



Membership Profits

- CHECKLISTS -

#13 The Membership Community-Building Checklist



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Checklist #13

The Membership Community-Building Checklist

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If you want to build a profitable site, then you need to engage and retain your members. One good way to do this is by building a community. When people feel like they belong to something bigger than themselves – when they feel like part of a community – they'll get more value from your site, which in turn leads to fewer cancellations.

So how do you build this sort of thriving community? By using this checklist...

Make Members Feel Like They're Part of Something

When a member joins your site, they don't want to just lay money down and become a "number" inside the membership site. Instead, they want to feel like they're part of something bigger. They want to feel like they're part of a community. They want to feel like they're part of an elite group.

If you need a good example of this, look at strong brands like Apple. Apple fans will line up around the block when a new product gets released. They join fan forums. They have a sense of belonging within the community, and often insiders feel a sense of superiority when they look at outsiders who don't use Apple products.

You can help foster a similar feeling among your own members through your choice of branding and wording within your site. Specifically:

- Foster a sense of belonging. You can make members feel like they are insiders by giving them a special name.

For example, if your membership site focuses on weight loss, you might refer to your members as "Fat Busters" or "Weight Loss Warriors." You want members to identify with the chosen name and be proud to call themselves by that name.



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- Make members feel special. Make them feel like insiders. Show them how they're different (and better) than those who aren't members.

For example: "You're smarter than the average marketer, and you're about to discover secret strategies that 99% of other marketers don't know..."

- Give long-time members special perks and even special names. In other words, reward people for retaining membership, and give them special status as senior members.

For example, if you have a dog training site, you might call the newest members "Puppies," (which only lasts for a month or two), the mid-length members "Big Dogs," and the senior members the "Pack Leaders."

- Rally members around a related cause. You might donate part of your proceeds to a specific cause, and encourage members to be activists in the field.

For example, if you have a dog training site, you might choose a cause such as supporting no-kill shelters, banning the Asian dog meat trade, or even loosening restrictions on bully breeds.

Next...

Offer a Forum or Group

A private members only forum or Facebook group is a great way to build a community and let members interact with each other. And as an added bonus, it increases member retention, because members don't want to lose access to the support and their newfound friends.

Of course the key to success with this strategy is that you need to get members engaged and posting. The more "invested" people are in the



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forum or group, the more likely it is that they'll stick around for the long run.

If you can get "ambassadors" in your group – especially other well known business owners in complementary niches as yours, you're members will feel really specially knowing they're in the same group.

Especially if your ambassadors participate and engage with your members.

So how do you engage members? We'll cover that next...

Engage Your Members

If you want to build a sense of community, then your goal should be to engage members both within your group/forum as well as outside of it. To that end, here is how to get your members active all around your membership site:

- Ask questions. This is a good way to draw people out so they start interacting. You can ask questions in your member newsletter, on your member blog, and within your group or forum.

For example, you can share two sides of a controversial topic, and then ask, "What do you think?"

Or you can ask your members to share their favorite tips, strategies, frustrations, stories, photos, etc. For example, you can ask bodybuilders, "What is your most embarrassing gym story?"

- Interact with members. A community is about a dialogue among you and members, not a monologue. That's why you'll want to personally interact within the community. This means answering questions in the group, "liking" replies and comments from group members, and generally



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showing members that you appreciate and value their contributions to the community.

- Solicit feedback. This is something you can do privately, such as having people email you with their feedback, or you can request that people share their feedback and ideas publicly. But either way, your members will feel special and they'll engage if you genuinely ask for feedback on an issue—and then apply their feedback where applicable.

For example, you might ask questions such as:

- Who would you like to see as the next webinar guest?
 - How can I make this membership better and more useful for you?
 - What prizes would you like to see in an upcoming contest?
 - What sort of bonus product would appeal to you?
 - What features do you want included on this brand new app?
- Offer points for participation. In other words, “bribe” your members to engage on your site by posting in your group, commenting on your members only blog, offering private feedback to you, etc. For every activity your members participate in, give them “points” which are exchangeable for other products and services

Parting Thoughts

As you can see, building a community isn't just about installing a forum or starting a closed Facebook group and calling it a day. It's about making your members feel like they're a part of something bigger than themselves, making them feel like their part of an elite or inner circle, making them feel special and valued, and giving them a sense of belonging. If you follow the strategy outlined above, you too



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will be able to foster this sense of community that bonds your members to your site.



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