Answering Unanswered Membership Site Questions - Part 2

Stuck on product development? Wondering how much business research you need? James Schramko and John Lint answer your paid membership questions here.

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James Schramko and John Lint

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is Episode 818. We're talking membership sites. I've got John Lint here from 10XPRO.io. He's my partner in that business platform, and we are getting a lot of success for our members. So we're really passionate about this topic. It's going to be membership season soon. You'll see all the launches coming, and we want you to be informed.

So what we've done, we've actually already answered a whole bunch of questions on Episode 806, very, very popular. We thought we'd just keep answering all the unanswered questions that are sitting out there on the interweb, especially on the Facebook groups that appear to be abandoned by the sales people who set them up.

But never fear, we are here. We're going to get straight into this.

Creating order out of the content in your membership

John, I love this question for you, because you have the platform where people are building memberships, what's the best way to organize your content?

John: So when you say that, you mean the content for an online course or for a membership site. So when it comes to an online course, organizing the content, for me, it's all about, okay, what's the path to deliver that result that this user wants? Right? So how am I going to organize these? How am I going to break these down? So I know that they want to go to this final step, that's the final result, I need to break it down. So what am I going to deliver in all of these steps?

So I'm here, I want to go there, what are the steps to get there? These are the main steps. And inside those steps, you have many steps, right? So that's one way of organizing your online course, very easily. That's one way of doing and creating your online course and coming up with a very powerful outline. And that's basically the formula that I've been using for years that our members are using as well.

When it comes to the membership site itself, and you're thinking about, well, how am I going to organize my content from a membership site perspective? And in my mind, again, it's about breaking down, well, what's the experience I want them to get? And we talked about this last time.

What are you going to deliver inside your online membership site? What is your membership site? Is your membership site content-based? Is it community-based? Is it coaching-based, doing maybe some of the things that you do, James, like the private coaching, or maybe the live Q&A calls, or maybe the chat, the group chat, the private group that you have set up in different sites?

So it's about having clarity in that, and then breaking things down and say, Alright, well, I'm going to have that, and there, etc, etc. If you're talking about, how do you organize your content or your stuff online, obviously, there are different tools available for that, that we can talk about.

James: Cool. Yeah, I think you've covered the broad range of it. I've got a membership where the only deliverable is what you call a social wall, and it's where people can ask a question and get an answer. That's a $10 per month program called Support Assist at SuperFastResults.com, and that is the simplest membership to create.

There's a few clients who are in there asking questions about that product, how it works, what sort of results I've got, and they've been adding it to their own programs as a supplement to one-time courses. So that's a simple version. Other ones that I've tried are the drip fed ones. So you can organize your content to be timed, so you could actually deliver it.

I've got one where it's going out over 30 days. That's a [challenge](). But it could easily be a membership, where I actually feed that membership for years. And I do know, that was kind of the old school way of memberships, wasn't it? It was, put people on a subscription, then drip send them content forever.

There are still sites like that in the running market, in the fishing market, in the non-online marketing markets. That is their model. So you can easily do that, especially with 10XPRO, because it will synchronize with the email system. And that's what I wanted to do the course for, was to prove the concept, and it's been seamless.

It sends out the correct email with the correct access all at once using triggers and so forth. I don't know the tech, but I do know, it was pretty easy to set up, especially because my team member helped me. But the other thing is, you might have, where you have an element of courses, and then an element of coaching, and what I like is the way you can configure 10XPRO; you can actually have courses which are nice, big, clear, easy-to-use panels. You can create bundles.

So they could have that, but they could also have a forum where they could have categories and topics. And you and I were talking about this recently, John, because I'm starting a new product around pods, and I can actually have a forum where only a few people can see a particular part of that forum, so a little private area.

So I can create little trios of customers, three people per pod; they can coach each other, and I can be facilitating that with them. And the only people who can see that are those three, and me being the administrator, and I can have unlimited number of pods under one forum membership, and I can still have a general section that everyone can see.

So I really love the flexibility of that. I think your answer is simply, how do you deliver the result people are signing up for? And that's going to depend on what it is that you've promised. So there's innumerable ways you can configure it. I would also think, have a look at the user experience and see, what courses or memberships do you belong to that you've liked the way that experience has been? And that's a good starting point.

John: Awesome.

The things that were absolutely needed in the first six months to a year

James: What were your top priority tasks strategy in the first six to 12 months of launching? Would like to hear this from people who started from scratch with no pre-existing audience.

John: Okay, launching your membership site or launching a course; there are multiple things that obviously we need to do. We talked about this before, okay, if you're starting from scratch, like you said, well, I need to build a mini audience, I need to have an audience that I can control, that I can have access to, that nobody's going to steal from me, because I don't want to be the platform or whatever, right?

So to me, it has always been and will always be the most important thing to do. And we see this now so often with YouTubers that finally understand, finally understand, and you can see them say at the end of their videos, Hey, if you want to get in touch with me, or join the private group, then go there on my website and join my mailing list. Building an email list, building your own audience so you can send messages - this is the most important thing.

So whenever you're going to be gearing up to launch, you need to start building that list little by little, because when you're going to be doing a launch, what's launching is about telling people, Hey, we're going to be opening the doors soon. It's going to be awesome. So you want to create an event around it. So that's step number one, building that little audience.

Step number two, or one A, one B, of course, you're going to do that at the same time, is to think about, Okay, great, I'm going to have that membership site, what am I going to deliver, how am I going to make sure I deliver the result that they really want, and what is that result? Because we want to create an offer that converts. We want them to buy that, and we want them to get results, and we want them to show us that they want it by purchasing it.

So we need to think about that. And that's going to come by setting up in place the different elements that we talked about, having your sales page that has good copy, that tells them what they are going to get, why they should get it, why they should spend that money, what are the results they can expect, basically talk about what it is, what it will do for them, the benefits, and how they can get access to it. Okay, great.

An order page to accept payments online so that they can pay you. And then a little thank you page that tells them, Great, awesome. Check out your email, you're going to get your login details to the members' area. And they log in, they're going to see the different elements that we just talked about, okay, this is the membership site, what is it? So get clarity on that, build your list, set up that little funnel to accept payments and sell that membership site.

So these are the different things that we need to do as we're gearing up. And when it comes to the launch, lots of people do it multiple ways. You can do the simple sales page, order page, the thank you page and do a limited time campaign if you want to. You can put it on evergreen, if you want to, once it's ready. You can do a launch, which is basically videos before the sale, and basically, you just want them to get to know you, like you, trust you. That's why you're releasing those little videos.

So you can show them that you can actually help them by helping them first, by telling them, Hey, here's a cool tip on how to do that. Or, Here's my story. This is how I struggled. But now I'm not struggling anymore. And look at all the results. And by the way, look at all these people that I've helped. So that's what you're doing with those little videos that you release for free before, because then you go with the next part, which is sale page, order page, thank you page, meaning here's how to get access to members' area, you saw how awesome it will be.

You saw that I'm qualified to help you. Therefore, the next step is for you to decide whether you want in or not, you know, and it's going to be awesome for those who get in. So these are the elements, build your list, and then decide on when you want to open the doors, and then you start doing that campaign, send emails, one email per day, maybe for the next four days or five days. That can be the first time you open the doors, you do that.

And then after you say, You know what, I want to leave it on evergreen, meaning that whenever they go on my website, they can get access to the membership site. You can totally do it that way as well. And these are the things that we need to do to answer your question quickly. These are the things that I would do that our members are doing when they are gearing up to launching their membership site.

James: And then of course when people join, one of the common things I've seen in this particular Facebook group is they've brought the market forward, so to speak. They've pulled all the customers out of their free Facebook group or their initial launch, they've made the sales, and then the wheels fall off. They're like, they're desperately scratching around looking for clients.

So you absolutely have to think about two things. One is keeping the customers that have purchased, like you need to do whatever it takes to make sure you deliver on the results, that you help them to get a result, you follow through, you've got fantastic support. And the second thing is you need to start thinking about that pipeline and how you're going to fill it for the next time.

Some people get in a vicious cycle of launch, launch, launch, launch, launch, and then they get exhausted and give up. The guys who sell launches are still launching over a decade later. That is their entire model, and they still haven't figured out a better way. But you know, I kind of feel sorry for them in a way.

Then there's other people who have figured out, Hey, go the recurring subscription. Keep adding people from different areas; it could be a podcast, it could be short social media videos, it could be coming out with a challenge, it could be a consumer guide, it could be publishing a book. You can have a book on Amazon, feeding your funnel. There's lots of ways that you can do this. But you need to keep the pipeline filled, so you're never desperately scratching around for traffic.

And then if you keep people, and it's just like a bucket, plug the holes in the bucket, and then keep tipping water in the bucket. And if you do that right, you can have a membership like I have for, gosh, I started mine in 2009, my current subscription model. And so that's really survived the test of time by just having an ongoing way of getting people into the pipeline, helping them on their way through, and then keeping the people you actually got.

And the better a job you do with keeping people, the less concern you're going to have about starting from scratch, which is really what I'm reading between the lines on this question.

The one thing John and James owe most of their success to

What was the one thing you implemented that brought you the most success?

John: Hmm. Simplification. If we're going to summarize it that way, simplifying is always one of the best things that you can do in your business; simplifying your processes, simplifying your product, simplifying the way your members are going to get the results, not trying to have to deliver an encyclopedia. This is something we talk about whenever we teach people how to create an online course or a members' area, you know, because people who start, they think that we need to deliver an encyclopedia with all their knowledge, but that's not what people want.
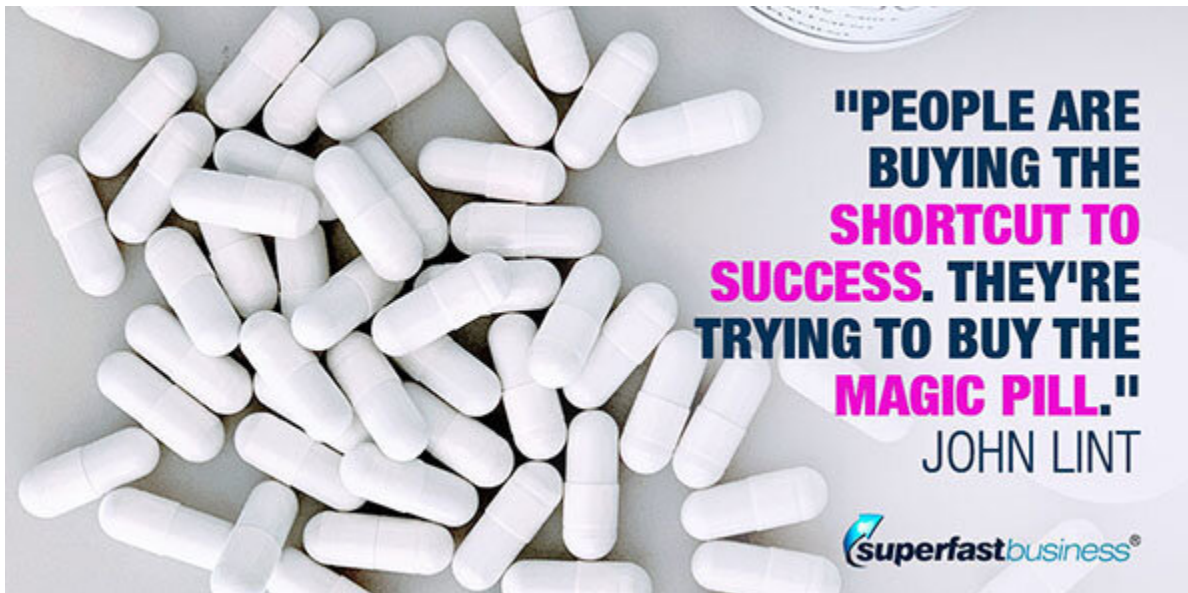
People are buying the shortcut to success. They're trying to buy the magic pill. Now we know, there's no magic pill. But our job as the creator, we need to try to create the magic pill with our stuff. So what is the fastest way I can get you the result? And that's the only thing that people care about. And actually, it'll be a little bit counterintuitive for people who start out, is that actually, the less you create, the less your online course, if I can give you the result the fastest way possible, then it's way more valuable than something that is maybe 100 video long.

You know, of course, if I can just watch one video, I get everything, I get the strategy, boom, I'm making money or I'm losing weight, it's better than 100 videos to get me to that point. So very important, simplifying, from a creator perspective, from a marketing perspective as well.

We see those people are having complex funnels because they listen to one guy saying, Yeah, I'm doing this, this and that. And don't worry, I've done plenty of very complicated funnels, we sold them for a ton of money to our clients who wanted to have those modules, those funnels setup. But the reality is that the simple funnel is always the best. And that's the one that we like - sales page, order page, thank you page; this is what I have, this is the product, this is why you should get it, the benefit.

That's it. Simplifying the process, simplifying your traffic process as well. Okay, well, instead of trying to do all of them, do the ones that you like, or maybe you don't like one, maybe find someone that likes to do it. And then this is now a team member. Simplifying your team as well; at least for me, instead of having 50 people on board that is a nightmare to manage, maybe have people who can do different things and then use tools and whatever, right? So that's the most important thing to me.

And that's what I try to do all the time in my life, in my business as well, of course. Simplifying things, simplifying the processes so that they can be replicable. So that means I can easily train someone else to replace me if there is a need. So yeah, that would be my answer.

James: Simple is a great tip. It reminds me of when I sold off a whole bunch of surfboards and there was just the good ones left. It made my choice easier what to choose to surf, and it's counterintuitive, but less really is more in that regard. I would say also, it's good to have your essential pages in, but a good tip for people, whether it's retention or filling the pipeline, is to focus on building an email list.

And the great thing about 10XPRO is it has a lot of campaigns, and I much prefer the word campaign than funnel. But there are one-click campaigns you can push that will help you start collecting an email list. Because probably the pages on the site might do 10 percent of the heavy lifting, or maybe 20 percent. And people get a bit confused by this.

But I would say the pre-marketing, whatever it is you're getting people onto your list with, or the email marketing itself, is going to do a lot of the heavy lifting by the time they get to that page. And the more you can warm them up, the better. Now my tip for this question, the one thing that I did that I think's been the key to my success is I cared more about my customers than most of the other people that I've experienced.

And I show that by actually turning up on a regular basis. I've been turning up every day for decades. And that takes discipline. It doesn't have to be for a long time. And there'll be a day here or there I might have missed it if I was on a flight or whatever. But most days, I will log in and tend my forum and answer questions. And so someone who's using that well will actually get a daily update from me.

If they ask me a question every day, I'll give them a daily update. If they do it once a week, I'll give them a weekly update. So it really comes down to how they use it. But I show up. And that was my one reason for creating the community in the very beginning, was I was a member of communities, and the founders never showed up. They were too big for their boots, they got the money and they ran, and then they let it fall into the ground.

And that's been a hard thing for my competitors to replicate, for two reasons. One, is they're not me. So they can never be me. And two is, they just want to do whatever is possible to not be present and to not show up. So they're creating this divide. That's my moat. That is the moat that made my business strong. And I might have to change that one day if I ever want to sell the business. I'm really realistic about that. But for now, it's been a good advantage for me.

Where do you begin with it all?

Okay, moving on to the next question. This is a very simple one. Where to start? I think this is worth answering with a short answer, because I know this will be a question that comes up. You've heard all about these memberships, you want to have a membership, memberships look great, everyone's making all this money and working a lot less with the leverage that comes from it. Where do you start?

John: Actually, the most important thing in my mind is also the one that gets skipped a lot. So if I'm starting out, I haven't done anything online, I'm starting out, the most important thing is to fully understand your market. Most people don't talk about this, they're going to start talking about the funnels, the campaigns, list building, offers. I get it. All of that is important, but nothing will work and nothing will happen unless you fully understand your market.

And that is the part usually in a course, because when I teach about how to create an online course, that's module one. Here's how to understand your market. What does that mean? Well, it means, what are they struggling with? What are their problems? What keeps them up at night? I'm sure people have caught that before. Why? Why are we doing this? Because, again, our product is going to be the solution to those problems. And we need to fully understand that.

And a lot of you are, Yeah, I get it. Yeah, okay, I think I know. You can't think you know, you need to do the research. And if you don't have a website, that's okay. Go on other people's websites and pay attention. Go on Facebook groups, go on YouTube comments, look at the comments that people are getting on their blogs, on their podcasts, whatever; listen to podcasts, analyze sales videos. That's what I do all the time.

I download the sales videos from other people. I study them. I watch them more than once. I transcribe them sometimes. Back in the day, I used to write, I used to go on websites, marketplaces, and they had all these sales letters. And what I was doing every single day, I was actually writing it down with pen and paper, old school. The web page was in front of me, I was writing the sales letter down, because that forced me to then notice some of the power words that they used.

So if it's a good sales copy, they have done that work for us before. It's a goldmine. It's an absolutely goldmine to be analyzing sales letter, sales videos, because those guys who are making money have done the hard work. They have done the research about what is it that our market wants, what are they struggling with, what do they want, what are the benefits of the product. So do that work.

That might seem boring at the beginning, we're not talking about sexy funnels and whiz bang widgets, or whatever. But that is the work, because now you're starting to understand, Ah, actually, they don't just want to make money, they want more freedom, they want lifestyle, they want to be able to be free, they want to be able to have that peace of mind.

And I'm a very peace of mind-oriented guy, and I'm a very freedom-oriented guy. So the motivation for me to building a business is not really so much about making the millions. I mean that's great. But what that allows me to get. And what that allows me to get is to live in any country where I want to, in the world I want to, to have the lifestyle I want. You and I surf every day. So we love that. Freedom, being able to do what we want. So that's what it gives us.

So these are the things that it's important to understand when you're analyzing your market. Why do they want it? What are they struggling with? And how can I create something that's going to solve those problems? And when you know that, you can write great emails, you can write great ads, you can write great sales letters, you can create great sales videos, you can create awesome YouTube videos and put on social, you can do great posts on Instagram, because you know that that is what they want.

If you don't do any of the work, you can do the other stuff, but it's going to be average, and it's not going to work. And then you're going to be wondering, hey, why aren't people opting in? I just told them, Hey, join my newsletter. Why aren't people opting in? Well, maybe it's because you're not offering what they want, you're not targeting that pain and telling them, Hey, you know what, you just need to enter your name and email, and I'm going to give you a blueprint, or a cheat sheet or a report or a video that is going to solve that problem. You know?

So that is the most important thing in my mind, that you need to do first.

James: That's great. I'm going to say the same thing, research, it appears in the beginning of my membership course as well. And I've seen evidence of how this is effective, because I've actually had a couple of coaching students copy my sales page for their market, and then complain to me that it's not converting.

And I'm astounded, firstly that they would just copy it, and that they think being a member gives them permission to replicate my business model. There's too much of a message out there about, Hey, just copy this funnel. Second thing is, why would it work for their market? They don't have the same customers as me. They're not helping with the same problem, they haven't done the same pre-marketing, they don't have the same solution.

So it'd be a miracle if it did work. And this is so key, you know, like, I've got an entity that focuses on a different market altogether. And I think I'm seven years in so far. And I knew when I started, I don't know anything about this market and I need to be patient, and I need to learn it, I need to experience, I need to get my feet wet with it, I needed to roll up my sleeves and just do the work and really know the market to be in a position to even have an opinion about the market and then finally start to control some of that market. And I think you need to be patient.

Look, my first success online was where I was the customer struggling to build a website. I found the software that helped me do that, which is why I've got such an affinity with 10XPRO, because that really personifies my journey online. I could not build a website myself, I struggled. I couldn't find anyone who would actually get on the phone or respond to me and teach me. And when I finally found software that made it easier, I wanted to shout it to the rooftops.

And I built a demo site to show myself how it worked, which I then turned into an affiliate site and was able to show others how it works. So I was my customer. But if you are not your customer, that's an even bigger divide you have to cross. If you are the customer, be a member of other people's products, be a member of other people's services, experience it. Buy other products and services, go through other people's campaigns or funnels and really know the market. And then you're in a position to make an offer that might be compelling.

And I think an offer that converts is the hardest thing to have, but also the thing that will make all the difference for your online journey, because once you have it, you're away. And I've been selling more or less the same solution for a long time now with slight iterations around the pre-marketing and post delivery. But essentially, I found my little position in the market, and I'm very happy with that.

You found your position. You create the world's greatest software program that helps you build the pages, does the cart, the memberships, the courses, the click button campaigns, and handles affiliates and everything else. So you found your position. We're happy with our position.

If you want to start, just go to do the hard work. At least pull out a spreadsheet and fill it in on everything you can find in that market. If you're going to go and buy a retail business, if you want to go and buy a motor dealership for example; and lots of my clients, they always say, Oh, I'll buy a Mercedes-Benz dealership. I said, well, you should speak to someone who runs it in depth, at least three separate businesses, and find out everything you possibly can about all the pros and cons before you hand over the checkbook, because if you did, you might discover that the average motor dealership in Australia makes less than two percent profit on revenue.

And they are an extraordinarily complicated business. And they're massive tax collectors. They collect tax for the government for goods and services tax, for registration taxes. You need to stock $10, $20 million worth of vehicles and parts; you got to be affiliated with all these different government registered bodies, like be a licensed mechanic, all these sort of things, regulated finance advisor, there's so much to it.

So they think, Oh, I'll just have a Mercedes dealership and drive whatever I want. Reality is, it's a very difficult business to run and to own. So I think that's a great way to end this episode. I want to keep them bite size, and I want to get you back, John. We'll get some more feedback from this and see if you would like us to answer the unanswered membership questions that we find online. And you've got a question for us, please send us an email, hit reply to the episode reminders when it comes out, or put a question on our episode at 818 on SuperFastBusiness.com.

I'm James Schramko. That there is John Lint from 10XPRO.io, check it out. Thanks for visiting again, John.

John: Thank you. Thank you for having me.

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