

MEMBERSHIP **AUTHORITY**



RESOURCE CHEAT SHEET

Once you understand how membership sites work, you have your idea and you're ready to start making recurring income, all that's left is to actually start putting all of the theory into practice by creating your first membership site.

And to do this it can often help to use some of the various different tools and resources that the web has to offer. While few of these are absolutely required to build your first membership site, they can certainly make life easier and help you to grow more quickly while also reducing the amount of time you have to put in up front.

Keep this resource sheet to one hand and you'll always have easy access to everything you could need to get your site up and running. This will not only provide you with links to those tools and resources but also offer some quick references for common questions and checks.

Building Your Site

The most important tool for building any blog or website these days is WordPress (www.wordpress.com). This simply allows you to take the files that provide the framework for your site or blog and then upload them to your server. You can then log in and use these to create whole new designs and to implement different looks and themes as well as adding functionality through plugins.

There are numerous sites that provide hosting but a great place to start is BlueHost (www.bluehost.com). This comes with cPanel included, meaning you can install WordPress with a single click (and with no need to manually download and upload the files).

From here, you can quickly implement a new theme from WordPress' own theme store, or by visiting Theme Forest (www.themeforest.org) which has thousands of professional-looking themes both free and paid.

The other type of plugin you'll need is one that can turn your site into a membership site. These are easy to come by and three of the best are:

- MemberMouse (www.membermoues.com)
- Memberful (www.memberful.com)
- WishList Member (member.wishlistproducts.com)

Extra Tools

Some extra tools you might use:

Optimize Press (www.optimizepress.com): This is a plugin that allows you to make easy sales pages. What's more is that it can also be used to create membership sites – killing two birds with one stone!

Optimizely (www.optimizely.com): This is a tool that can be used for split testing. So you can create two versions of your sales page and see what works best.

Autoresponders:

- Aweber (www.aweber.com)
- GetResponse (www.getresponse.com)
- MailChimp (www.mailchimp.com)

You can use these not only to build a list to promote to but also to enhance your service – for example by having an email course for example.

Also interesting is that many ecommerce platforms allow you to build membership sites, including the likes of Shopify (www.shopify.com) and Volusion (www.volusion.com). Volusion also doubles up as an autoresponder and more.

Ideas and Options

There are many types of membership site. These include:

- Content mill – This means that you are going to be offering blog content behind a pay wall and then ‘drip feeding’ new posts etc.
- A newsletter or ezine – Make sure this has high production values and that you are offering some kind of measurable value. A good way to do the latter is to write an industry newsletter for instance and to update visitors with the very latest news and tips – this way they can see your product as helping them to increase their ROI.
- Forum membership – If you can create a community that discusses information that can’t be found anywhere else, then you can again charge a lot for membership. Communities are great at promoting themselves too and this can create some very loyal customers/fans. They can also generate their own content!
- Physical products – Numerous physical products can work well for subscription sales techniques. There are a surprising number of online membership services that work like this and have been very successful.
- Courses/Lessons – Lessons and courses lend themselves very well to being delivered in instalments.
- Software as a service – This might mean access to a set of tools or a web app.
- Stories/Entertainment – You can sell a subscription to web episodes or comic strips if you are creatively minded! This is less common but can still work!
- Evergreen membership site – This is a site that has a set amount of content and doesn’t need any more. This is the most truly passive of all these models!

Examples of Membership Sites

Sometimes seeing examples of successful membership sites can be very helpful. Here are some good ones:

The Times (www.thetimes.com): This is a UK newspaper that now charges access to its content online. The paper is always offering new ways to interact with it and provides a great service all round.

LongeCity (www.longecity.org/forum): A great example of a 'subculture' that has become big online and works well as a membership program. This forum is for people interested in extending their lifespan and improving their intelligence!

Reflexion Yoga (www.reflexionyoga.com): A simple site that teaches yoga for a price. Very nicely presented and a great all-round tool.

Hashtag Nomads (www.hashtagnomads.com): This is a community and resource for digital nomads that offers a lot for people who live that lifestyle.

Lumosity (www.lumosity.com): IQ training and other intelligence tests and exercises. Also comes with a membership aspect.

Headspace (www.headspace.com): Headspace is a website and an app that provides lessons in guided meditation and has a very effective subscription fee setup.

AIDE: This is an app rather than a website but shows how you can think outside the box. This is an app that allows users to program for Android on an Android device and also comes with some lessons.

Loot Crate (www.lootcrate.com): This is a great service that provides curated gifts for comics fans and gamers. This shows how a membership site can incorporate physical items.

Remember – you can take influence from multiple of these!

Further Reading

www.smartpassiveincome.com – A great general blog for internet marketing.

<http://www.conversion-rate-experts.com/seomoz-case-study/> - An excellent and highly relevant case study from Moz.

http://www.mequoda.com/articles/subscription_websites/what-do-the-best-membership-websites-have-in-common/ - A quick rundown of some things that the best membership sites often have in common.