



Turning Your Skill Into a Membership - Case Study

That ability you have could be the catalyst for a paid membership. Be inspired by Robin Nolan, gypsy jazz guitarist and owner of a community founded on his passion.





Robin Nolan

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is Episode 794. We're talking about membership sites today. For that, I've brought along a special guest, Robin Nolan. Welcome to the call.

Robin: Great to be here, James. Nice to see you, nice to meet you.

James: Yeah. It seems like we were only kilometers apart earlier on in the year when our mutual friend, [John Lint](#), came over to Australia to visit me and some of his family, and evidently visit you as well in the neighboring suburb to where I live. So, I'm sure we'll cross paths one day.

Robin: Yeah.

James: But John keeps telling me about what you've been up to with your membership. I think it's a really interesting story for our members.

We often talk about topics such as memberships, the lifestyle that you can get with a membership, but also the real stuff, like what actually goes into running a membership. And one of the most important things I hope we can touch on today is retention and how to actually keep people in the membership.

So let's just set this up with where things are at for your membership in a moment.

Born and raised with music

But to get there, of course, we have to go way back. We have to go back to Vietnam, you were born to a musician parent, you started playing guitar when you were about six years old. You've gone on to fall in love with a certain style of guitar playing, which I hope you'll share some information about because I hadn't really heard of it before I came across your material.

So why don't you just give us the sort of short version from that sort of early years of guitar playing, learning this particular style, to where you've ended up having a membership? Because I think a lot of our listeners are going to fall somewhere in that spectrum. And then we can get them up to speed with what your membership is doing now and how that actually works for you.

Robin: Yeah, exactly. So like you say, I was born to musician parents, music was all about when I was growing up. So I was always playing guitar. I was going to make a living playing guitar in some shape or form. And, of course, as a musician, you envisage playing on the stage, and that's what we seek, and that's what we desire.

Playing the jazz of the gypsies

There was a moment when I fell in love with this music, which you mentioned, gypsy jazz, which is what I'm involved with now. I went to this festival in France and fell in love with this stuff. And basically, gypsy jazz music kind of originated in Paris in the 30s, 40s. And it was kind of spearheaded by this character called Django Reinhardt, who is a kind of mythical legend.

He was a gypsy, he basically reinvented the way that you play the guitar. He was incredible. And if you talk to any major guitar players today, they will cite him as an influence whether they can play like him or not, because it's pretty tricky music. But I was blown away by Django's music and seeing it in real life with his people, the gypsies, playing it in France.

So I knew what I wanted to do. I got that style of guitar, and we moved to Amsterdam. And at that moment, we didn't have any gigs. But we could play on the streets here in Amsterdam. So we made a CD. In fact, it was so long ago that we made a cassette in my bedroom in London. Came over to Amsterdam, we had 100 copies, went out onto the Leidseplein, which is the main square here, and sold them, amazingly enough, in one day.

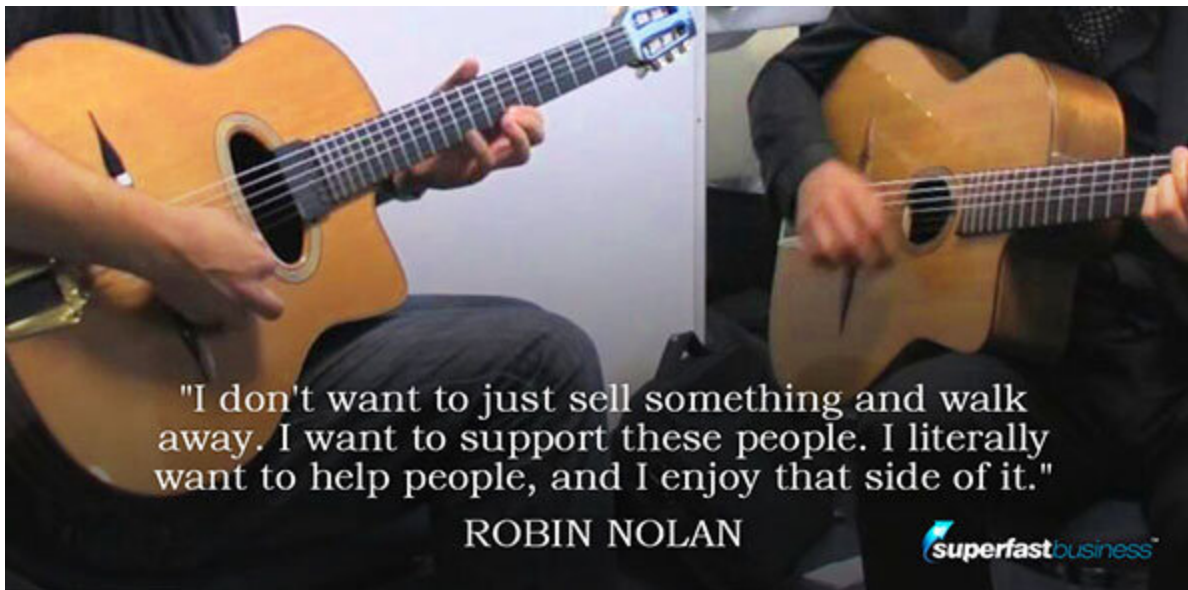
So suddenly, we had a lot of cash in our pockets, an audience, and so we basically never went back to London, and gypsy jazz has become my life. About the turn of the century, around 2000, I wrote these books, a series of song books on how to play this style. And that was also around the beginning of the internet or my experience with the internet. And they did really well. And they basically kind of, we sold a bunch at the time, a lot to America, and it kind of fueled a kind of resurgence in this style of music.

And it basically showed normal people that it was possible to play Django Reinhardt's music, and this is where you put the fingers and this is what you do. So that was a big part. And it's established my name in the educational realm of this thing. But of course, I'm a musician, I've been touring. That's what I do, and right up until March in Sydney, which was the last time I played.

A musician making an online living

We did a retreat over in Melbourne, then we met John Lint, and since that time, I haven't played at all. I literally now make a living online. As a musician, that's quite an amazing thing to say. And it's real now, and the membership came about just less than two years ago, working with John Lint and the team over at [10XPRO](#), which has basically made this all possible, you know, I'm sure you'd agree.

And we started a membership because we had done previous standalone courses and digital things, which was kind of an extension of those books that I mentioned. And by the way, the membership came about by, I heard you on a podcast, you know, years ago, then talking about the concept of a continuity and that whole thing, and it really, it really struck a chord with me because I thought, this is perfect for me.



Because I don't want to just sell something and walk away. I want to support these people. I literally want to help people, and I enjoy that side of it. So the membership was a great structure to do that. And since March, like I say, we've really been kind of concentrating on the membership and all roads in our world lead to the membership, whether it's buying a book, or buying another course, or getting our free crash course, which is how we build our list.

All roads lead to the membership. And now it's growing, you know, it's not major, major, but we've got a great healthy bunch of characters around the world in the membership, who I tend to on a daily basis, rather like you do. And I do take a lot of influence from the way that you minimize your working day. And I'm able to look after these guys and make them happy in a personal way, and also have time for my kids and for the other things that I love. That's where I'm at today, James.

James: Isn't that great? When you were talking about making cassettes and then selling them, that was an early version of leverage; that is doing something once that you can then make money from. And a lot of what we do with memberships, I guess, might have been inspired from industries like the music industry, where you record stuff, and then you get to publish it and sell it.

Of course, the record labels usually keep a good chunk of it, and there's managers involved. But with the membership, you have a lot more control than you might have had through the previous sort of media channels, except for when you were on the streets, you know, selling cassettes. I imagine you had a lot of control, but distribution might have been more difficult. It's really like the modern-day version of having your own record label when you have a membership.

Robin: Absolutely. And I've never signed with a major label with the books, with the cassettes, with the CDs; we've always been in control of that, which is great. But like you say, you've got to play to sell. The membership is working day in, day out. You know, I wake up in the morning, I know what to do. I wake up, and I know that the mortgage is paid.

You know, I feel that security, which you would always talk about, which was possible from doing it this way. And it really suits my way of doing things really, because I do love the interaction with the guys and girls in the membership, you know.

James: I can see that. I had a little look at your membership to see how it operates. And I noticed a few things. But the camaraderie between the members and the way you're running it there, you've got a combination of the forum, or the campfire, and then you've got courses or tracks people can do.

Why it doesn't take a huge team

The thing that really strikes me about your business is how small the team is. And I imagine you can only achieve that because of the tools you've chosen. Because when I see people have larger teams, usually they're doing more complicated things, or they have more moving pieces. I imagine as an artist, it allows you to spend more time making music and talking to your customers about helping them play better, than getting under the hood with all the mechanical stuff.

Do you want to talk to us about the team size and what roles happen to run your membership? Because we have a lot of musicians inside my membership, inside [SuperFastBusiness](#). We've got guitarists, piano players, saxophone, bass guitar.

Robin: Bass players?

James: Yeah, they're everywhere and kicking ass. I just got a message from one of my customers; he just made more last month than he used to make in two years as an artist, and he did it while he was with his little kid. And the leverage is unbelievable. But I want you to give us a sense of scale, and what do you actually do on a weekly basis? And who else have you got in the team and what are they doing?

Robin: Yeah, so I'll get to me in a sec. Essentially, the core of the team is me and my best friend, basically, Jason Rogan. He's from New York. He also lives in Amsterdam. In broad strokes, he's the brains of the operation, and I'm the guy, the visible guy on camera who plays guitar. But saying that, he's the one who introduced me to internet marketing and then the whole thing. But I really enjoy the marketing side of it as well now, in a small way. So I do really enjoy that.

So he's behind the scenes. He's doing all the emailing, you know, all the work that goes into keeping a list and keeping everything going. And we do sell a lot of other products as well. And there's a lot of things going, a lot of moving parts that he does. So I'm on the other side of that. So I wake up in the morning, like I say, I'm logging into my membership. And I'm looking after the customers.

The other elements of the team, we have two guys in the Philippines, one who helps us with graphics, and one who helps us with websites. So Jason deals with them as well. And that takes a bit of work just to make sure they're doing what we want. And also, we have two marvelous ladies in Minsk, Belarus. They do all our customer service, all our emails, and Jason, again, liaises with them, to make sure everything's running smoothly.

And you know, five years ago or a couple of years ago, you know, I was clumsily answering emails or forwarding it to Jason, did you answer? You know, all that confusion, which basically takes up time, like you say, from playing guitar, which is what I want to do. I know you and a lot of people have great big teams. If you look at [Scott's Bass Lessons](#), I mean, that is the benchmark, of course, of a music membership.

But of course, the bigger you go, the more complex it becomes. And the more meetings you have, I'm sure, and the more this and that. So at the moment, I like this small team, which is, it feels very homely, and I feel very much in control. And like you say, it gives me that time to really love on these members, to really help these guitarists learn this style, and I'm doing that, and that is really helping with the retention and really helping grow this site.

You know, we're a few hundred members now, but the growth is there, and there's nothing to say that, you know, we could reach many, many more. So it's really exciting for me. And finally, with the membership, it gives me a clear role of what I do in a day.



James: Yeah, it's like, I'm sure this will end up as a tweetable. But it's okay to have a small, profitable business, you know, and a comfortable life. You don't have to set the world on fire with a monster-sized business. I've had plenty of great conversations with Scott as I helped him grow his membership.

And they definitely go through different phases. When you go through into the multiple millions, and you start working your way up to what will end up being an eight-figure business, yeah, you start hiring bigger roles. You know, you might have to have a Chief Technical Officer just to handle your tech. You'll definitely need a general manager or a CEO, and you start getting more corporate-y. And that's not for everybody.

Even my business is quite small. You know, my massive team, it's actually only seven or eight people now. We don't have a big team. But for the size business I have, it's a really efficient business model, because my whole team in the Philippines, I have contractors who help us with specialized things, and that's the beauty of it. We can just plug them into our [Slack](#) channel, and we can have help from experts on everything from [copywriting](#) through to [SEO](#), or [running ad campaigns](#), just on a contract basis.

The platforms that support the interaction

So you can mix and match what you need. But I like that you've been able to focus on your role. Let's just talk about the practicalities. How do you find operating the platform in terms of interacting with the customers? This is something I can truly relate to because I know I do over 1000 posts a month in my own community.

I'm updating members every day. I'm pretty hands on when it comes to operating my community. I do a lot of it from my mobile phone, and I use Dictate. And I've worked my way around the buttons to figure out the shortcuts.

In fact, you'll be very pleased to know there's a nice little hack coming for your membership that I asked them to roll out based on seeing how it works, and it's going to make your life probably 50 percent easier than what it is today. So I look forward to you enjoying that.

Do you use it from a desktop? Do you use it from a phone? Are you finding that it's easy to use, or did you have a tech learning curve when you started out with the membership?

Robin: A small learning curve, but it was really small. I kind of really quickly learned it for what I needed to do. I do a little bit of back end things. And I'm always curious about the members inside, and I look at the member list and some of the sales pages we do. But essentially, I'm working in the forum, which like, we call the Campfire, with the Gypsy theme. And I'm using desktop.

I'm also using the app as well, which John has rolled out. So we've taken advantage of the app with [10XPRO](#), and that's really, you know, you say a game changer. But you know, I use my phone a lot. And that means that I can do the majority of this, answering people and helping people, including posting photos and videos, which we do quite a bit, because it's music.

I do that from my phone, which is fantastic. I get notifications. I know what's going on in my forum. And I'm always there. I don't miss a post. So that's really user-friendly. And what was the other question you said, James?

James: I think you answered both about your learning curve and how you're actually using it. I like when you log in, you get that little instant stats. So you get a feel for the health of your business on a rolling average 30 days, I think that's great.

Robin: That really obviously keeps me motivated, to see the growth and to see the snapshot without getting too detailed. Obviously, there's all the expenses and all the things that go on. But that keeps me motivated, seeing the health of the business the last 30 days, last 90 days. It's very easy to access that info and understand it.

Facebook group versus private forum

James: Here's a question that comes up a fair bit, I want to run past you. Has there been any pushback from members? Or did you ever feel a need to have a Facebook group when it comes to running a community in a private environment? I mean, this is something I'm huge on. I've resisted the urge to have a Facebook group. I'm not a fan of losing that control or experience to some multinational that's going to, one day, potentially cause me ruin.

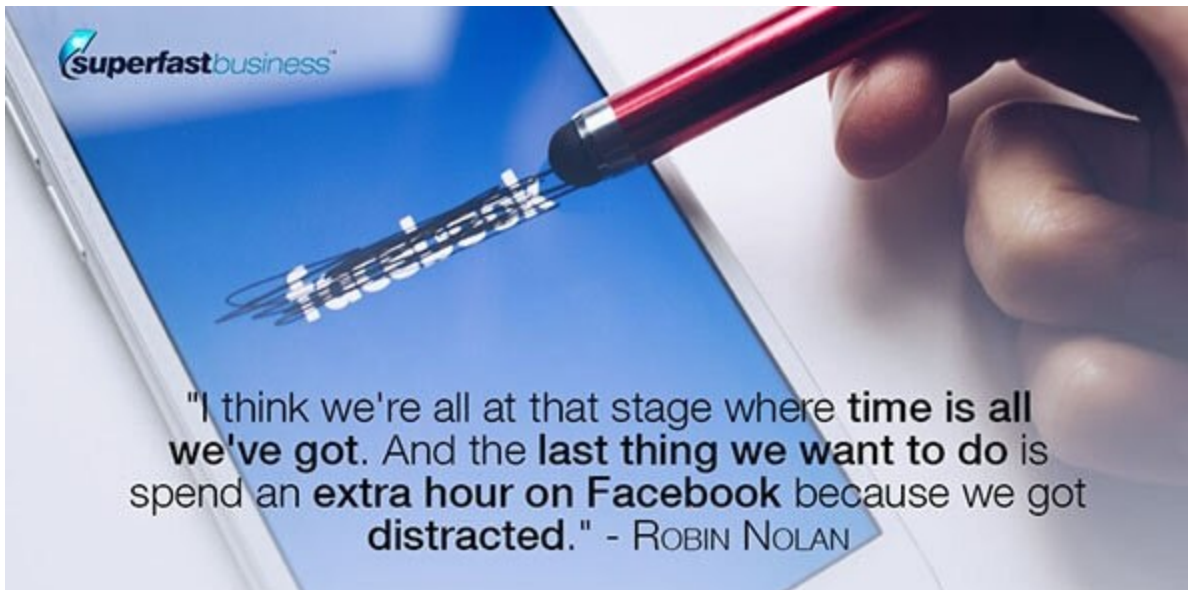
So I want you to just sort of address the topic of, why did you go down the path of having your closed environment? And yeah, did you get pushback? Or how are the customers accepting it?

Robin: Right. I had to resist the urge about the Facebook group, if I'm honest at the beginning, Because I knew that will be an instant, as Facebook works, engagement and things, but we absolutely went with the decision to use the forum capability in 10XPRO. And of course, and it's teething in the beginning stages, you get a little bit worried because of the amount of people that are in your membership and the engagements going on.



But once you reach that tipping point of enough members - and that's happening with us at the moment - we're at that stage where members are creating their own conversations, answering each other's posts, welcoming new members, which is, that's perhaps the most joyous thing to see, when another member will welcome a new member and say, "You're in the right place." That's pretty fantastic.

But I think as everyone are jaded with the Facebook experience, especially in this last period, where it's kind of, you know, the whole thing is starting to turn a little rancid, when you realize how you've been controlled. And I think that our customers and the guitarists in the forum and the Campfire, actually enjoy logging into the club, and then checking out the Campfire. Because they know that they will leave there with something, either something inspirational or an actual new chord or a lick, or a song or some answers to their questions, without getting distracted.



And I think we're all at that stage where time is all we've got. And the last thing we want to do is spend an extra hour on Facebook because we got distracted. So I think I speak for all my members, I really enjoy logging into the 10XPRO site. Because I know that I'm going to be productive and useful. I'm going to help people. I'm going to move my business forward and not get distracted.

So I'm quite passionate about that as well like you, and I know John is, about keeping it within the realms of the membership, and I think everybody else appreciates that now, too. It's not quite as flashy with the bells and whistles as Facebook. But I think also that's quite a positive thing as well, because the written word is powerful and people write meaningful posts in our forum.

And it's worked well enough for us to have conversations. It worked well enough for people to post videos to critique. And I think it's a fantastic thing that John's created, and it's really the heart and soul of our membership now.

James: Yeah, I think it's great when you get user-generated content, when they're contributing. It's like, you know, you called your membership a Campfire, the forum component. And that really speaks to the heart of the product you have.

Robin: Exactly.

James: I mean, your whole music is inspired by a campfire. So it's on brand, it's on topic; you really hit that well.

Who does the Campfire attract?

I'd love to know the type of user you have. Like, do you have a typical demographic for someone using that? This is really just addressing that, can a particular demographic use this technology? Because I get people with websites from menopausal women through to grannies doing arts and crafts through to young hot shots doing social media traffic. You know, what type of person is using your platform?

Robin: Yeah. We have young members, but in general, I think you're talking about guys our age. I'm talking for you there, James, our age plus. And it's not a hindrance. So luckily, in the last 10 years, these guys have learned how to upload a video, these guys have learned how to get something off their phone into the forum.

James: So it's probably Generation X, somewhere around that.

Robin: Yeah, exactly. So yeah, but it's not a hindrance with the demographic.

James: Great.

Robin: It works nicely.

The experience that makes people stay

James: What sort of things do you do to help a member have a great experience so they stay? Do they stay a long time? And if so, why?

Robin: Yeah, so the member experience, you know, I thought about that a lot. And again, gleaned a lot of ideas and inspiration from your teachings, and John's teachings. And it starts when they join. You know, that's the big moment where they've taken the plunge, they've got the credit card out, and they've made a decision to commit to a recurring membership, which, you know, you don't take lightly. That's quite a big decision.

So, you know, I think you talked about Bonjoro a few years ago. So I use Bonjoro. So I will send them a Bonjoro, with some, obviously, congratulating them and giving them a nice friendly message, and then with some clear instructions. And the clear instructions are, login, don't worry about all the courses, all the things, first thing you need to do is really say hi to the community, if you're up for that. Say hi, let us know what guitar you're playing. People would love to hear from you. So that's one thing.

And then the other thing in the Bonjoro, which I've started doing, which is, I think, having a good effect, is that, when a new member joins, when I see the back end of 10XPRO, I will immediately go into 10X, into the membership, and put a message in their inbox. Basically, the same kind of things, except a written message saying, "Great, John, you're in. This is going to be good. I'm here to help you all times."

And that, I think, starting the private message thread within the membership, is quite powerful. Because, for example, I've had people join before and they carry on emailing me or messaging me with Facebook Messenger, and they carry on that kind of contact with me. And by shifting it into the membership, it means it's another, you know, I'm not talking about I have to private coach them every day, but it's a little tie to me, which is only available as they stay a member.

So I begin that straightaway, that little message, which they see when they log in as a bubble, red bubble, the top right hand corner. They've got a message from Robin, and it solidifies the whole onboarding thing. Then our team in Minsk, the girls, Anne and Marina, will send them an email to help them with passwords, anything technical. And also, they'll include a link, a Calendly link, which is what I use for members. They have the option to have a 15-minute call with me. And so that's the onboarding.

Not everyone takes me up on the call, which is fine. But it's just the option, and the ones that do really will become the longtime members. So that's the initial onboarding.

You should always have something coming

And then, again, I learned it from you, James, something is always coming, right? So when they log in to the dashboard, there it is. Next live with Robin masterclass, this is the live element of what I do in the membership. There's one coming, and it looks great. You know, it looks like, oh, wow, that's something I really want to do.

James: To full credit, I learned that from [Dean Jackson](#) about 10 years ago. He said, the secret to a subscription business is you've always got to have something to look forward to coming down the pipeline. And I've been running live training now, I think I've done about 80 in a row, 80 months. There's probably over a hundred, because I do a Q&A now as well, every month, so it's probably well into the hundreds. And the recorded archive of that's pretty phenomenal in terms of what people can access.

But it becomes a powerful asset to look forward to that next thing. It's like, I'm looking forward to Formula One this weekend. And I'm looking forward to when the World Surf League starts again. I look forward to my Maldives trip all year long. You know, I know it's coming up.

I actually think, you know, as someone who has gone through life like you have - you know, you and I are at a similar age - you've experienced a lot, you've traveled a lot, you've got success in life, you've got things set up, we have to be careful to make sure that we still have things to look forward to. You know, I get inspired by this. I could spend all day just picking up my boards and thinking about the waves I'm going to catch on them. And making that experience for your members is critical. I love that, so much personalization there.

Someone's going to hear this, and they're going to say, "Oh, but Robin, that sounds like hard work." I actually had someone say this. There's this famous guru. He interviewed me, and he had big memberships, and he'd said stuff, and he's asking about my model and I explained that I log in every day to my membership and answer questions. And he's, 'Oh my god, that just sounds like such hard work. I'd hate to do that.'

But this guy, he's built a membership. Then let it run its course, stopped it, then started another one, and then stopped it, and started - this guy's had, like, six business models since I've been online since 2005. I've had one membership go for 11 years straight. So I know what I prefer. So in my case, I'm saying the answer for me might be, I'm okay with doing half an hour a day to maintain this amazing flywheel that's spinning.

The joy of keeping things spinning

But what about you? Do you ever find it's like, 'Oh gosh, I got to go and do my homework now. I got to do my work.' Or is it joyful?

Robin: It's joyful. Hand on heart, it's joyful. So I do those, Live with Robert. This is the live element of our membership. Like you, I do a monthly masterclass, which is live, people join me, I teach a lesson for about an hour. I back that up with a full-on, it becomes a course like yours. I put some backing tracks, some extra things, some PDF charts, and it becomes a standalone masterclass. So now there's 50 of those in the membership. So, you know, the value becomes more and more, the things that are in there.

Also, to mention your name again, you know, it's like, I was doing them every two weeks because I was gung ho at the beginning. It was like, every two weeks, I've got to do another, every two weeks, every two weeks. Suddenly there's 50. And then suddenly, there's a lot of stuff. So then, you know, the word [overwhelm](#) comes in.

And then I think to myself, well, wait a minute, because the two weeks were coming around a little bit, oh, it's every other week. And so I thought, I'll tell you what, I don't have to ask anyone. I took a decision. I said, I'm going to do these monthly, it's going to be a monthly masterclass. And sure enough, the last three months it's been every month. So there's something coming every month, and it's fantastic. It's worked great.

James: What was the thing of mine? Was it just making the change and not asking anyone about it? Because I'm known for that. Or was it less is more?

Robin: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Wolves coming after the sheep

James: I mean, I started doing it every week. The background to why I did live trainings is fascinating, because, considering I've had a membership for 11 years, I've seen it all. But I had a couple of over-enthusiastic members come in and want to start harvesting my membership. And maybe you've had this happen to you. But I don't think I've ever talked about this on a podcast.

They would start to sort of say, "Hey, I'm going to do a little, you know, who wants to get together?" And then they start running these little trainings. And then next thing, they think, 'Oh, this is an MVP!' Now they start putting up a sales page, and now, they're going to go off and do a membership on automation or a membership on copywriting or a membership on whatever.

And I'm like, 'Whoa, hang on a minute. These people, they're just into my paddock. They're wolves into my paddock, eating my sheep. And I've got to protect and preserve my sheep because, you know, I don't mind sharing some wool. Everyone's happy, but they can't take my sheep. It was an insulation technique. And I said, "Okay, I'm going to run a training next week." And then I put all the topics that these random bandits had gone off and done.

And for the first, however long, several months, every week, I did a session, and it was broken into sections where I covered all the topics that my competitors were trying to siphon my members off for. Then I'm like, okay, now I can step this back to monthly. And the reaction I got was, 'Phew!' This huge sigh of relief, 'Oh my god, now we can keep up with it.' I had some people leave, because they couldn't keep up with it, and they'd feel like they're paying for something they're not using. So this is very important.

The beauty of the supermarket strategy

As membership owners, we have to be careful not to put too much into it. And I love what you said before, it's spot on. Listen, there's a lot of stuff here, ignore it. You know, just tell me about what you've got going, and I'll show you what you need. And I call this a supermarket strategy.

We don't go into the supermarket and buy every item on the shelf. If we don't have a pet, we stay away from the pet food. If we don't have a baby, we stay away from the baby food. Like, you don't have to use everything in there. You just go in and get what you need today. Anyone in my membership, I tell them, if you don't know what to do, just tell me, just say, "Hey, I don't know what to do. And I will show you where to go." And that works great.

And that way, just like a supermarket, every person coming out has a completely unique shopping basket. I don't know how often someone would go out with the same order. But I reckon it's pretty rare. You've got the beauty of an all-you-can-eat buffet, but the facilitated, guided shopping. And that's probably why I've been successful with it.

Letting people go, taking them back, and keeping them

When people do leave, which, you know, obviously, somewhere in the world, a cat dies, and Robin goes to sleep crying his eyes out, but what sort of reasons do they offer?

Robin: It's the usual. I think everyone would be up to speed with these. It's either a financial thing, or it's a time thing. But I think the reason that they would give is a time thing, or an operation or something like that.

James: Usually, they'll have a, I'm not using it, or my situation has changed, which could be financial. In my case of business-related market, it could be, they've switched jobs, or they've got a different business model, or they've got so many good ideas, they need to just go and implement. So anyways, there's a lot of reasons. Do you have a policy on letting people back in?

Robin: Our team, if someone leaves and says they would maybe like to come up and start the membership again in a few months, then our team, Anne and Marina, will keep tabs on them, and expect their email when they want to come back in and kind of so they can start off on the same footing. So we kind of keep in touch, and we don't really have an exit strategy in mind.

I think we're putting all our energy into just the positives. You know, we're keeping people. I mean, there's people ticking over now for the third year. And that's great to see. There's another thing we've been doing since March, since 2020, and everyone jumped on Zoom. I know you started that Ask-Me-Anything call as well, which I never make, but I listen to the replays. I love the real questions from real people.

James: I love those calls. I get eight to 11 pieces of content out of those calls to put on socials. It's like a marketing content creation factory.

Robin: Yeah, it's fantastic. So what we started, like I said, everyone was jumping on Zoom. I didn't even know what Zoom was. So Zoom, oh, you get a group of people. You start a thing. Okay, well, let's have a club hangout. So we've all got time on our hands. And so I started a club hangout in May. And I had about, you know, a good majority. Well, I had about 50 people join the call, which is, you know, we're about 300 members. So that was a good bunch of people.

And then basically, at the end of the day, we've done one every week until now. And now this has become the ultimate something's coming, for the hardcore. It's an open mic, people prepare a piece of music during the week. It's given people a lifeline, a social lifeline to other people just like them, as people are stuck indoors. And it's something which I basically just moderate.

So I sit there like this and I'm like, 'Okay, welcome to the live hangout. This is going to be a great open mic, sit back over with a drink, relax. Raise your hand if you want to tell a bad joke. Ask about that annoying chord that you can't get. Or if you want to play a bit of music, this isn't Carnegie Hall. We're all here to support each other and send each other love and happy vibes.

And it's turned into this kind of like, really vibey, upbeat, fun hangout with a lot of laughs. And so these are building and this happens every Sunday now. And it's become a real mega retention tactic. I mean, I'm in that bucket as well, I'm looking forward to it every week as well, just like everyone else.

Dynamics surrounding a group

James: Two things on that. One is, what's happening there is you're taking advantage of group dynamics. And what happens when a group forms is you've got the forming part. And then there's the storming part, everyone's in the pissing contest to work out who's the alpha and who's the submissive. And then you go into the norming phase where they all sort of get to know who's who in the zoo. And then there's the performing stage. And the last phase of group dynamics is when the group breaks up.

So it's like summer camp, you know, you go to summer camp, you get to know all these people. By the end of it, you're best mates, you've been singing songs around the campfire, and then suddenly it finishes, and then you have to go home. And there's tears. Remember, everyone cries?

What you found is a way, it's like the anti-goodbye. That's why I was early on to forums and groups before social media. Like, I had my forum before there were Facebook groups, because I think this is just so obvious. This is what people want - the connection.

I'm going to tell you about a micro version I've been using, using the platform [10XPRO](#) in my [SuperFastResults](#) community, which is just one social wall with no content other than the posts. And there's no calls, there's no consults or any of that. But I started sending a desktop notification every weekend. I go and put a post and I say, "Hey, just tell me what you're up to this week." And then I'd push a desktop notification to that post, or just to the wall, and they land there, and they started updating it.

And then one week, I didn't do it. And they started posting, like, 'Hey, where's our notification? I'm looking forward to the update this week.' So it can work on the most micro scale. This is a commitment and consistency, a behavior setting that obviously is done for positive good. Like, it's very encouraging for me to get my members to come in, to be real and honest about their progress, and to get some focus on what they're doing next week.

Some of them post stuff like, 'Hey, you know, I just bought a whole bunch of plug-ins from Appsumo or whatever.' And I'm like, 'That's great, as long as you're a website developer. But if you're not, just curb that, and get back to the core.' And they're like, 'Thanks for pointing that out. That's a really valid thing. You know, I get caught up in the purchase.' So these things are really instructive as well.

So do you use desktop notifications?

Robin: I haven't used them yet. But that's definitely next on the list.

James: You just go into the booster. You hook it up once with this free Firebase thing. And once you've set it, you can then just send out whatever message you want to whatever page or whatever, you can have an action, like click on a link. It's unreal. And it's just, like, the power at your fingertips to be able to communicate stuff. Like, you could send one out, 'Hey, the get-together is starting right now.' Send that out and they'll pile in.

The technology that gets things done

Robin: Exactly. That's really great. Yeah, you mentioned technology before in relation with John's platform, 10XPRO. These lives that I'm doing, this live masterclass, just to let listeners know, I'm using my phone, right? So I schedule a YouTube Live, and then the link goes into 10XPRO, so then that's what the members see that's coming.

And then I literally put my phone on a stand and start the live. No extra phone, no extra camera, no extra things at all. And it looks fantastic, it sounds fantastic, and it goes straight into the membership. So just to let listeners know, there's nothing stopping anybody. It's not buying that mic. It's not getting that extra fancy camera. The iPhone 11 is great. The camera is good.

Another dimension that we've added now, doing a live, we started one last month is, again, it's the concept of not adding more stuff, more things you should be learning, more things you've got to keep up with. It's not broadening the dimension.

So we do a gig, you know? Gigs aren't happening this last six, eight months. So I thought we'd start a new series called Living Room Live. So I literally do a gig in my living room. Again, with my phone setup. We advertise it to the outside world at like, 10 bucks. It's a gig, which everyone wants to see. And it's complimentary to club members because I stream it inside the club.

So it's another dimension used in 10XPRO, which is easily done. You know, people get caught up with adding content and more lessons and more lessons. But it's kind of thinking of things a little bit outside the box, which basically keep that member coming back for joy, for enjoyment, for inspiration, not just the hardcore data.

James: Well, it's about experience is what you're describing there.

Robin: It's the experience.

James: I imagine you're going to get people want to join your membership, and they're not even that interested in the guitar. That sounds like a great subscription service for performances.

Robin: Yeah, that's right. And I've got old timers in the club, who are, you know, they're not going to be the next, you know, hot shot on guitar. They've kind of learned what they've learned. But it's transitioned into an experience, like you say, and a hangout or somewhere they can come and feel welcome. And it's worth what they pay every month to be there. And I'm making sure it is worth that. So, yeah.

James: I don't know if you've already done it, but you can definitely take one of those recordings and pop it into your cart abandonment sequence and say, "Hey, look, here's one of the weekly performances that we did recently, and that you've missed, but I hope you can join us on the next one." And you let them go through that. It's a great way to do that.

Robin: That's a great idea.

James: I'm an ideas man.

How about, how do you get customers?

How the customers come in

Robin: Yeah. So that's the challenging thing, right, for a membership. We started with selling standalone courses with the launch model. Great, put a lot of effort into it. It's a one-time purchase. Sold a lot. Great. So the membership has always been a challenge. Basically, our traffic comes from YouTube. So I do a fair bit of lessons, you know, at least every week, there's a YouTube lesson.

James: What's your channel called?

Robin: [Gypsy Jazz Secrets](#).

James: We'll link to it.

Robin: Yeah, yeah, sure. So we've got quite a big catalogue there on YouTube. We do use Facebook. I did have a period of doing lives on Facebook at least every week, got quite a large following on Facebook, which drives now to the membership. And we've been cultivating an email list over the years. And we give them content, we look after the email list every week. And now all roads, like I said in the beginning, lead into this membership.

We're doing giveaways. I know that you've talked about giveaways not being relevant to your market. And I think that's a good point. You know, join the club, get an iPad.

James: Yeah, generally, something that would represent the thing that a good buyer would be most interested in rather than just a random person on the street.

Robin: Yes, so we went the whole hog there. So the first prize is a \$3,000 gypsy guitar. And then there's a whole range of other prizes, which are practical, real solid, physical things that we'll ship to them if they win. The giveaway now, the last giveaway we did, is only for club members. So that was a transition we made. So it works two ways. Obviously, to enter the giveaway, you need to join the club. And if you're a club member, guess what, you got another chance to win a guitar. We've got another one coming.

We aim to do three or four a year. So that's another thing which is always coming. And sure enough on one of those Sunday calls, I announce the winner. Everyone congratulates them. And it's real. It's tangible. And it's got that win win, you know, we're promoting a guitar brand, we're keeping everyone happy, and someone wins the prize. So, giveaways worked well for us in the last period. And the prizes are completely relevant to gypsy jazz guitar.

James: Do you send out a membership? Like a free membership card with every guitar that's sold through the retailers?

Robin: No, we haven't done that. That's a good idea, of course. In years gone by, we do retreats, right? So we do four retreats a year in different parts of the world, a retreat is quite a high-end thing. So it's a couple of grand to attend a four-day thing. You'll get an annual subscription to the membership.

James: It's so easy to sell a membership off the back of. I bet you those people stay forever. Because if you go to a retreat for more than a few days, then you're going to fall in love with Robin Nolan. And you want to be around that environment forever.

Robin: Yeah. Yeah, I think you're right there. And there's a psychology in someone joining the membership on the back of something else, as opposed to just the naked, "Oh my god..."

James: It keeps the experience alive. It keeps it alive, instead of closing it. I met John Lint on the [Maldives](#) retreat, you know, and we formed a good friendship, surfing waves together for many, many years. So keeping that relationship alive is a big part of what memberships do. And do you do much in the way of paid traffic?

Robin: We use Facebook. We do a fair bit of paid advertising, not necessarily advertising the membership, but advertising something which, you know, we've just done a Black Friday special, we've got another course coming up next week. We do use Facebook advertising. We haven't done any YouTube advertising. But that could be something we look at.

And we have a crash course, you know, we have this thing which builds our list every day. You know, we're getting maybe 20, 30 leads through a relevant crash course, which will teach you your first chords in gypsy jazz, your first rhythm. And you just got to enter your name and email. So they get the crash course, and then they join our list.

And there's an upsell with that to a \$25 action pack we call it, which is relevant. They choose rhythm, soloing or repertoire. So it's a little bit on that premise of making a choice and then send. Actually, the action pack actually pays for itself. So that fuels the Facebook advertising. And basically, we get our leads for free that way.

James: It's called a self-liquidating offer.

Robin: That's it, James.

James: Do you send an email sequence to people who take the crash course but don't buy after the cart upsell?

Robin: Yeah, we do.

James: That's where I'm sure a lot of the sales will come. I've set up on my [10XPRO](#) at [SuperFastResults.com/30](#). I set up a Work Less, Make More in 30 Days Challenge. I opened that up, and I've had members going through - I think at the time of recording this, about 15 days in. But over that 15 days, they get really good exposure to a little bite-size idea each day. It's 100 percent free at the moment. That might change.

It's really interesting to see how they funnel through to the other products when they're redeeming coupons, when they do feedback. But I'm getting a lot of people say, "Hey, I love the platform. This is great." It's just so flexible. You can have those free front ends. I've got a free [Lifestyle Design](#) course. We're using different ways to display those.

Then I've got paid courses like the [Profitable Membership Business](#) course. It covers a lot of things we're talking about. It sits there, and a lot of people who buy that will end up joining SuperFastBusiness. If they go through the course and love it, and set up a membership, then they're going to be pretty hungry for the next stage.

It's great to think about your ecosystem. I like how you can interplay between external things, and then the membership, all still under one roof if you want. So it's very flexible.

Robin: That's right. And then I didn't mention, but we did a book with a publishing company on Amazon called Beginner Gypsy Jazz Guitar, which actually did really well. You know, it was number one in many countries. That book, apart from being an awesome book, it's kind of the first time we did a book that put QR codes in the book, which lead to a landing page in 10XPRO. And the book is basically advertising or giving tips from the membership, you know, so we've had members join from the book. So that works for us as well.

James: Wow. Do you have multiple books?

Robin: Yeah, we have multiple books. The song books that I wrote, like I said in the beginning, around 2000, we have like six of those. This latest book is the one that we're kind of pushing on [gypsyjazzbook.com](#). It's kind of a low-cost book on Amazon, but really gets people up and running.

James: I coach someone who's got a book. They got three books, and on their purchase button, I told them to put a bundle. When people click to buy, it pops a bundle. Like, it's an on-button offer that offers three books for a saving, and he's getting a 25 percent take. They're just going nuts. So you should have a six-book combo when they go to buy, any book. And you'll sell so many of them. It's ridiculous.

Robin: Yeah, yeah, true.

James: Let's just finish up then. Firstly, you better tell us where your website is. Because if we've got half an interest in guitar or Gypsy guitar, or just want to come and watch the Robin performance every so often, where do we go to buy?

Robin: Yeah, [gypsyjazzclub.com](#), [gypsyjazzclub.com](#). And then have a look, when you're next time on YouTube, just look at Robin Nolan or the [Gypsy Jazz Secrets](#) channel. And we have quite a cool Facebook page as well, [Gypsy Jazz Secrets](#). So that's where you'll find me.

James: You've done well with the naming. I often tell people when I'm describing a membership concept, I tell them to make a club. Make a club for your customers. And the campfire for gypsy guitars, just genius. So that's great.

Robin: I agree.

A quick sum-up

James: So let's just finish with a little recap of what we've talked about. And then I'm going to ask you what you're most excited about to close out on. So you've got a moment to think about that. But basically, what we've discovered, having a chat to you, Robin, which has been really, really interesting, is that you have taken an expertise, you've been able to build around you a small team, and using a good platform - you're using 10XPRO.io. - you're able to get leverage on your skill or expertise.

You're able to do it in a way that's easily accessible for you, you can maintain your gypsy lifestyle and travel in normal times, and you actually enjoy the work and your customers enjoy it and they enjoy the experience of using it. And through paying particular personalized attention to your clients, they stick around. It's a profitable venture for you.

The tech has been a dream. And you've got little things you can do within the system you've already got that we'll just tweak it, in that next stage. So I can imagine the next phone call you have with your business partner after this is going to be fun. And I look forward to hearing about the results you get from that. But what are you most excited about moving forward from here?

The future that Robin sees

Robin: Well, the future. Because the path is set now. And like I said, really, at the beginning, I know what I'm doing every day now. And if I do it every day, sure enough, things are growing in an organic way. So there's no flash in the pan. There's no sudden big this or that. But it's a really steady thing, which I really enjoy. So I'm excited about the future.

Also, I didn't mention, but I haven't played as much guitar as ever this last period before the membership, and I love playing guitar primarily, right? That's what I do. I wake up in the morning, I pick up the guitar. And having the membership, people are asking things which I don't always perhaps know the answer at the beginning, but then I'll kind of work it out for them. And I've learned something as well.

So I'm playing a lot of guitar and I feel myself improving as a guitarist, as a communicator, as an educator, as a teacher, and I just feel very positive about the way things are going these days. So I think it's excited about the future and the way it's going.

James: I think when you're in a position where you have a recurring wall of income coming every single month for aeons, you would sleep better at night. I know I do. You can observe people around you having a bit of a stressed-out time. But that doesn't have to be you.

My message for someone listening to this podcast, episode 794, where the full transcription will be available, and a cheatsheet of the main bullet points from this episode, is, you have the power now, more so than any time in history, to go and create something from either your expertise or any expert you can find who will license, sell or contribute with you. You don't even have to be the expert.

I mean, Robin's got a partner who's not a face of the business. So there's that role in this. The platform is out there. I mean, I know listeners are sick of me talking about [10XPRO](#), but it's just that good. So that's why I keep talking about it, because it was such a problem that we couldn't solve easily. You needed all these bits. You needed a team. I'm still stuck with all that stuff from the last stuff, but I just looked at my recurring 30 days for [SuperFastResults](#), and it is booming.

And that did not exist. Even what, six months ago that site did not exist in its current form, and it's come from nowhere. So even in a pandemic, I've been able to create something new and exciting that gets me looking forward to logging in. So get out there, create your own thing, and enjoy.

I hope to see you inside SuperFasBusiness. I hope if you're interested in guitar or gypsy guitar in particular, go and visit Robin. Let him know you saw this podcast or heard about it. And I look forward to our next catch up. It's been great to see you, Robin, and thank you so much for sharing generously on our podcast here.

Robin: Absolutely. Welcome, James. It's totally inspiring. Thank you.



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