

## 10 WAYS TO TEST YOUR IDEA BEFORE BUILDING A MEMBERSHIP SITE

*Not quite ready to start a membership site? Here are 10 alternative steps you can take right now to test your concept and gain momentum.*

### 1. Start a Blog

- Starting a blog is an easy way for you to get your ideas out there and test your content online.
- The advantage of a blog is that it can help you build an audience of people who may be interested in paying for access to your membership site in the future.
- If you don't have a lot of experience creating content, starting a blog will help you formulate a realistic content plan & calendar for a paid membership site. Many people are surprised with just how much work is involved in creating new content for paying members.

### 2. Start a Facebook Group

- If your idea for a membership site revolves more around access to a private or exclusive community than content, starting a Facebook group can be a great way to test your idea.
- A major benefit of starting a Facebook group is that you will be able to interact with prospective customers in real time. This will help you identify what they need and what they would be willing to pay for.
- **A word of warning:** it can be challenging to convert free members from a Facebook group into paid members on your membership site. If you do plan on building a membership site, make sure you have an idea for an exit strategy from the very beginning.

### 3. Write an E-Book

- Writing an e-book is an excellent way for you to perform an in-depth test of your idea with your market before creating a membership site.
- You can either give the e-book away for free in exchange for feedback or use the opportunity to test prices in your market.
- If you do decide to give the book away for free, consider using it as a lead magnet to grow your email list. Which leads us to our next item...

#### 4. Build Your Email List

- When you *do* decide to launch your membership site, you'll need a group of people to launch it to! Having an email list is essential in this process. Tools like MailChimp are free to use up to a certain number of subscribers.
- There are many different strategies for building an email list. For instance, if you are starting a blog, consider asking your readers to sign up for your mailing list so you can notify them when you publish new content.
- At the beginning, don't worry so much about the size of your mailing list. Remember, a handful of highly engaged subscribers who are interested and invested in what you are doing is much better than a big list of people who never even open your emails.

#### 5. Release a Video Training on YouTube

- If your idea for a membership site revolves more around access to a private or exclusive community than content, starting a Facebook group can be a great way to test your idea.
- Publishing your videos on YouTube will also help you familiarize yourself with the processes involved in creating video courses.
- Plus, you can use this opportunity to drive traffic to your blog, social media pages, and build your email list!

#### 6. Start a MeetUp Group

- What?! Did you hear us right? Are we crazy? Yes! You can test your idea for an online membership site offline. Consider starting a MeetUp group in your town or city centered around your area of interest or expertise.
- A MeetUp group can give you invaluable insight into your market: their wants, needs, and desires. You can interact with them in real-time and get feedback on your idea.
- If and when you do decide to create an online membership site, your offline MeetUp group can actually work as a lead generator for your online membership. If you are delivering content at your MeetUp group, you may even be able to film or record it live at the MeetUp group and publish it on your membership site.

## 7. Start a Podcast

- If your idea for a membership site includes audio content like access to exclusive interviews or trainings, starting a podcast could be a great, low-barrier way for you to test your idea.
- Another advantage of starting a podcast is that it can help you build an audience and discover what your target market is actually interested in.
- If you're not exactly sure what format your content should take, or how you should structure and organize it, a podcast gives you the opportunity to try out different content topics and numerous approaches to your subject.

## 8. Create a Slack Channel

- This is a newer strategy we're seeing implemented in different markets. For example, if you offer 1-on-1 business coaching for artists trying to advance in their career, you could create a private community Slack channel for your individual coaching clients to interact with each other.
- Starting a private Slack channel is similar to a Facebook group, but is better suited for small, intimate communities. There is also a greater sense of privacy associated with a private Slack channel, so it may be a better fit for professional situations.
- If your idea for a membership site involves real-time access to you, consider starting a Slack channel over a Facebook group.

## 9. Do an In-Person Demo, Class, or Focus Group

- This can be an ideal way to test your idea for a membership site if you specialize in highly technical, detailed training.
- For example, if you are a real-estate trainer, you can do an in-person demo or class on your area of expertise to a small group of your peers before you attempt to roll out online.
- An in-person demo or focus group is a great way to get direct feedback from potential customers about what is valuable for them.

**AND #10.....**

## 10. Attend Speaking Engagements & Conferences

- If you are an expert in your industry with highly sought-after knowledge, this method can be a great way to test your idea before building a membership site online.
- You could use the networking opportunities available at conferences to get feedback from people in your market and learn what people would pay for on a recurring basis.
- Speaking engagements and conferences also allows you to research what others in your sphere are doing and gain from their experience as well.

*Once you've had some time to develop your idea, get feedback, refine things and test your interest in generating content, then you're ready to formalize a business around your idea and start a membership site.*

*When that time comes, MemberMouse will be here to support you and help you grow your business!*

