



The Seven Steps for Creating Your Membership Site - The Membership Series

The Membership Series takes a look at the seven steps involved in building a membership. Discover essentials, membership website platforms, and more.

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James Schramko and John Lint

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. Today, we're talking about membership sites. This is Episode 845. I've got [John Lint](#) from [10XPRO](#) back again. Hello, John.

John: Hi. Hello, hello. How are you?

James: Great. I don't know how many episodes you've been on, but it's quite a lot, definitely in the double digits. A real favorite here.

John: Well, thank you.

James: We've got a lot of listeners who have an interest in membership sites, or have membership sites, and maybe listening to this sort of in the early phases, or maybe well down the track. But either way, I think this will be a great overview episode. Today, we're going to be talking about the seven steps for creating your membership site.

And this should serve as either a roadmap if you're new, or a checklist if you already have a membership site. So I'll just sort of take us through topic by topic, we'll have a little bit of discussion about it. Of course, you run [10XPRO.io](#), which is the platform that I suggest people use to build their membership sites.

The data is your foundation

I have a few membership sites, love the business model. It's the reason I have the life I have now. And step one is get the data. This is a really important one because often I see people have an idea or they think, Okay, I'm ready to go for a membership site. Now we've had a couple of previous episodes, which hopefully have been informative as to [if a membership is right for you](#), and [which type of membership model you want](#).

But before we do anything, I usually pull out a blank piece of paper or a spreadsheet, and we get the data. We go in and see, what is the market doing, what is the market showing us that's important for us when it comes to membership? And just for a little bit of backstory here, way back in the day, when I was a member of other people's memberships, there were shortcomings in those memberships that I thought could be improved upon.

One of the big problems for me was that the founders of the membership were never there. Other ones were, there was sort of no filters on the type of people in the membership, and other ones where the content was sort of ho hum. And certainly, it was hard to get good advice from anyone who wasn't just there to sell stuff. So they weren't really being regulated or moderated.

So I wanted a community where we have great information, the founders are very interested and turn up all the time, and the coaching is high quality, and the training materials are good. So that was my sort of thing. I actually listed down all the things I like about the memberships I'm paying for to be a member and what I would improve. What's missing?

And that gave me a comprehensive sort of overview of what's out there. And I had a look at, you know, searching for different phrases, what memberships come up, what sort of sales pages do they have, how much do they charge, what do they deliver for their membership? How long have they been around? What sort of social following do those people have?

Back then, of course, the social following wasn't big. How big was their list? How prominent were they in other communities, etc? I wanted to get a snapshot. I think it's good to inform yourself before you go in blind. Just interested in your perspective on this, John?

John: Yeah, absolutely. And this is one of the main things that we all need to do, no matter which market we want to enter, no matter what kind of online course we want to create or membership site that we want to create, and a few things. And that's something that we teach as part of the 10XPRO.io Academy.

When you become a member, you have access to all of our training for free. And one of the first things that I recommend people do is this three-step process, which is number one, is let's say you want to discover a new market. Well, the first thing you need to do is to follow the money, follow the money.



The first question that we need to answer, whenever we enter a market is, can I make money? Can I make money in that market? Right? If the answer is no, of course, we're not going to waste the time. So the answer needs to be yes. How do we do that? Well, are other people making money? We want to see other people making money in that market.

So that's a good thing, right? And most people think that we should try to find a market where there's nobody, and we are the first ones. That's a mistake, that's a red flag. I'm not going to take that risk. I don't want to take that risk. I'm not Apple that has all that money that can do all that research. No. I want to know, Okay, I see a lot of people are making money. That's a great thing. That's step one.

Step two is what you were describing. We want to model what works first by analyzing. Okay, we see those players. The next question that we need to answer is, so we know that they are making money or at least looks like they're making money. Second question is, how are they making money?

Are they building an email list? How are they building that email list? What are they promising in exchange for an email? Are they attracting people to their website or their social? How are they doing this? Are they doing little videos on YouTube? Are they doing shorts on Instagram? What are they doing? How are they doing that? Are they making money? What products are they selling?

So we want to know that, what are the products? And then of course, we want to maybe buy those products, like you did with your membership site analysis, and find out, what are they delivering inside those products? Are people liking? Do you like it as you go through those programs that you buy? You put yourself in the customer's shoe, do you like the experience?

In your case, you didn't like the experience. The guy wasn't there. The people in there were not at the level that you desire. And by the way, all of these things are still happening these days.

James: Oh yeah. It hasn't been solved in every market, that's for sure.

John: That's right. You see guys building Facebook groups or whatever communities, and they're never there. And the promise that hey, When you join, I will help you. Great. And then when you get in, they're never there, or they don't answer your questions.

James: It's actually one of the first questions people ask at a high level. How do I have this benefit of having recurring income for my membership, but I don't want to be involved in it at all? And it is a pretty common complaint, because people could be forgiven for feeling slighted, they've handed over often big sums of money and the person's gone, you're being fobbed off on to sub people or a team or having delays in responses. Very bad situation.

I like what you said about buying the products. Don't be afraid to invest. This is a business venture. Invest in different programs, so that you have a feel for what the market will pay and what happens in them. Sometimes you can't see behind the front door unless you pay access.

And I will tell you this, this is a really interesting thing, the number of famous people who have purchased my programs, joined my programs and who I've actually, I've helped develop their own programs is significant. These people aren't just trying to have a guess or do everything for free. They will happily pay and then they will get advice or learn from it.

And I wanted to say a big no-no, do not go into someone's program, and cut and paste their stuff and call it your stuff. It's become a thing. We hear the word hacking. And it's often been associated with borrowing, you know, they usually put it with a quote about, great artists steal or whatever.

It's not okay to go in and replicate. And I've seen plenty of people come in and clone my stuff. It happens all the time. They think because they're buying the membership that they can just cut and paste it for them. Now, I signal what you can and can't have. In some cases, I give people the methodology.

But I actually want to teach them to fish, not just say, Look, here's a fish. You can call that a shark if you want to sell it yourself. No. I say this is how we catch the fish. And once they learn that, they've really got a deeper level understanding of how this machine works, and they have a chance of longevity and survival.

Now, we're only up to step one so far. So we probably should move on to step two, because there's seven of them.

John: I think it's important to clarify though, like the word I use is model, it's not copy. You need to see what is working, why they're buying. And that's basically about building a huge file of ideas. This is the most important step of everything. That's why it's important to talk about this. You need to have clear understanding of what is it that the market is buying right now, what are the problems that they're having? How are those guys solving that problem?



And then you need to find the holes in those programs, or the ways that you can say, You know what, I'm going to do it differently. I'm going to do it my own way. You need to find your own way, the thing that's going to position you differently than everybody else. That is extremely important. But before you can do that, you need to understand, what is it that people want? What are they currently buying?

You should be subscribing to everybody's newsletter, you should be reading all the sales letters you can, watching all the sales videos you can, buying the products that you can, and having a full understanding of your market. And you can only do that by spending time, money, investigating your market at first.

A lot of people jump through that step, and they go into the building phase that I'm sure we're going to talk about, but then they find out, nobody is buying, what happened? You told me I was going to be a millionaire, but nobody's buying. Well it's because you probably don't even understand your market.

You don't even understand what people want. You don't understand what you should deliver. How you can be different. You just did something that everybody else is doing. So yeah, they're not going to buy if you do that.

Apple wasn't the first one to invent a phone or even an iPod. They looked at what was being done out there. Companies like Nokia, which is almost dead these days. Samsung as well was doing things like that; a lot of companies. They looked at that and said, You know what, we can do it better. We can have a better design, better interface, better style, and we're going to make it easy, easier than the other guys.

They did that, and it was successful, because they knew that there was a market, all the people were spending money there. And there were other people making money. Nokia was a powerhouse back then, now it's almost gone. But they knew that they were making a lot of money. So Apple said, You know what, we're just going to do something our own way with our own interface, our own store, whatever, and then the rest is history. So maybe we should do the same.

James: Yeah. It's like the mouse. They went and looked at Hewlett Packard and thought, Oh, that that's a good idea, we'll go and make something like that. And they made it easy to use. So there's a fine line there between entering into a market where there's nothing like what you plan to sell exists, could be a high-risk strategy.

Going into the market with exactly the same as what everyone else has got makes you commoditized. So you need to go into the market, basically find out what people are buying, and come up with something compelling for them to buy, which is sort of leaning into step two, which is create your offer.

What are you actually selling?

So this is where you take that data, you figure out what is strong enough for you to have someone actually pay money for your solution, and that is the important thing. Now, back in the start of my online career, for me, that offer was basically a solution for how you could use website software better.

It's funny, we're back here in 2021, you know, 15 years later, and I'm still in the same space, because I like that space. I like helping people get their vision and dreams out there into the world, as you do, John. But I actually created an offer that was so compelling, because I said, Hey, you can buy the software, or you can buy the software for exactly the same price from the people who sell the software directly.

So you're buying the same software from the same place, but if you buy it through my affiliate link, I will give you this membership for free, this cheat sheet with webinars and training, and I'll help you if you get stuck, etc. So I had an offer. Turned out people really liked that. And I was able to sell a lot of it.

And then over time, I evolved, and in 2009 started what is now SuperFastBusiness, the very first version of it. And it's evolved and changed over time. But my offer is essentially similar. I'm going to help people with their online business. I'm going to help them [work less and make more](#). And I'm going to use my experience and my resources and assets and trainings to do that.

And I've delivered it in a way that up until 2020, it was fairly uncommon for people to have the access to a weekly virtual meeting, it was always like a three-times-a-year in-person thing, the old 25K programming etc. Or people were stuck on Facebook groups, etc. So find your offer, make it compelling.

And it really should rely or be informed on some of the information you found out about your market. Just like the copywriters say, you've got to know your market back to front and give it your best shot. Now, you may not come out of the gate with your first offer being wildly successful, it's pretty common.

And I have seen people take shortcuts. They just cut and paste and then copy the ads, and then wonder why it doesn't work. You've really got to differentiate. This is where being a good copywriter, being a good marketer can help. And that's where people like me and John in your life can help, because you can show us what you got, and we'll tell you where you might refine.

Now, I just want to point out, at this point is where we see a lot of this situation of preference versus performance. And that's the classic old thing where you go out to your people and say, What would you like? And they say, Oh, we would like this. And then you build this. And then you go back and say, I've built this for you. And then nothing. Right? Nothing at all.

John: Crickets.

James: They're not buying. And that's because people will say one thing, but not act the same way according to that, because now you actually want to get paid. So one way you can do it in reverse is get your minimum viable offer, and you can read about this sort of stuff in books like *The Lean Startup*.

In that sort of scenario, you get your first version of the offer, even if it's a waiting list, and you start collecting emails or you get people to reserve a spot or pay a deposit. That way you can start validating. Now, you might think, oh, no one would pay money in advance of a product. Well, if you've ever been to a rock concert or flown on an airplane or whatever, you usually you have to pay before you get the thing. And so, it's totally possible with your online thing.

And if you don't get enough sales or it's not worth it for you, then you can actually refund everyone and say it's not happening, or whatever. So you can start small. The reality is, you might have to find a few different iterations for this offer to stick or to take effect. But that's basically getting the offer. You've got to come up with something that is compelling to your target audience that they will give you money for. And of course, that you can deliver to a high level. Comments from John.

Yeah, I mean, that's exactly right. We talked about those [main elements of a membership site](#). So if we're focusing on a membership site, that's going to be either creating content, either providing some community or providing some coaching. And that coaching can be group coaching, or private coaching. So these are going to be the main elements of a membership site, the reasons why people will join.

So definitely building a wait list at the beginning to see, hey, almost you have a sales page, but they can't buy, they can join the waitlist, that's going to give you an idea if people want to do it. Because if nobody joins that waitlist, then it's a bad sign, right? So people join your wait list. And then of course, the ultimate vote is when someone takes out their credit card. They enter their details, and they buy.

And you can absolutely do it before it's even up and running. That's been done all the time online. Either, I don't like the word, but you know, people would join beta programs, prereleases. That's been done all the time in video games, where you actually preorder the game and the game is not even finished.

You don't even know if there's going to be tons of bugs in that game, but people buy it. And they buy it. Why? Because maybe they're getting a special deal or a founder's rate or whatever it is. Maybe they get a special bonus, or maybe they get extra coaching sessions from you. Give them a good reason to buy now. That's a part of what you are talking about, which is create an [offer that converts](#), right? Something that's enticing.

And once you get those first members, which you need to be realistic, you're not going to get thousands of members at the beginning. You might get a handful, and that's okay, depending on the traffic that you get. If you only get 100 people on your sales page, and you get a handful of people join, that's actually pretty good.

You need to look at your conversion rate. If you get one, two, three, four, five, six percent, seven percent, 10 percent conversion, that's pretty good. But the bottom line is that you now have a proof that someone was ready to buy, and that's a good thing. So now the next thing that we need to do is to focus on that person and say, Well, how can I attract more people like that?

What are the characteristics of that person? Where did they hang out? Why did they join? And the way you find out is by actually talking to that person, old school, I know. But you build that relationship with those first founding members. That's why it's so vital to have those first founding members.

So don't think that, oh I only got 10 people to join my membership site, it's a waste of time, I'm going to give up. No. Work with those guys, get them the best results possible, so that you can then go back into your offer and make it even more enticing and attract more people like those 10 guys, and girls, of course, and find out exactly why they bought, how can you do better.

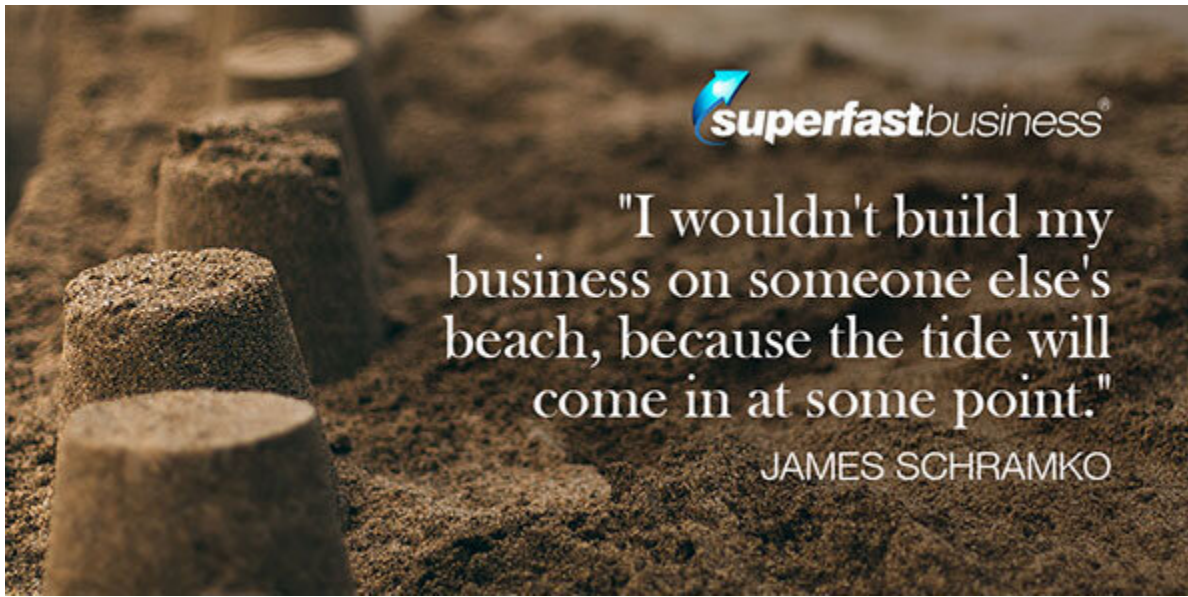
And step by step, you're going to improve your things, improve your offer, and you're going to be attracting more people and converting more people into buyers.

James: And you've kind of touched on something important there. You don't have to have a big launch to launch your membership. You can start small, and you can grow it and improve it as you go.

Let's get building

Now, step three is to build the site. Now, this one's a soft spot for John. It's just what he does. He's got 10XPRO.io. A few options here. Look, there's a bazillion different platforms out there. And what I teach is more or less agnostic to whatever platform you want. I've tried lots. There are a couple of things that come up a lot.

We're often going to hear about Facebook, that's a very common one. My concern with Facebook is it's still a little bit difficult to organize, you've got absolutely no control over how your customers are marketed to or the database. So you absolutely have to get some details off there. It doesn't integrate well with cart systems or access.



It's not where I would build my business. I wouldn't build my business on someone else's beach, because the tide will probably come in at some point, and that's fraught with danger. The other one that you hear a lot about is the WordPress-style platforms. And what you should know if you're going to go on that path, it was and is a great platform, but - and there's a big but.

There's a lot of maintenance involved, and plugins and clashes and bits and pieces bolted together and trying to do lots of different things, it's what I call a Frankenstein. You will need a webmaster or a service provider to do it. You will need hosting, you will get DDoS attacks, you'll need SSL certificates.

Basically, there's a lot of stuff that I think is like wrapping a chain around the neck of a starting-out membership business. It's just way too much, and it'll sink them. A business like mine, yeah, I can sustain those things. I've got two full-time people in my team who just work on my website, just for perspective. So I can carry that sort of load. And I used to do it all myself.

But then if you are doing it yourself, then you're not doing the other things that are important, like creating podcasts and looking after your customers. So I had a slower start than what I can have now. Just to prove a point, I went and registered SuperFastResults.com as a 10XPRO installation. I put some [information products](#) there, I put a [membership](#) on it.

We have been using it seamlessly for the cart, the reporting, the products, the upsells, downsells, the funnels. And the funnels, I specifically want to mention because it relates to the previous step, your offer. On my side, I've got a book offer. I give away my book, SuperFastResults.com/book. I give away a 30-day challenge, SuperFastResults.com/30. Now you can type three zero or the word 30, both should go to the same page, right?

It was very, very easy to set up. It was a one-click campaign install, it was unbelievable. And it's very easy to type over the words because it all does it. Now, we don't have to worry about hosting, or security, or plugin, or updates, or gluing all the different platforms together, or API's, or PHP, or Java scripts, or sprints, or all these other things that inevitably you have to worry about when you go down the path of customization. Customization equals expensive and difficult. Just know that.

So bottom line, there are cheaper, easier platforms, but they don't have enough features to do what you want. And usually, you're going to run out of scope, and then you'll have to upgrade. So my advice is just go to 10XPRO.io, start a trial, thrash it, give it a good workout, attend John's trainings each week, ask the support whatever questions you want, go through the academy training, which tells you all the stuff - how to build your first list, how to get your first customers, how to write your sales offer, it's all there, and be amazed, right?

And then go and listen to like 10 or 20 [case studies](#) on my own podcast where people have had success by skipping the whole tech nightmare, or the control problem that could inevitably happen if you build on someone else's platform. And trying to use tools that aren't really built for communities can be difficult.

I mean, some people use [Slack](#) or whatever. I actually started my first forum on Basecamp. But it wasn't really designed for that. So it's compromised in other ways. So there you go. That's my recommendation. I don't want to get bogged down on it.

I'm cautious asking John to have input on this because I actually think John could talk for the next month on the topic of websites, just to say that we have had many, many episodes on topics around [website building](#). But if you've got a sort of paragraph or so you want to throw in there, John, just when it comes to the site, the build.

John: Yeah, I think it's very important to realize, and I can see that from our members, right? So yes, answering your question, you can pick any platform you want, go for whatever you want. The reality is that the most successful members, the most successful people online, most of them, they actually don't do any of the setup, using the platform, they don't do any of that.

Why? Because as an online entrepreneur, that's what we call doing bad work. You're wasting your time, you're doing bad work, you're doing stuff that you should not be doing. And all that success will be bought. You James, all of our successful 10XPRO members, they don't do bad work, they do good work.

They focus on the marketing, they focus on creating awesome content, they focus on solving problems for their members. They don't focus on wasting time trying to find the right plugin, or this plugin is not working, I need to find a solution. Let me look at forums and find out what people are saying. Let me contact this chat support because my thing just broke. They don't do any of that.

And that's our mission with 10XPRO, making your life easy, so you can focus on doing good work. Now if you don't want to use 10XPRO, that's okay, use whatever you want. But I highly recommend that you find a solution that will make it easy for you to do what you're supposed to do, which is none of the tech stuff. You're not a tech support person. You're an online entrepreneur, you're an online marketer, and you shouldn't be doing any of the tech stuff.

So our mission is that, let us do the tech boring stuff. Let us build on the features that you might ever think of. And I'm sure that we have so many that you probably don't even realize that you can do these things in 10XPRO. So we do all that. You just focus on your business. That's my mission. That's my goal. And if that's interesting, awesome. If not then totally cool. No problem.

James: Cool. There you go. Put a bullet point on that.

When it's time to launch the thing

Step four is launch. And this one, oh my god, I mean, there are entire memberships built around this concept where this is the focus, and they're students of the launch method. I even dedicated a chapter in my book to explaining how stressful a launch can be.

Just in summary, what I've seen happen over and over again is people put a lot of effort into their launch, maybe it doesn't go as well as they thought. They have a big stress load, all that cortisol and adrenaline pumping, maybe not a big financial gain, all the money goes back out anyway. And the cost they just hocked their house for, and the launch team, and all the bits and pieces they needed to get it going. And then affiliates and everything else, and the ads, sometimes they lose money, and it's very stressful.

I much prefer release. That's my favorite way to launch. But if you do want to do a launch, there are guides around that. I know John can teach you how to do a launch. I've got some material on launching inside SuperFastBusiness. There's a book called Launch. So the launch part is fairly easy. But this is essentially saying, Okay, you've got your offer up, it's on the website. Now you need to let people know about it.

Now we're going to cover that in a future episode. So I don't want to go deep on this topic. I just want to say that step four, you have to let everyone around the world know that it's out. But I will say that for me, your email list is really a number one go-to place. If you can't sell your membership to your email list, then I'm pretty concerned that you're going to do a great job by running a lot of ads or pumping people through a three-hour webinar or whatever, or having affiliates spread the word.

If you can't convert through your own audience, then don't go too much broader than that. So do a release. Now, as John said before, he doesn't like the word beta. I don't either. Beta program means crap program, it means crappy first version of the program. But you could call it a pilot. Okay, you could call it a pilot program.

John: Founding members, things like that.



James: Yeah, get some foundation members in there and get it all moving and working, so you know what you've actually got. And one thing I can tell you is year after year, your membership will never be the exact same membership. It'll change when you get different members, it'll change when you change, it will change when the market changes.

I've had a thousand different versions of my membership over the last 12 years. It's fascinating. It's this incredible Petri dish. But what hasn't changed is that stable, recurring six-figure income every single month, for over a decade. And that's why I love memberships. So the launch, what I'm saying here, is definitely, you've got to let people know about it. But so much more of running a successful membership is after the launch.

So I want to get into step five. I will just ask you, John, do you have anything else on the launch? Or do you think we're good?

John: I think if there's one important element that a lot of people forget, and you can call it whatever you want - launch, release, whatever. But the bottom line is, like you said, we need to let people know about it. A mistake that some people make is that they just believe, Okay, I'm going to build this thing, and then I'm going to tell anybody who probably has never heard of me before about it. That is a mistake.

What we need to do is to offer this as the next logical step of continuing their education or getting more results. So how do we do that? There needs to be a first step before that, that you can do in multiple ways - social media, YouTube, content, podcasting, guest appearances, whatever. The goal is to get people to know you, like you, trust you, before they even come to your sales page about your membership site.

You should be providing value to people before you open the doors. Because now they're like, Okay, I know James. Yeah, he told me about this cool tip before. Yeah, he's a cool guy. I'm interested in this. Oh, he's telling me via email that his new membership site is open. Let me find out about it. Yeah, that sounds interesting. It's for me. I'm going to buy.

But if you just tell someone who you never met before, who has never heard of you before, Hey, I have this membership site, it's 20 bucks per month, and you can learn this and that, they're not going to buy, because they have no idea who you are. So we do need to provide value before. And that's why we can talk about any funnel, any campaign.

But at their very core, every campaign is the same. You provide value beforehand, and then you open the doors to your offer, and you tell them more about your offer in different formats that you want - that can be video, can be a long sales page, a webinar, it can be a sales letter, whatever.

But bottom line, we're telling them about the offer after we provided value up front, and then the guys who are ready will take the next step to get even more results, to get even more results. These are important keywords, more results than they got before. And that's it. So keep that in mind. And then we can talk about many types of campaigns and funnels.

The importance of continuous improvement

James: Yeah, nice. Okay, so step five is to tune your membership, like a car. We service our car, we service our computer, we need to keep maintaining this thing. Wherever you start is not where you're going to finish, we've established that before. So you've got paying members, they're buying your offer, whatever you use to get people there and to buy is working. Now it's time to make some tuning.

So think of it like a locomotive running along, you've got to maintain this thing, you've got to keep looking for innovation. When [I quit my job](#), I made a commitment to myself that I will promise to keep innovating, because as Peter Drucker said, Business is about marketing and innovation. If you don't keep innovating, you will die.

Just for context, when I started membership sites, Facebook did not have Facebook groups. Can you imagine how strong my membership had to be to survive and repel the big threat of every single marketer on the planet has a Facebook group, except for me.

John: And me.

James: The only Facebook I've got is a group for the Maldives mastermind. And that's just because it's the easiest platform to share pictures, and there's only 12 people in it. So just for accuracy there. You know, go and change your advertising campaign, go and change your onboarding, change your usability.

I'm making changes all the time. Here's a couple of changes that I've tuned up for SuperFastBusiness as an example. I'm using a lot of Loom videos. I'm making videos for my members and putting it into their private coaching. So I listen to them, I make some notes, and then I make them a video.

So it's like we have this asynchronous coaching scenario. They can see me, hear me, and I'm speaking specifically to them. That's a super high-value solution. I've also installed it on my telephone, so I can easily make them stuff wherever and paste it into their membership.

Another thing we've done is start pods. We now have 10 pods inside SuperFastBusiness, of groups of two, three, or four. And that's where members huddle together and help each other. No matter what plan they're on, whether they're on standard or intensive, they get together. So let's say, John, you and I are in a pod, and our pod would be to dominate the globe for membership solutions.

You know, we do that already. We meet every single week. And we either record content, or we talk about how we're going to grow the business and how we can make it better for our customers. And we fine-tune things. So you've got to do your tune-ups. You can't just set it up.

There used to be this thing with memberships, and I just wanted to spill this now, where you would go into a weird little market like trout fishing, or triathlon running or whatever, you set up some autoresponder for five years, and you put a little ugly sales page up, and you sell it for 10 bucks a month.

And people sign up and then it just automatically sends them an email for the next five years until they stop. And that was a micro membership sort of business model. This was popular in like the late 2006, 2007, 2008. Maybe there's people out there killing it. But I think that's kind of old-fashioned now. And it's unlikely that that's going to be the way forward now, especially with people really interested in video.

People are very, very much more interested in usability, people want to be able to access the membership from an app, people are wanting more than just an email from the person they're investing with. So think about how you can tune it up. If you've got any tune up tips there, John, by all means, contribute, and then we'll move on to the next step.

John: Yeah, it's all about, like we talked about before. Let's say you have your first founding members, like I said, you need to find out, what is it that they like? What is it that they don't like? How can you make it better, and you will get your ideas from your members, usually, your paying members, which is the only thing that matters.

Your partner doesn't matter, your business advisor doesn't matter.

James: Your mom.

John: Your mom. Your social media friends don't matter at all. The only people that matter in the world are your paying members. I only listen to 10XPRO.io members. I couldn't care less about anybody else. And if I have a member that tells me, Hey, this will really help me do this. Ah, let's do that. And that's it.

And you will get ideas well from your members about what is it that they want. How can you help more people? What else should you do? Should you start doing live event calls? Should you start doing pods? Should you start doing, I don't know, a social wall like we do in 10XPRO? Whatever.

You get ideas and then you decide, Yeah, it's worth my time. I like that. I enjoy doing that. Let's do it. It's going to help more people and that's how you grow. Because the next job after the previous step, you've got people in, now your job is to make sure that they stay, they stay for the long term. That's your job within a membership site.

James: We'll definitely be covering that. And also, a big shout out to my mom, definitely one of my founding inspirations and had a heavy hand in my creation. And also she listens to the podcast, so I want to make sure she knows all that support. But yeah, when she's going to give me advice on what's right for my business, which she wouldn't anyway, but you have to factor in, is that the right person to hear it from? Because they're biased. She loves me, and she's going to say things that make me feel good.

John: Yeah, it was just a metaphor.

James: Of course. So it's all good, Mom. The next thing is, gosh, I'm just thinking about what you said there, there was a really important point. But it was about hearing from your members. Now, as I've been using 10XPRO, I've noticed things that I think would make my platform better. And I talked to you about it as the founder, and some of those things you've implemented into the machine and made my life easier.

You've given me some features that make it more powerful. Especially, I'm thinking about reporting features, and about some of the nuances in the social wall, how that works, for example, and the way that the usability happens. And that's great, that's a responsive thing.

I've been a member of other Software as a Services before where I might make suggestions, and I might be a power user, maybe I'm not a superpower user, maybe there's much more important users than I am. But often they'll either not do it, or they'll want to charge a big development fee to do it. And they won't even respond in some cases. But I like that you're responsive.

And also, when you don't want to do something, or you can't do it, or it doesn't make sense, you're very clear about that, that that could be supported later if there's more people who need that thing. But you have to think about what's right for the bulk of the community. And I like that, too. It's clear on what we do, what we don't do.

But for the most part, I think you've actually implemented everything that I've asked for. So that's good, having a partner who is advancing the machine, like you're not sitting on your hands, like you've got this machine. It's continually evolved since the beginning. And you have full-time developers on staff who are just cranking out updates and development that we don't have to worry about, which I like as well. A lot, actually.

John: Yeah. I mean, that's part of the fun. That's why it's so fun.

This is where the magic happens

James: Step six. This is sort of the magic stuff, the automation. Step six is automate. So we're thinking about what things we're doing manually that we can start getting some assistance with, and there'll be a few things there. And it could be a combination of software, or human automation. And what do I mean by that?

I mean my team, my magical team of amazing team members, do a lot of the functions behind the scenes for my membership. When people join, they're checking usernames, they help people change credit card updates, they collate newsletter things and put them into posts, they send out emails, they take my raw materials.

Like I did a training today for SuperFastBusiness members. They will take that, and process it, and turn it into a transcript, and put it in the membership, and then tell people about it in the news, and then email it. That all happens without my involvement. That's automated from my perspective. And I'm just paying a maintenance fee for my team to be able to do all of those things.

So that's about making your life livable, like what can you stop doing? and I used to do a lot of that stuff manually. I used to do everything, like absolutely everything in the beginning. And then over time, I transferred the tasks out. I either get a software to do it, or I get a human to do it. But either way, it's automated.

And of course, if you can delete something, that's even better, but payments and stuff, this is where you find a big problem with things like Facebook groups, where nothing talks to each other. At least now when someone joins my membership, they pay, they'll be sent user logins, they'll receive a welcome video, they will get some onboarding follow-up, they'll be integrated into the coaching calls, if they're an intensive level, and things will run smoothly. And that's what you want.

And even if they stopped turning up, you can automate things like that. And we'll cover that more in the retention stuff. If they want to change something from administration wise, like upgrade a plan, or change down to a lower plan, then those things can all be set up by having helpdesk and people to support that.

So that's really where you get a more mature membership, and one that becomes livable. So don't worry if a lot of the stuff's manual upfront, except for the website stuff, because if you do that, you're mad. But in terms of just working out your offer, and listening to your customers, and delivering content, and following people up, that might be a little bit manual at the beginning, but over time, make a list of every task you're doing and then you start to get other people to do that.

John: Yeah, because the goal is to build a business. And you might think, well, yeah, we all know that, but most people don't know that actually. And a lot of people who might get a lot of sales, they still don't have a business. They have a job. They built a membership site that is actually their job now.

In fact, doing everything. In fact, trying to do everything. That's not a business, that's a job. You just created a job for yourself. That's great. But ideally, we want to transition to a business where we're going to have a team, we're going to have other people doing the different things. And you want to be able to build something where you can actually remove yourself, if it's possible, where you can remove yourself, the business doesn't need you anymore.

You're just the thinker. You're planning everything, and you're only watching what's going on. This person is doing that, that system is handling this, everything is working perfectly without your involvement. You can be at the famous images, autopilot income, living at the beach, but ideally, you want to be just wherever you want to be - at the beach, or wherever, having your phone, and you know that everything is running, people are doing their job, the systems are communicating with each other, sales are coming, traffic is coming. That is what a business is.

And you want to be in a position where maybe in the future, because you are now removed from the business, you could sell that business to whoever you want. And that's it. So that transition is very important to think about. And that's why creating processes as you go along is extremely important.

Even if you don't have someone, you're not ready to hire someone, it's very important for you to write down whenever you're doing something in your business, create a document, write down step by step how someone could do it, because that's what will help you hire someone and say, Read these documents, and just do the steps of that document. When these things happen, follow the steps in that document. As you do that, then your business will finally become a real online business.

James: And then you'll be ready for step seven. You're ready for step seven?

John: Let's do it. Let's do it. The last one.

Now you take things bigger

James: Okay, scale. This is where you crank your site up, right, the thing's working, you've reduced the amount of work you're doing, you know your offer's attractive out in the marketplace, you've got a body of customers who are giving you this goldmine of information, feedback when they leave, feedback when they join. It's taken on a life of its own.

This is beyond just tuning or optimization. This is about sort of radical innovation. How do you find a big nest of potential customers and tap straight in? And how do you add a whole new thing like adding a podcast or turning on a big traffic campaign? Like for me, in this year, I've really started running a lot more ads.

I'm getting a lot of people say, I've seen you on my YouTube or whatever. I've even seen myself on a couple of pages where I've visited, giving away my book or the challenge. That's new. That's the scaling thing. I'm putting budget behind building my audience, making more offers, having more members come in. It's just really effective.

So we start scaling it up. And hopefully, the site's strong, and it's not going to break, your capacity to deliver is well thought out and planned. And you can just keep lifting it up. And I'm going to go deeper on that in a future episode. I really just wanted to keep this as more of a broad overview of the seven steps.

What to do after listening

So the action steps here would be, basically, get ready to do a little bit of work. So some of these things, depending where you're at in the journey, if you're just starting out, you've now got a roadmap for what you're likely to need to do as you go through that evolution of a membership site.

If you already have a membership site, give yourself a little honest assessment. Where do you think you're at in that zone? Where do you need the help? The good news is, I've got training on the subcomponents of this, and we're going to be talking about this in future episodes. So there's more stuff coming. But this was the overview.

And you can get help from John at 10XPRO.io, with the platform and with his coaching, and of course at SuperFastBusiness.com, we have our membership there. And if you put some time in your schedule to really work your membership, this is a replacement for a job. This is a better income stream than many other business models for some of [the reasons we talked about before](#).

If you're hating your agency right now, or you're finding your ecommerce margins too slim, or you built a YouTube channel, but they decided they don't want you to participate anymore, and you're out and about, then membership model, that might be the way to go.

This is Episode 845 at SuperFastBusiness.com. We transcribe our episodes, so you can go and get that. If you know someone who you think should be doing a membership model, please refer them to this episode, send them a link, give it a tweet, whatever you do, it's always appreciated. Tag me, [James Schramko on Instagram](#).

And I want to say thanks again, John, for coming along and commentating with me on this interesting business model. And we've got many more episodes to unfold. In fact, in the next episode that you and I talk about, we'll be talking about what you need to actually create for your membership.

So we've got the high-level view, but we're going to go in a bit deeper, and so like, what do the actual bits look like? What are the deliverables? So that's what we're going to go into next. Thank you so much for coming along today.

John: Thank you for having me.

James: Yeah, there you go. That was a lot of fun. And this is episode 845. We'll catch up in a future episode.



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