



Callie: [00:00:00] Welcome to episode two of Behind the Membership. On today's episode I'm talking with Colin Gray from The Podcast Host and one of the things that Colin shares in this podcast is how his first version of his membership site didn't actually work and Colin's really upfront and open about what he actually did to pivot from his initial membership to his new successful membership that he's currently running. Your membership not going as well as you expect it is probably a lot of people's fear and it's great to see how Colin actually dealt with this and how he turned around to his benefit. Without further ado here's Colin.

Callie: [00:00:49] Today I'm joined by Colin Gray podcast host extraordinaire from The Podcast Host. Thanks so much for joining me today Colin. I'm not going to lie I'm feeling the pressure a little bit about having a podcasting expert on the show. But I'm looking forward to hearing more about your membership site.

Colin: [00:01:07] Not at all thanks for having me it's a pleasure to be here.

Callie: [00:01:10] It's great to talk with you. So I actually want to dive straight in. Can you tell us a little bit about your membership what it offers, who it's for.

Colin: [00:01:20] Yeah no worries. I mean it kind of I suppose it goes back to what we did originally really which was ThePodcastHost.com, so the website that I run. Which goes back five or six years now, we've been writing about how to podcast everything from, well it started out as a really geeky kind of equipment review blog really. Writing about all the shiny things that I was discovering in my podcasting journey from mics to mixers to digital recorders and the site grew up around that kind of techie side of things and expanded into really how you, the wider world of podcasting. So how you launch your show, how you build a website around it, how you monetize it, how you grow an audience all that kind of stuff. All the skills you need as a podcaster. So that site grew up around and all that free content really, it was all blogs, it was podcasts, it was video. And we got quite a big audience around that and

were monetizing it only through affiliate and sponsorship income really up until the start of this year. And it was at around that point I kind of you know it's always a bit, it's always a bit dodgy relying on things like sponsorship and affiliate income. It relies pretty heavily on your Google rankings that type stuff and jitters up and down and you get months where it's like down by 20 percent and you're like urgh is this the start of a big decline or something. So that was really what got me into thinking about the more long term income strategies and memberships always came up as a big part of this.

[00:02:43] I met Mike last year, no it was two years ago wasn't it. And he was telling me a little about what you guys are working on. There was a few other people I knew at the time starting up memberships too and I was actually I was initially really reluctant to get into the whole membership game because I have to admit I quite like the whole affiliate type approach because it's so little work. I'm lazy I don't like any work. Whereas a membership really there's a lot of work has to go into it. It is not half as passive but I do like the idea of people helping people. I'm a teacher by background so I enjoy the teaching side of things. We created a lot of online courses and it just became natural actually that we did it so we started The Podcast Host Academy which is really, I see it as almost a premium upgrade to our free content. We've got lots of courses in there which lead on from the free content that's kind of gone in much more deep lots more context or specific set ups for use, how tos and really a lot of tasks as well actually, a lot of activity and tasks and questions that get people doing stuff. And we also do live support in there as well so people that have, which with podcasting particularly we get a lot of... So this is exactly where I sit and I have three people sitting around here and we have this recorder and those microphones, how does this all work together and it's like it's no use to anyone apart from this one person so it really is it's being able to help people like that as well because they come into our live support now and ask those questions.

[00:04:09] So yeah that's kind of that's the approach it's really the courses, the live support. It's that upgrade approach to our main free content.

Callie: [00:04:17] That sounds great and how are you, I love the idea of that live support because as you said it's something where questions are very specific to the person a lot of the time. How are you actually running that is that through like a community or is that done separately.

Colin: [00:04:31] It is, it's through, well actually it's through Zoom actually the same way we're recording this isn't it. I have a live events page on the membership site. It lists the upcoming four sessions, we do them every fortnight so every two weeks we do a live session. I alternate with Matthew, so Matthews my sort of second in command at The Podcast Host. So he does the early one around four o'clock every month and I do an evening one at about nine o'clock every month and we alternate that. So we have them listed in there and it's always the same Zoom link so people just click on the Zoom link when the time comes along. They can join in and we just have a conversation.

Callie: [00:05:07] Awesome. And do you have a community as well alongside of that. Or is it mainly content focused and the live support.

Colin: [00:05:15] Yes so this is something I've debated over a lot in the last six months since I first tried to launch it back in December. I did a launch initially think it would be a full on community type approach whereby we'd have forums. And I put forums in there, under Mike's recommendation, well and yours. Mike's recommendation to put in, you talk about IPBoard which is good solution for that. So I put IPboard into the system started working with that and really I think.

Colin: [00:05:49] So the first iteration of the of the membership there were a few problems with it. One of which was the fact that there's good competition out there for this type of thing there's a lot of memberships coming out now at the sort of 40 50 dollar mark. And I thought one way we could differentiate actually was treating it like I said as a premium greater free content and the way to do that would be more to have it as a lower cost higher volume membership approach. So I started thinking about ways to try and actually cut down the time that it would take for us to maintain it to allow us to go in that lower price point and the forum was actually the first thing that occurred to me really. So that was when I went to the live sessions approach I thought well do what we'll do is we'll do the life session every two weeks. So there's an hour there where Matthew and I are allocating an hour of our time to go in and help people build a bit of camaraderie a bit of community around that.

[00:06:40] And actually we'll cut out the forum entirely and that'll cut down a lot of the support time because as you know Callie forums take a long time to be in and especially in the early days they're actually quite often a bit of a liability anyway because they're so quiet and they can look a bit bad. Well we put it in there and I left it there and even when I relaunched it I kept debating over whether to remove it. And actually in the last few weeks even the last four weeks actually it's totally kicked off in terms of the conversations the communities that are going on and there are people actually talking to each other now as opposed to just to us. And so I'm kind of going back and forth right now I haven't made a decision really on what we're going to do. But yeah to answer your question really the live support is the main thing that I concentrate on in terms of the community right now. But there is a forum there with the membership which may or may not be around forever. But actually right now it looks like I'm veering towards keeping it actually and starting to build that out again because it's just it's doing really well it's almost maintaining itself right now.

Callie: [00:07:42] Yeah I think when your community is kind of maintaining itself your members are talking with each other and your time can be spent on that live support and things as opposed to in the community every day then it's definitely you know more of a bonus than if you're having to post a lot yourself to get that engagement going and things.

Colin: [00:08:00] Yeah yeah. I think I mean I put it in there basically because every other membership has it. In the early days I was I was being very unimaginative and just basically copying everyone else's membership sites you know courses resources community and live

events. And that's basically what everyone does. But it was when I started working on it and that kind of first iteration of it didn't do very well it didn't sell very well. Like I said there were competition all sorts of different reasons. A couple of mistakes from us as well in terms of the branding. But when I relaunched I really sort of thought you know what do I actually want to do. What do I want this membership to be not just to help our audience obviously that's the biggest part of it is to help them. But also it's it needs to be fun and interesting for me and Matthew to run as well so that's when I thought maybe actually we can cut down the time we spend on this actually concentrate more on the evergreen resources as opposed to the forum and stuff like that so yeah rethinking it just now But yeah haven't certainly haven't got that final shape of it yet but it's it's definitely get there.

Callie: [00:09:00] And so how long has the Academy been going for now.

Colin: [00:09:03] So that first launch was start of December. So that's what eight months ago now. But it was called at the time, I don't know whether it was worth delving into or not but it was called at the time fanfission. So I tried to do a little bit of a rebrand for various reasons. That was the one that didn't work very well. And then we relaunched really in to the Podcast Host Academy at the start of March this year.

Callie: [00:09:26] So still really early days for you in terms of the membership.

Colin: [00:09:30] Yeah definitely. I mean that The Podcast Hosts Academy is only yes so that's what four or five months now. And even before that so the fanfission one we got in about 25 members initially. So yeah pretty small. Not that much work. Well yeah. Not much work going on in there at the time because there were so few people but yeah definitely early days for us.

Callie: [00:09:52] So when you, so you mentioned you had the fanfission that didn't necessarily do as well and then you kind of you rebranded reopened. What did you actually do to, what did you change when you decided to pivot from that fanfission to The Podcast Host Academy. How did that kind of process work if that makes sense.

Colin: [00:10:13] Yeah I mean the initial idea was that I was relaunching it trying to basically widen our scope a little bit in that, maybe not even widen it massively. So we do podcasting, podcasters our our core audience. But learning how to podcast is like, it's a process. It's a techie thing it's not a benefit. So you know you're trying to get your your messaging out there and really what we do is help grow fans, grow a fan base for what you do. Podcasting is absolutely brilliant at growing fans because of the loyalty it creates the personality you can get out there. The length of time people listen. It's a great medium for growing fans. But we do a lot of video as well. So I was toying with the idea of trying to be able to expand out a little bit into video even sort of a little bit around other types of content too. So kind of be media. Anyway that was the idea the fanfission thing. We help people grow fans. But it was just it was a step too far. It was like the messaging just became really confused. The people that know us already didn't really know what it was about it was like, what do you mean, I don't

know whether this is for me as a podcaster or whether it's for somebody else just well whatever. It just didn't really make sense to people. So.

[00:11:24] So that's why we redid it and it was quite nice in a way because like I said I had just created it as a generic membership site. What we changed really, I mean I brought the membership site into the Podcast Host so it went from fanfission.com to thepodcasthost.com/Academy.

[00:11:44] And so it was inside our main domain then. So it benefits abit now because of the sort of authority our site has in terms of search and all that kind of stuff. So that's good it means that it's much more congruent for people that visit our site already. So people who are already fans of the podcast host. They can find the Academy and go obviously this is for me because it's within this site that I already know it's called podcast something which makes sense. So in terms of the branding that's really what we did we just changed the name got new logos made up and put it inside our own stuff.

[00:12:16] And in terms of the structure changed very little actually. I basically copied wholesale the entire site. It was a WordPress site, took that WordPress site put it into a subdirectory on the Podcast Host and that was then /Academy so that was just a it was a new Wordpress site in there. Probably not the cleanest nicest way to do it but it was just it was the quickest and easiest at the time and it's actually working quite well keeping it separate. And like I said I was going to take away the forum so I was going to remove the forum but I was too lazy to do it at the time. Too busy sorry too busy to do it at the time. And before I got round to doing it it started picking up so actually that might not be something I change after all.

Callie: [00:12:56] Yeah so it sounds like it was more of a brand messaging pivot than the actual membership content and things like that.

Colin: [00:13:01] Yeah. I mean it was the price as well I suppose. So that was I mean that was a big factor. It was I was cutting out the idea of the sort of the in-depth support and community in terms of the forum that was the main thing that was going to drop and that was going to take it down from what I saw as sort of 40 to 50 dollar membership down to 18 dollars a month basically. So I wanted it to be at a point, at a price point where it was worthwhile for us and that's why I thought we had to take out the Forum and make it less time intensive but it was still worthwhile for us profit wise which I think 18 dollars a month is at volume. But I wanted it to be low enough cost that people could see it almost as just that something they could have on hand just in case they need it. So we've got all our videos all our tutorials all our resources in there. We've got the live sessions if they have a trouble some kind of trouble with our podcast one week they can get to talk to us live within two weeks so having that just that support on hand when needed. I wanted it cheap enough that if they don't use it for a month or two months they think well actually it's it's worthwhile keeping on just because next month I might need some help with that.

Colin: [00:14:11] And also the other thing and I don't know how much this applies to other membership sites but we have a lot of people. I mean we've got a really big audience that come along and use our free content that read a lot of blogs that follow all the podcasts. Actually I discovered that a lot of them just wanted to support us a little bit for that free content. So we have people that have signed up for the membership that don't necessarily use the courses the resources they're just they're seeing it as a way to support the free stuff that we do. And I've put that in as a sales message I suppose on the sales page it's one of the reasons you could sign up. So I wanted to be cheap enough that that was an option as well. And 18 just seemed great for me. And it seems to be it seems to be about the right point right now for us.

Callie: [00:14:51] I love that I love the other you know people wanting to support you because I think that does happen a lot more than people expect especially if you're starting the site after having been giving a lot of free content for a long time. I think that's definitely something people don't think about and I like that you've kind of thought a little bit outside of the box with the price point there as well because as you said a lot of people go straight in with the 40 50 dollars and actually it doesn't need to be priced like that to make it a successful membership site.

Colin: [00:15:21] Yeah yeah. I think as long as you for me as long as I'm thinking about the time that we're investing into it so you can make it cheap. People automatically think cheaper, can't go cheap and there is a big mentality around just now isn't it like double your prices, double your prices. In some cases that's the right thing to do. But in other cases I think there's a lot of room for cheaper products as well. As long as you can make sure that the time you're spending on them is paid back you know you're not doing too much for too little income so yeah this definitely was something that went through my head a lot.

Callie: [00:15:52] Definitely. So we kind of touched on this a little bit as you were talking about what's actually been the biggest challenge do you think with you creating and launching this.

Colin: [00:16:08] I think the biggest challenge for me is trying to figure out ways to keep that continual value coming because especially with when I've been thinking about not really ... Often people talk about the fact that the community is the thing that keeps people in isn't it. Like there's that mantra. They come for the courses but they stay for the community. And I think that's true in some places not true in others but either way I thought I'm not necessarily wanting to build a heavy community here. So how else can I bring in value even if we do build a community like I say I'm thinking about changing that. I still think there needs to be something else. And that's sort of that's a big challenge for me right now. I want to build in ways into this membership whereby people are getting something new every month but it's not just a huge amount of time to do it's not a new course a month. And I'm kind of going back to some of my old teaching background just now thinking about ways that you know we're actually interested in initiating some curriculums more or maybe actually guiding people through things.

Colin: [00:17:12] You know it's not a new idea but the drip fed approach whereby you actually much more guide people through it. I think people rebel against the idea of structure and discipline and actually not didactic teaching exactly but but directive teaching because it's assumed that flexibility that that choice is always the best. You should give everybody everything all at once. But actually in a lot of cases that really scares people. And to these people it's a big barrier because they see everything there and they don't know where to start they or even if they do have an idea for where to start they see it as like give them a road map, here's the three things you should do first. But it's still like a block of three hours a block of five hours a block of two hours. Whereas if you can actually break it up much more small and either drip feed it or guide them through day by day or something like that. I think that makes it a lot more accessible creates a lot more success and therefore a lot more satisfaction in your membership.

Colin: [00:18:09] So that's the challenge that I'm having right now is trying to figure out ways to bring those types of approaches into the membership and make sure that people are visiting us day by day not just like popping in every two weeks when they need a wee bit of help but actually coming in every single day because there is something useful that they can do in just five or 10 minutes they'll grow what they're doing just by a little increment.

Callie: [00:18:31] Yeah. Getting people to take action essentially so that they're getting, as you said those results and that success.

Colin: [00:18:39] Yeah exactly. I mean that's that's not only what keeps them joined to your membership it keeps them paying for your membership it's what, it's what causes them to evangelize what you do. So they go out and sell it for you and I think that's what we're all looking for isn't it, we want 100 fans that actually tell everyone else all their network about what you do.

Callie: [00:18:57] Yeah definitely. Nothing sells your membership better than people singing its praises essentially.

Colin: [00:19:02] It's actually being successful as well it's singing the praises and saying well actually look I've got a hundred thousand pound business here and that is actually in part due to their membership which only costs you 20 quid a week.

Callie: [00:19:16] And so what's been your favourite part of having the membership.

Colin: [00:19:22] I really enjoy the live sessions actually. It's good fun just sitting for an hour and talking to a group of people that are in the community that have these really individual problems and you're kind of helping them through. And then when they actually start helping each other that's really cool as well. So that's definitely a part of it. But I do. I mean that challenge that I was talking about actually that's one of the most fun parts of it for me as well it's figuring out something a bit different to do because I'm really conscious of the fact that

like I said before that I did create a kind of generic approach and I'm equally conscious of the fact that so many other people are doing exactly the same thing as well. I don't know what you've seen Callie but nearly all the membership's that I see these days are look exactly the same. So that's the thing I'm finding fun right now. I've got a list of about 30 40 even 50 ideas that I've got that are just little things that I could add in just little ideas that I could add into membership that I've not seen anywhere else. Bring in from completely different realms and different areas and nothing to do with membership. Nothing to do with business but they apply to the model that I have got here.

[00:20:26] So trying to put together ideas and plans for what we're going to put in over the next five six months that I think will really surprise people will really give them a whole lot of success and value and stuff and also will just you know help them be really successful too and keep coming back like I say day by day. So I find that really fun just now figuring that out.

Callie: [00:20:48] I love that. I love it when you can experiment a little bit as well. But I am looking forward to seeing what you, what your ideas are cos I'm intrigued now.

Colin: [00:20:57] I'll have to come and start sharing them in your group.

Callie: [00:20:59] Yeah definitely.

Colin: [00:21:05] Then everyone will steal them.

Callie: [00:21:05] I'd like to shift gears a little bit now and talk about what you're doing to actually grow the membership. I'm presuming your podcast is probably one of your best methods of promotion at the minute. But what's something that's working really well for you.

Colin: [00:21:19] Yeah. So in the last, in the last month there is a bunch of stuff I've done that have been that I've been meaning to do for a while.

[00:21:29] What if, so our blog is our biggest asset. I know podcasting is what we do. And I would never I would never stop podcasting because the way it works for us really is that and it should. I think the way that I works for the vast majority of people who podcast is that a blog acts as that kind of capture method. So a blog is how people find you initially because text is still the biggest search out there. Voice is supposedly catching up. Thanks to smart speakers and the like but still the return on a search is still almost certainly going to be text for a long time. So even if you do a voice search it's still going to read out a text result almost certainly because until everyone in the world like speaks out their blog posts. So text is that, that's the wide part of the funnel that's how people find you. But podcasting is how you engage them basically. So people read one or two of our blog posts and then inevitably within one or two or three pages they'll find a podcast episode or they'll find a reference to something a full podcast that we do. And our job is to try and get them to listen to that because that's where I think we turn people from casual visitors of our blog or even our videos into massive fans because they end up listening they get a bit of personality they find

that much more about us our values our ethics all that kind of stuff.

[00:22:48] And they listen for hours at a time. I mean that's the big power that podcasting has is that people listen for hours at a time because video can get personality across. It can do that kind of personality work that engagement work. But attention is still really short I mean three four five minutes on YouTube max. But you can get people to listen for half an hour an hour or two hours on the podcast. So that's how it works for us. Blog is the kind of capture. And then the podcast is the kind of turn them into a super fan job.

[00:23:17] So right now we have really good traffic on the blog that's our biggest asset really. We get about 2 1/2 to three thousand people a day looking at the blog. So that was my first job really was to try and funnel all those people into the membership or at least put the membership in front of them. So right now actually the things that are working well for us they are. I actually and I know this is kind of old school thinking but I just thought I'd try it out I put a few really simple banner ads in some of our most popular blog posts and funnily enough a few thousand people seeing it you know every week and quite a few of them are converted into members for us. Since I put them on it's literally just a headline and a button on quite a lot of our blog posts and that's just directing through our academy, through to our academy sales page and that's doing really well and I'm putting on there mainly things about courses. So for example the Audacity course we've got an Audacity editing course one of our most popular ones.

[00:24:15] So I say struggling with editing or want to become a pro producer or you know sort of the benefits led headlines and that takes them through to the landing page which tells them about the courses we do. And that's working really well actually. Just putting those into our popular blog posts and directing people through that.

Callie: [00:24:29] Awesome yeah that's one of my favourite approaches as well and something we we do a lot. And kind of that connection between your free and paid content I think is something a lot of people don't necessarily start doing. And it's a shame as so many people actually just need to be told about your membership. To actually be interested in joining.

Colin: [00:24:51] The other thing that we've done related maybe slightly less old school and more kind of context based is that I took our top they what was that again. So the banner ads may be the wrong thing a minute ago actually. The banner ads are on everything. So that I'm using a tool called Ad Rotate. That's right I think but I can give you it for the show notes afterwards. I think it's called Ad Rotate. And I've got five or six banner ads in there. And they're basically injected into every single post on the site. So 400 500 posts we've got on there currently have those banner ads in them. But I took our Top 20 posts so I just went into analytics looked through top 20 posts and I went into every single post, a couple of weeks ago I spent a whole week doing this. I just allocated a week to it because I knew important it was. And just put in contextual mentions in every single one. So still some of our most popular posts are equipment based so for example our best mics article I went in there and I

found two places within that article to mention in context. So this mic I think's really good for this this and this, and oh by the way if you want to know the set up how you set this up with a mixer with a mix miner so that you can record skype them we've got a course for that and a membership which is The Podcast Host Academy. So I've got a couple of mentions like that.

[00:26:11] So a bit more subtle a bit more you know they are actually really really interested in this type of thing and mentioning how the Academy can help with it. So that's our top 20 posts traffic wise have had that added in and its probably not solely due to this but our growth rate has jumped since doing that and I think the banner ads have gone from a new member every week to at least one a day up to 2 a day right now.

Callie: [00:26:39] Awesome. That's some great improvement there.

Colin: [00:26:43] It's funny what happens when you actually tell people about it.

Callie: [00:26:46] Yeah. It really is. But I'd imagine as well that it's also easier for you to make that connection now that you have made that branding change as well and there's that little bit more cohesion between the two.

Colin: [00:26:57] Yeah absolutely. I mean it's like I said that whole kind of premium upgrade thing just makes a whole lot of sense now because people are reading through it. And if they enjoy it it just makes it just so much more of an easy link. Yes. Saying if you liked this by the way we've got a bit more detail in our premium upgrade or our membership if you if you want to join in.

Callie: [00:27:16] And so once someone's joined then how are you currently keeping members engaged and coming back month after month. I know you mentioned before there's some new things you want to put into place. But what are you currently doing is that mainly the live support.

Colin: [00:27:29] The live support helps yes. So I'm sending out an email every two weeks which is a members update so that invites them in to the live support, asks them if they have any questions in advance. But it also points out a couple of new things that we've added. So whether that's about live training that we've done or whether it's a resource that me or Matthew have put in there like a checklist or something or a new course, something like that we'll mention that too so that helps. I'm building out our automated sequences just know which is the kind of onboarding I suppose I've got it up to I think six emails right now. And actually I've just thought the next ones I want to add are around because I'm thinking about the community maybe working again the next ones I want to add are around how to get people a bit more visible in there and it's just as simple as nobody in there has images right now. I think maybe out of them there's maybe 15 to 20 really active people right now in there and maybe two or three of them have images for their profiles which makes a huge difference to I think to engagement and even their names too like they all have their user names as opposed to their real names. So even I don't know that I have to go and look up the

bloomin linkage between the orders and the user names and stuff to find out what their actual name is so. So I need to do a couple of e-mails sequence now around that and I think that will make a big difference actually because it will just put a bit more real people behind it all.

Colin: [00:28:48] So that's that's the two things just now that I think the next thing I want to do is this this idea of a launch course which is drip fed. And I think that's really important because the majority of our members are really early stage so far. That might change over time but I think we'll always have a bunch of launchers. It'll be one of the learning paths and I want to put together a sequence of e-mails which guide them towards elements of the courses towards resources towards live training and give them like a day by day. Here's five 10 minutes you can spend on your launch today that you can go through and people will just click on you know a link in our membership and it would put them on a convertkit sequence for example to do that. So that's I think the next big job for me. And that might take I don't know two three four weeks to put together I would say.

Callie: [00:29:34] That's awesome. Yeah I think that kind of approach of giving people that drip fed option there can work really well.

Callie: [00:29:42] And you've mentioned already that you've kind of got a team helping you with this it's not just you.

Colin: [00:29:48] Yeah yeah. Yeah. So it's me and Matthew. I started The Podcast Host years ago now but Matthew joined the team about two and a half years ago seems a while ago now. Back when he came on as an audio producer when we were still did a lot of client work helping people run their podcasts. But now days he creates more content than I do for the site. The two of us run most of our podcasts as cohosts and he does lot of work in the academy too because he's, his backgrounds audio drama so he knows audio editing audio production equipment inside out so he gives people tons of help on that. On top of that we've got who else we've got we've got an editor. So I took a journalism student on last year and he know edits all of our posts. He's only part time so maybe a couple of days a week just editing writing up shownotes that kind of stuff for podcasts. And I've got an admin assistant I work with as well she does maybe two or three days a week and helps us with all the admin does a bit of my book keeping but also does like generally posting like if somebody was on the website or little changes to the website that type of stuff. Oh and I've got a designer as well so the designer does a lot of our graphics too. And yeah so that's that's about all for now I think. Oh and we've just taken on some developers for the application we're working on but that's kind of a side project.

Callie: [00:31:10] Just to detour into that a minute I'm curious with the, I know you're setting up a SaaS app as well. Is that going to have a membership model behind that.

Colin: [00:31:18] Well it's interesting you ask because I think I think it's going to be one of our big strengths in both sides actually in the end. So I think one of the things that SaaS

companies I've found out struggle with is you know the onboarding side of things. The fact that people sign up for a tool but they won't necessarily know how to use it or even if they do know how to use it they don't need, they don't know how to do it well so they get success with it and therefore stay subscribed. On the other hand membership's people quite often go in they learn how to do things but still don't have the time to actually do the work and therefore they drop out of it and subscribe. I think we're going to have a real strength here in that we can sell them as a package we can sell them together or even if they're not a package they're a really strong partnership because we're teaching people how to podcast with the membership or showing them how to do it successfully everything from the equipment to their monetization. But it still relies on them actually going away and doing the work. Now we're building software application that will actually do a lot of the work for them. So it's designed to take a raw audio file or a couple of raw audio files and turn that automatically into a branded processed podcast and publish it for them too. So it takes so much of the pains away of podcasting.

Colin: [00:32:33] So I think it's a natural upgrade for people who join the membership because we're going to show them how. And here's something that can help you do it. On the other hand with the SaaS application as well people come along thinking this is going to solve some of the problems with podcasting but we can then say well by the way for an extra 10 20 30 whatever dollars a month we've got this community here which actually you get loads of courses, loads of resources around podcasting, live support all that kind of stuff. It will help you actually make the best use of this tool.

[00:33:01] So I think I feel like the two of them are going to be a really strong partnership together. I suspect we'll get people join either separately. But I feel like I have a feeling gut feeling a long way down the line actually they'll just be one and the same. Actually the application will be a tool as part of the membership and all tied together.

Callie: [00:33:20] Yeah it sounds like it's quite a powerful, or can be quite a powerful combination there, so yeah a natural fit.

Colin: [00:33:27] Yeah hopefully hopefully.

Callie: [00:33:30] So overall what kind of impact would you say having the membership, I know it's still early days, has had on your life and business at the minute.

Colin: [00:33:39] I mean this last month has been a big change and I think the impact that it had over the six months prior from launching in December it made me think about a bunch of stuff around business, you know it made me do a lot more planning because I was thinking more long term. I was thinking about diversifying our income and the membership was a big part of that and especially when it didn't do so well in the early days. It kind of made me re-evaluate a lot of things around business. What we were aiming for. What kind of business we wanted to run. What I want my day to look like basically. Like what I want to spend the majority of my hours doing and that's what made me sort of resculpt a little bit and go with

the more the less supported the cheaper option.

Colin: [00:34:21] But now in the last month seeing the engagements starting in there seeing one or two people joining every single day, seeing that it could become, or having it confirmed that it could become a big popular thing has made a big difference to me. It's helped me look more long term in the business in terms of that diversified income it's helped me sort of see that my projections I put together last year that they could actually come true and therefore I can take a bit more of a risk on the software for example because that's costing us a lot of money to develop. And it was relying on the fact that membership was going to succeed. So now that it's starting to make a difference it's letting me it's given me a bit more room a bit more breathing space to do more with that software do more with the rest of the business that I wouldn't have been able to otherwise.

[00:35:08] I think it's the, it's the recurring income isn't it. As soon as you start to see people coming and staying for more than just a few months you start both relying on that and it lets you take more risks because you've got that back up.

Callie: [00:35:19] Yeah it's amazing how much difference that can make just to your mindset. If you've been working with I think you mentioned before kind of affiliate income sponsorships where it can change each month or with client work where it changes each month. So actually once you realize you've got that stability each month and that actually it's just going up if nothing else. And I think that makes a big difference.

Colin: [00:35:40] Absolutely. It's something I need to do a lot more work on actually is the stats side of things. I mean I'm a bit geeky anyway. So I quite enjoy doing my KPIs and my stats that's every month but I need to look more into the, the projecting income type of thing like working out my cost of acquisition member lifetime value and all that stuff. my sort of churn rates over six months 12 months and I can't do that yet because we're not old enough but you know three four five months down the line I can start to look at those numbers and really figure it out. And and that will give me a real picture of you know what can I realistically expect to be earning in six months in a year's time and that'll let me much more easily grow the other side of the business and invest in areas that'll help us do a lot more for our audience long term.

Callie: [00:36:24] Awesome. And so if somebody sat at home listening to this and they're thinking about starting a membership or they've recently started one what's one piece of advice or recommendation you would give them.

Colin: [00:36:37] I would say and I don't know if this is maybe obvious to everyone else apart from me but make sure it's very closely linked to what you do right now. I mean that's the, that's the mistake I made. I tried to branch out too much in the early days or I tried to make it, it was a bit too abstract. The more obvious the better I think the more close a link it has to whatever your audience currently expect of you the better. And again that could be obvious to everyone apart from myself. But it's certainly I missed it so hopefully that helps somebody.

Colin: [00:37:11] The other one is maybe really don't just follow the crowd do as much research as you can like a lot of the ideas that I've found have been from in terms of thinking about different ways to run a membership you know different approaches from looking around. I spent a whole day one day actually just searching membership organization. You know subscriptions you know all sorts of things and I found not just online memberships but you know membership organizations that are all in person live type things that have great ideas around how they retain because they've been around for 100 years. So they've been working on this for, don't think that online memberships, well online memberships are new. Don't think that memberships and subscription services are new they've been around for centuries. So look back at the sort of the older versions of them and see if there's anything we can bring forward from there because I got a lot of ideas from those types of organizations. Even the kind of old cheesy ones that you probably love to hate, like BNI and stuff like that. They have some good ideas. And obviously you need to adapt them to what you do. But certainly don't just do the same old thing spend a good day looking around and try and come up with some unique aspects to your membership to make it stand out.

Callie: [00:38:27] I think those are great tips and I love the idea of yeah looking outside of kind of what might be common in your niche or in memberships in general and bringing in aspects from there I think that's a really great recommendation.

[00:38:42] So what does the future hold for The Podcast Host Academy where would you like to be in 12 months time.

Colin: [00:38:49] I'd like in 12 months time to I have a have an aim for the end of this year so six months time I wanted to hit 100 members. And I know that's not massive by any means but I thought if we're hit that I'll consider this year a success. I think in 12 months or through next year I'll be hoping to get up to a few hundred at least maybe four or five hundred by middle of next year. Going on current growth I think it's realistic as well.

[00:39:15] So I want to have a really active group of people a few hundred folk in there who are all helping each other out and I want to have built in a range of tools as well I want to, and I know you and Mike have been working on this haven't you with your re-release like trying to building ing custom stuff it's not just off the shelf membership tools. I want to build in things like I want to be able to help people organise their interviews for example one of the biggest problems that people have podcasting is organizing logistics around interviews and things like that. If I can build little tools for them to do things like that I think that could be a really big value add as well that keeps people engaged. So starting to think about much more customer stuff and the advantage I have in that I suppose is that you know I've taken on a couple of developers to build our software our SaaS application so they can actually start to build little tools for the community as well. So I think yeah 12 months time I want to have done a lot more speaking to my members to to figure out the real little problems that they have.

[00:40:13] And we've done a lot of that already but do so much more and really try and create as many solutions as we can that just add these little incremental steps that makes it you know worth way more than the 18 dollars we're charging now. But that's probably another thing we'll probably want to be charging a but more at that point too. But offering enough value to justify it.

Callie: [00:40:31] Awesome. I'm excited to see what you create.

Colin: [00:40:35] Me too.

Callie: [00:40:38] And so if anyone wants to improve their podcast or just find out more about you and the membership where can they find you.

Colin: [00:40:44] Yeah you can find our website is ThePodcastHost.com. And the Academy you can find it from just about anywhere on there. It's in this it's in the navigation part at the top under coaching or community or just type in ThePodcastHost.com/Academy and you'll find it there.

Callie: [00:41:01] Awesome I'll add that to the shownotes as well. And I think you're speaking at YouPreneur Summit in November as well for any of our listeners that are going to that so they can get a chance to meet you there.

Colin: [00:41:13] Yeah definitely. I can't wait for that actually looking forward to it. I'm not talking about podcast either so a new subject entirely.

Callie: [00:41:19] Oh What are you talking about.

Colin: [00:41:20] Talking about goal setting and achieving. So it's something like. Like I said earlier I'm a tool geek in terms of planning and stats and all that kind of stuff so I think it was around stuff that I'd shown in the YouPreneur community around how I plan my year my month and my day. Which is yeah it helps me a lot actually because I'm completely and utterly unorganized disorganized person by nature. So I've had to put in so many systems and processes to force myself to actually take steps in the right direction. And with the team as well growing the team over the last year or so as well. So lots of stuff I want to share.

Callie: [00:41:53] I'm excited to hear your talk. I love that kind of thing.

[00:41:58] Thank you so much for joining me Colin. It's been great talking with you. And I'm yeah I'm really looking forward to seeing how the site grows over next year and all these different ideas that you're going to implement. We'll have to get you back on and see what you've been up to.

Colin: [00:42:12] Be happy to. Thanks for having me.

Mike: [00:34:40] If you've enjoyed today's episode of behind the membership we invite you to check out the [MemberSiteAcademy.com](https://www.membershipguys.com) the Member Site Academy is the essential resource for anyone at any stage of starting growing and running a membership web site. So whether you're still figuring out what your idea is going to be or whether your website is already up and running and you're just looking for ways to grow it and attract new members then the Member Site Academy can help you to get to the next level. With our extensive course library, monthly training, exclusive member only discounts perks and tools and a supportive active community to help you along the way with feedback encouragement and advice the Member Site Academy is the perfect place to be for anyone looking to start manage and grow a successful membership web site so check it out.

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