



# Creating Your Membership Community

by Chris Ducker

(Collated from an Interview with Robbie Kellman Baxter)

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## Starting A Membership Community

Before I got Robbie Kellman Baxter to come on the show, I didn't peg anyone as an 'expert' in building membership communities.

Well, Robbie has experience ranging from companies like Netflix, Yahoo!, Oracle, and eBay...

So it looks like we got the right person!

You'll want to open up your notebook or fire up your favorite note taking program for this one. Be sure to take the lessons, techniques, and strategy and start to brainstorm out what it looks like for you.

Use this PDF be a starting point, reference, and guide as you build your online membership platform. Report back on your learnings at [www.chrisducker.com/105](http://www.chrisducker.com/105).

### Where to Begin

#### Have A Clear Value Proposition

Most business owners walk around saying "I sell cars." Instead, we would communicate our solution better by saying, "I'm going to get rid of all the worries you have around transportation."

As entrepreneurs, it's easy to see why we love the recurring membership model so much... But it's important to put yourself in the shoes of your target customers.

Putting it another way, ask why would your *customers* love your offering.

#### Here's some reasons why they may love it:

After physiological needs are met, (like food and shelter) we want to mitigate risk in our lives.

On top of that, we want to feel like we're apart of a social community, get recognized, and have the ability to achieve our full potential.

Which are you providing? and how can you take care of that need for them?

Robbie used Crossfit as an example. When you join, Crossfit guarantees you'll get into shape... just show up three times a week.

**Some other advantages:**

- Crossfit members have a feeling of 'belonging'
- No one can leave the gym until everyone finishes
- All Crossfit members compete against each other, so members achieve status
- When you don't show up to the gym, members call to see if you're alright when you don't show up—not the coach

Crossfit fulfills *all* human needs.

How can you model this in your membership community?

## **Marketing Your Online Membership Community**

Start at the bottom

These next two parts are critical to moving forward:

1. Make sure you have a relevant promise to your audience, and
2. Be sure to know *exactly* who those people are

Robbie calls this the "mission/market fit."

**You should know:**

- The value your audience sees
- The places your audiences hangs out (in-person and online)
- What message will resonate with them to get them to try your offering

Knowing these items can help you form a solid hypothesis, and once you're confident in it you can focus on the pipeline.

Start with creating your offering and “mission/market fit”. Then go person-by-person to make sure that your hypothesis is correct.

Go to the people most interested in your offer to see if they understand it. This will help you experiment with different aspects of your offer.

Once they're interested and understand, sign them up!

THEN outbound marketing starts...

## **Outbound Marketing**

As you move to this stage, the stakes get higher.

If you bring in the wrong person to your funnel, you end up spending time and money to recruit, but you don't have time to recover the cost.

A smarter approach: Word of mouth.

When you're building your membership model, think about how you can have existing members to do your marketing for you.

Think of how Hotmail exploded overnight: They included a little footer in each email offering a free account.

It went gangbusters!

How can you apply this to your membership community?

Remember, we get held in high regard by our peers when we make a recommendation that our peers like, so referrals are key.

## **The Numbers**

### **Breaking Even**

You have to know your numbers! That way you can calculate if it's going to be worth the effort.

What are your costs? and what's your time worth?

If you had a regular job making \$100,000 a year, but decided you're going to work half of the year on your job and dedicate the other half of the year on your business. That's \$50,000 worth of your time—broken down.

Other items to know:

- how much you're going to charge
- acquisition costs
- churn (more below)

“If you want to get rich quick, go digging for gold. Don't start a membership organization.”

### **Keeping Churn To a Minimum**

Passive Churn - when someones didn't mean to cancel—but it happened, and they didn't love you enough to go through the effort to resign up. This happens often when credit cards expire, miss the emails or forget, and then you get canceled.

Check into services like [Zorora](#) to help reduce this.

Sometimes 'life' happens to members in your community, take this into consideration. Giving your members a phone call, and giving the right members a break in the right situation can be a great way to handle this.

Active Churn - this is when people intend to cancel. You want to avoid this! To be proactive and prevent this, track engagement data! If they stop showing up, you should call them.

Rule #1 - follow up if you see a change in engagement

Rule #2 - when they come to cancel you need to give them some options, understand their issues, and see if you can win them back. In some cases it's worth it to give them a better deal. Other times you just need to listen, apologize, or fix what was frustrating them.

## On-Boarding

The first 30-60 days are mission critical to building a thriving community of members who come back for more.

During this period it's critical to deliver value and give your community a quick taste of the results they're looking for.

Tips for making this happen:

- Gamify the membership experience in the first 30 days
- Give status to people in your group to veteran or your most involved members and enlist their help to team them up with your newer members. Think: accountability
  - It's easy to focus on the least common denominator and newest members
  - Target your marketing at the 80%
  - Having mentors and peers involved for long periods of time can end up helping attract new, highly qualified members

In the end, it's all about the value you bring, not necessarily the 'stuff' you offer. You'd be surprised how many people will pay for, and value access.

The only way to know is to measure and keep track of your community.

What kind of membership community do you want to make, and results are you looking for?

Head over to [www.chrisducker.com/105](http://www.chrisducker.com/105) and leave your thoughts now!

Best,

Chris Ducker

## Next Steps...

I often get asked “what’s the best way to start my website?”, and honestly, it’s no different for a website as it is for a membership site.

My answer is always the same... Taking action!

Blogging has opened more doors for me than any other activity as an entrepreneur.

That’s why I use, trust, and recommend [BlueHost](#).

If you haven’t started your website, now’s the time.

Here are 5 (quick) Reasons Why You Should Start Blogging – TODAY!

1. Blogging helps you position yourself as an authority. Someone with something to say.
2. It gives you your own ‘home’ on the internet, without having to rely on other platforms.
3. Blogging is the perfect way to educate, inspire, entertain and create a community in your niche.
4. Blogging regularly is the main ingredient in creating a powerful personal brand.
5. It’s the first step in monetizing your experience and offering, as an online entrepreneur.

(This list could go on and on and on and on!)

Visit <http://www.chrisducker.com/bloggingtutorial/> to get your blog up and running in less than 10 minutes.

