



Callie: Welcome to Behind the Membership. In this episode, I'm talking with Jared Falk from Musora, and I'm not kidding when I say that Jared means business when it comes to his membership. Or memberships, I should say, as Jared has not one, but three going on four membership sites, all in different music niches. Jared has over 10,000 members in his original membership site, Drumeo, in fact, having served over 200,000 customers so far in his business. A huge achievement by anyone's standards.

In this episode, we're talking world domination when it comes to membership sites, including how Jared replicated his successful drum membership site into other markets, why he's releasing an hour of new content every single day into his memberships, how he's grown his business to a team of 35 and worked with some amazing guest artists from around the world at the same time, and why he's always trying new things when it comes to marketing and retention.

There's a lot to pack into this episode, so without further ado, let's get started.

Speaker 2: Welcome to Behind the Membership with Callie Willows. Real people, real stories, real memberships.

Callie: Today I'm talking with Jared Falk from Musora and Drumeo, the world's leading drum education site. Thank you so much for joining me on the show today Jared.

Jared: Thank you for having me. I'm super excited to be here to chat with you.

Callie: Yeah I'm really looking forward to getting the chance to delve into your memberships. Now I mentioned Drumeo there, which I believe was your first membership site and your main membership site, but you actually have several different membership sites, now don't you?

Jared: Yeah we have three and we're working on the fourth, which is going to launch in June. So the other ones are for guitar, for piano, and for home recording. So Guitareo, Pianote, and Recordero.

Callie: Awesome. I'm really looking forward to delving into that model of having multiple sites a little more with you, but if we look at Drumeo in particular initially, can you tell us a little bit about that membership?

Jared: Sure, it's basically like Netflix for drummers. I always use that because right away people get exactly that it's a bunch of great content from drummers for people to learn the drums. And so we work with the greatest drummers in the world and we film lesson content with them and we publish that within our platform. So we film many different types of content, like longer form lessons that are an hour long. We film courses that are broken up into five to seven videos. We film interviews. We do podcasts. We basically bring them out and for two days, we film as much stuff with them as we possibly can.

Yeah so we add around one hour of new content a day just for Drumeo. Sometimes more, sometimes a little bit less, but that's probably a pretty average.

Callie: Wow an hour a day, that seems like a huge amount of content.

Jared: Yeah I'm breaking the rules. In some ways, it's way too much and people have actually have left because they said I can't keep up with it. They feel like they're paying this amount of money and they're not using it, so they just leave. But in reality, anyone who tries to watch every single video would be absolutely crazy. It would take you over four months. If you did 24 hours a day, because I think there's over 4,000 hours of content in there now.

Callie: Wow.

Jared: Yeah.

Callie: So what made you decide to release new content every day then?

Jared: Well, my original idea for Drumeo was for a student to be practising , and every student, when they're practising , they have struggles within those very moments. And every single student's struggle is different. So I wanted it to be like Operation Red Phone, where they could log on and at any time, there would be an instructor there to answer their questions. So my original idea was to have live-streaming 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and then work with instructors all around the world, so we could hit all the time zones. That still might come at some point, but for now, we've said let's just focus on producing really, really great quality content with these amazing artists.

And the reason it's so much is because we had so much opportunity to bring in the artists that we're not gonna say no. So last time Madonna was in town, her drummer was a great guy, Brian Frasier-Moore. We invite him down, he comes up, and films some videos. Of course, we're gonna say yes. When Rascal Flatts were in town, Jim Riley, he came down and we filmed some more content. Other times, these guys are off tour and they contact us and say, "I'd love to come and deliver some education." Drummers have a spirit of sharing. They're very communal and they like to give back, and Drumeo is a conduit for them to do that.

Callie: Awesome, and so are you ... Presumably, you're paying them to do that rather than doing profit share or anything like that.

Jared: Yeah because it goes into a pool of content, it's very nontraditional. Drummers were very used to publishing a DVD or a book and they sell that and then they get a certain percentage per sale. That's the traditional model and we did that in the past. But there's no real way that we can say we're gonna pay you based on views, but there's nothing to say that a video that's viewed less isn't as valuable. Because everything is necessary when it comes to education, right? A video teaching quarter notes might be viewed less, but it's essential to someone's development on the drums.

So there's no way to really value that. We're not gonna pay people based on how big their network is or how famous they are. We basically pay them a fee and they come in for a set amount of time, and we do it that way.

The one caveat there is we have a large YouTube channel. I think we have one of the most engaged Facebook pages. Our organic reach on Facebook is incredible. Also on Instagram, we have a heavily engaged network there. So the artists love the way we cut up the content and promote it and always make sure we tag them. They get a lot of residual benefits from the stuff that they do, and I think they really appreciate that.

Callie: Cool. So when you first started Drumeo, was the idea always to have other people creating content, or was it just you?

Jared: It was just me. I started around 2003. I had a baseball cap and my little practise space on the farm. There's flies flying around the shot. You can actually see them. I had wings. I had hair with wings. So for the longest time it was just me and my business partner was the tech guy. So that went til around 2006, 2007, and we hired a few other guys to do packages, like DVD packages that we sold. But it was primarily me, which got tiring. So that's what led us to say we need to figure other ways that we can

produce more content because with the internet, the larger your content footprint is, the more success you're gonna have, especially if it's high quality content.

Callie: Cool. So why did you decide to create a membership? What was the starting point for that for you?

Jared: I think for us, it wasn't necessarily a model where we said, "Oh we need to create a membership so we can make more money." It was never financially driven. For us, it was always about how can we provide a better service. We found that when students bought a DVD package from us, that's where the sale ended. The book Automatic Customer refers it to a one night stand compared to a marriage, right? And we really wanted to get married to our students, and we really wanted to be there to help them on an ongoing basis so we could answer their questions and give them the feedback when they needed it and do stuff like that. It had to be a membership because there's no way we could charge a one time fee unless it was incredibly high and deliver on an ongoing basis. For us, we just think it's the best model for teaching drums on the internet and for a student who wants to learn drums.

For us, there's still a lot of students that do buy the individual lesson packages that we do sell, and I guess that's just a preference per student. The membership is definitely the main thing that we offer.

Callie: Okay so you do still sell those individual packages as well as the membership then?

Jared: Yeah but we sell them in different ways. One thing we've had a lot of success with is we sell semester based courses, so we can still get the element of service, but it has a start and a finish and it's non-recurring. So we sell these courses for six months. A student signs up and every week they get a new lesson delivered. Then they get to interact with that instructor throughout that week on that content. Everyone is going through the same

content at the same time. We've had a lot of success with that. My reason one I just did, I found an expert on drum technique. He's one of the best in the world at teaching drum technique, not just actually playing. He filmed this six month series. Now he's following up with those students on a weekly basis.

Callie: Awesome. I love that. So Drumeo's been going for around 15 years now it sounds like. When did you decide to start branching out into offering other musical instruments? So guitar, piano, and things.

Jared: Yeah. Drumeo started in 2012. I think we bought the domain in 2010. Before that it was known as many, many different things. The big company was Railroad Media, but it wasn't big. We had so many different websites, and we still do. In 2008, we decided to try and go more horizontal and take what we learned in drums and apply it to other markets. We failed. Fell flat on our faces because what we were doing is we were taking all the profits from Drumeo and just investing them in these new markets, so the innovation essentially stopped in Drumeo. That was a big issue. I think we actually got to the membership side of things later than we should have. I think we should have gotten there a little bit earlier. We started in 2012.

Now when I'm getting into new markets, which is in the last couple of years ... I think Pianote has been around for two years. I'm doing it very differently in order to make sure that I don't make those same mistakes.

Callie: And have you found that you're essentially replicating what you've done with Drumeo with those other sites, or are you having to approach each of them differently?

Jared: It's not apples to apples. I would say the markets are all fruits, but they're apples, bananas and oranges, and maybe one's a tomato, which is actually a fruit. A lot of people get that wrong. The piano market is completely different from the drum market. Piano players ... There's a different social culture there. You can't use

the same ... You can't talk in the same tone. You can't even teach in the same way. Piano is way more traditional. So to get people even comfortable with online education has been more of a challenge and we have a lot of backlash from these teachers who have been teaching for 30 years out of their homes, teaching royal conservatory, and they look at us as someone who's out to lunch. We don't know what we're doing. We're crazy. There's only one way to learn the piano is what they say.

We have to really treat each market differently. The guitar market is completely different than the drum market. Guitarists don't like to share everything about what they're doing. So if a drummer gets a new piece of gear, he wants to share everything. They're so communal. They love to chat. If I meet someone on the street and find out they're a drummer, we're best friends instantly. If guitarists meet each other on the street, they're like, "Okay this is my competition. I don't want him to see my peddle board set up. Or I don't want him to see my fingers when I'm playing my special licks so they steal all my ideas." Not all guitarists are like that, but this is a very big generalisation. We do have to treat every market differently.

Callie: That's really interesting that there's such a difference there between the approach to each of those. Does that effect the marketing of those sites as well? How are you approaching that?

Jared: It does. I would say from the student perspective, for a new student looking to learn, it's not as big of a difference. We treat the marketing differently because now we're starting ... Pianote started two years ago and it's a completely different world out there. There's way more people trying to create membership sites and trying to sell info-products, right?

You have to do different things to cut through the noise. In drums when we started, we started very, very laser targeted with our content. We taught just rudiments or we taught just one way to do a specific rule. With Pianote, our tagline is "It's never too late to learn the piano" because we're specifically targeting people

who maybe wanted to play, but never really got around to it and now they have a little bit of free time and they're just looking for an online solution community that they can be a part of.

So we're not targeting kids. People have asked for kids and I just say no. That's similar in guitar. Guitar is much bigger market. There's way more people doing it and we're again late to the party there, so we have to do things differently. So we're still really testing what works well because our goal is to try and reach every guitarist in the world eventually.

So right now we've got a great instructor named Nate Savage. He's our main instructor and we're really targeting just entry level beginners. People who are just starting. If you go to the website. I think it's something like the best beginner guitar lesson solution or something like that. I'm totally butchering it. So if an advanced guitar goes there, they won't sign up. It's not for them.

Callie: Okay cool. I'm sure our audience will be wondering then, how many members do you actually have across the memberships, if you don't mind saying?

Jared: Yeah there's around 10,000 active in Drumeo. But there's 200,000 customers in the database who've bought individual lesson packages. In Guitareo, there's I think over 2000, 2500. And then Pianote, we're well over 1000 now. It's going well and I'm totally all about the marathon, right? I'm happy with just steady growth. I come to work everyday, put my head down, and just grind.

Callie: That's incredibly though that you've been able to impact such a huge amount of people with those sites. Listeners of the podcast will know I don't usually focus on member numbers and things because I don't necessarily think it's the right benchmark to measure membership success by, but I wanted to highlight your numbers there because I think there's a big difference between managing sites, well managing different sites with a few hundred members each and sites with thousands of members. Presumably

you've got a lot of infrastructure and team involved there to help you with that.

Jared: Yes, my team is incredible. I have 35 staff now and we're still growing. We want to hire more programmers because we're building out some really cool technology that we're gonna use to power all of our platforms. The goal is to have something for every musician and even go deeper into the arts, like teaching painting or teaching dance or teaching photography or anything like that. So the platform we're building will be able to power all those different communities as well as moving into other languages, right? So I wanna create Drumeo in China, which is going to be entirely its own platform that we can provide support on.

So yeah, there's tonnes of infrastructure on the tech side, which is coming in the next six months, and then also the staffing side.

Callie: Wow so you're going for total world domination.

Jared: Of course Callie! It's all about world domination. Why not think big? I know it's sometimes crazy or sounds ridiculous or silly because there's so many other great other companies and great other people doing stuff in this space, but I finally got to the point where's it's like why not me? Why not us? Why not you? Why should it have to be someone else? I think if you just have that mindset, then we're gonna at least try. I'm not gonna guarantee that I'm going to do it, but I'm going to try.

Callie: I love that ambition. Was that always your thinking when you first started doing this? Did you imagine that you were gonna have this big team and all of these sites, or has that evolved as the business has grown?

Jared: When I started, I just wanted to pay my mortgage. I just wanted to be able to drive a nicer car than a 1985 Nissan pickup truck. I think the goals, the short term and long term goals, changed over time and when you have some smaller or medium sized wins, those are things that are going to inspire you to then create those

larger goals. So it wasn't until a couple of years ago where I said okay. Now I'm feeling like I really understand the model. Not as deep a level as you and Mike do, but I'm understanding it more and more and I understand more leadership. I'm still really working on becoming a better leader for all my staff here. So at that point I said I'm just gonna set a big goal and just give her. See if I can do it. But yeah my big goal when it was 2005 was to make enough money to eat and pay my mortgage. That was a big goal for me, right? So it always changes.

Callie: Cool. And you mentioned leadership there and stepping into that leadership role. So has that actually been difficult for you to learn to manage that team and grow that side of the business?

Jared: It's definitely, I wouldn't say difficult. It's been fun to learn. I know it was a deficiency that I needed to work on, and so it's something that I really enjoy getting better at something like that. But it's always a process. You're never done learning about becoming a better leader. It's like drumming. The more you know, the more you don't know. That's what I found with leadership. You think you're good and then you listen to a podcast or you read a book and you realise how much you suck at it or how many things you're screwing up on. But yeah I really enjoy that process of becoming a leader and seeing the strategies and tactics that I deploy actually have some sort of positive effect. I think that's really, really exciting. Yeah that's fun.

Callie: Awesome. So you have this essentially this huge musical membership empire now and still growing from the sounds of it. What would you say has been your biggest challenge so far?

Jared: Well on the membership side, the biggest challenge is keeping people engaged and inspired to really want to learn. I think everyone loves music. No one falls out of love with music, but sometimes people get excited about learning an instrument and then decide it's not for me and then they quit. So then they leave. For me, obviously the money is something that affects us because if I don't have that money, I won't be able to continue to execute

on our mission of world domination. More importantly, I really want more musicians. The music business overall is changing, right? Guitar sales are down because more things are going electronic. Less people are starting to play guitar because the barrier to entry, to get actually good at guitar, is harder than people think. Whereas getting really good at video games is a lot easier. So more people are just playing video games, like kids and stuff starting up.

For me, I would say retention when you talk about it from a very business membership point of view, but I think the problem goes a lot deeper than that when you really study the market and what's happening with kids from a young age now. So that's why we're seeing a lot of 30 to 60 year old people starting playing music because it's something they always wanted to do in the past, but you're seeing less new people getting into it.

Callie: Yeah that's really interesting you say that actually because I've had that experience with Mike who decided a year ago that he was gonna learn guitar. Bought a guitar, bought all the equipment kind of thing and then realised it's not quite as easy as learning Guitar Hero and quickly lost interest with that and then moved onto the drums and actually joined Drumeo. I can see what you mean there about that market actually changing and that kind of audience changing there.

Jared: So you guys do things called Quick Wins, which I really like. We do something called Quick Tips, which I stole from you guys and I just changed wins to tips. And those have been really, really helpful for us because for us, our goal is to try and deliver. Not just be a conduit to deliver information. We have to somehow inspire them through this digital interaction to take a physical real world action. That's actually really challenging when you think about it. Video games do it well. Even though it's sometimes just with people's thumbs, but the Rock Band and Guitar Hero stuff is good. So our goal for each lesson is for someone to watch it, have a deep understanding of the concept that they could just

go to their kit and play it. Or go to their guitar and just instantly get results. If we've done that, then we've succeeded.

Callie: Awesome. So as we're on the subject already, so how do you ensure that people stay members and they get ongoing value from the site and they do keep engaged? How do you keep them coming back month after month?

Jared: There's a couple things that we do. We track engagement, so we track overall on our community. We're working on a new thing where we can give each student an engagement score. I know you can do this through Intercom as well. But what we try and do is through the onboarding process, we get them as invested into the platform through adding a profile picture, through entering some information about their drum gear, their history. Posting in the forum to get into the community. The standard stuff. And that stuff is all good. I call those tactics, right?

When it comes to a strategic level, I think for us it all comes down to the content. How good is our content? It's like Netflix. You don't really think about the tech involved in Netflix. It's nice that you can access it on your iPad and stuff. It's nice. That's almost an expectation. If it didn't, I wouldn't even know about it. So of course you have to be omnipresent when it comes to different platforms, but if they didn't have good content, if they didn't have one or two shows that you're always watching, you're eventually not gonna see any value in it anymore. This is why people are cancelling cable. You hear it when they say it. They're like, "Oh I was only watching sports, and I can now get that on this." Or "I don't even watch any shows there anymore. There's too many commercials." Right?

People always go back to the content. So for us, what we're working on is more educational content that's wrapped in entertainment. So I'm doing some content licencing. This really cool guy, I don't really want to say yet because it's not official, but really, really cool videos that are super entertaining, but also have that element of education. We have a whole new show

section. So I'm doing something called Drumeo on the Road. I'm going to Germany in a couple of weeks and I'm going to Switzerland, and I'm filming content at these big drum companies. These 100 year old drum companies, and we're doing a documentary on them. So filming actual how it's made slash travel documentary. The goal is, even if a student stops practising, they can still get a lot of value out of Drumeo just through the content.

So that's where it all comes down to for us. That's what matters the most.

Callie: Awesome and with releasing the new content every day, how do you let members know about new content? Are you emailing them every day or do you just work on the principle they'll login and see that content?

Jared: Yeah we send one weekly update email and outside of that, we do have Intercom for larger releases, which we normally use more for platform changes. Like oh this functionality changed, you should know about it. Otherwise they have to go to this schedule and they can add things to their calendar. Because not everyone wants every piece, so we're not gonna email them every day. We used to actually, and when we stopped, some people got really upset. Who wants an email every day? Can you imagine? How fast would you opt out of that? But we're not the average consumer. You're obviously in the marketing world and you understand what's going on behind it and why they're doing it, blah blah blah, right?

So yeah, for us, we just basically put it on a schedule and they can check it out if they want.

Callie: Awesome. I love that. So do you have that schedule available for a certain number of weeks, months in advance so they can see what's coming up, or is it more as it's released?

Jared: No I think right now I think there's probably a couple weeks ahead that they can see. My goal is always to be three months

ahead, but that never seems to be possible because it always changes and stuff like that. We try.

Callie: Cool. Let's shift gears and talk about what you're doing to actually grow the memberships then. What's working for you when it comes to getting new members for the sites?

Jared: Well the biggest thing we do is just provide a lot of value up front. So if you go and look at our platforms, you're gonna see ... Go to the YouTube channel and you'll see multiple videos released per week. Facebook multiple per day. You'll see little mini-lessons. Like one minute lessons on Instagram, so something that we can hopefully provide that result quickly for students. That's one thing. From there then we just try and get them into our system in some way.

So if they're just starting out, we have a starting out on the drums lead sequence essentially. So they sign up and they [inaudible 00:29:09] a bunch of content. And we have a bunch of those for different results that people want, which is traditional email marketing, right?

And then another thing we do that has worked really well is we do promotions where we'll bundle the membership with actual physical items, so a lot of times people still have trouble seeing the perception of value for digital products or a membership which essentially lives in the cloud. Nothing they can touch or feel. It's hard for them to wrap their heads around that, especially if it's a \$200 a year membership like ours.

So we've got the exclusive licence on this practise pad, which is something drummers use to practise on, and we bundle that with an annual membership, and that moves the needle enough for students to try it. Hopefully that gets them hooked and then they never want to leave because our goal is that they stay forever.

In guitar, we're doing strings, so if you sign up for Guitareo, you'll get, I forget what it is, it's like a box of strings and we work directly with D'Addario, which is the largest string manufacturer

in the world, and they provided us with some strings for a reduced cost that we could then offer to our students.

Callie: Awesome. So with those physical products, have you got a stock of those that you ship out personally, or are they shipped directly from suppliers?

Jared: Yeah we have a fulfilment. We're located in Canada, but we have a fulfilment in California. We have our custom fulfilment system set up that just notifies them when an order comes in and they process and ship it out.

Callie: Cool. And you offer both monthly and annual options don't you, but really stack the annual option as being the preferred?

Jared: Yeah. It's \$29 a month or \$197 a year, and obviously if you do the math, you're silly to do \$29 a month. A lot of people still actually do it, and I think that's because they're just not ready to make that full on commitment, and when they think about a year, it's the difference between a one night stand and marriage again. It all comes down to that level of commitment. I don't like the monthly. I always tell my marketing team, get rid of the monthly. I don't want it. Just get rid of it. If someone doesn't want to commit for three plus months, then they're not gonna see a result. Like how are you going to sign up for a month to learn drums and get a decent result to where you're happy about your progress. It's very, very difficult.

Callie: Cool. But you didn't win that argument with the marketing by the sounds of it.

Jared: Well, if you go to the website, I've got them to shrink the ... It's like sign up \$197 a year and then below it there's a little link that says or join monthly for \$29 a month.

Callie: Yeah and actually speaking about your sales pitch, one thing I love is your actual pricing comparison where as you say, \$200 for a year's membership is great value anyway, but I love that you've compared it both in terms of features and costs with the

alternative of private tuition. I think that works really well for helping to highlight that value.

Jared: I think on a guitar, we do a comparison to private lessons and then also YouTube. A lot of people think they're just gonna learn on YouTube. Sometimes it's great. Other times it's like man you could go down the wrong rabbit hole and get bit.

Callie: Yeah definitely. And speaking about YouTube. So you mentioned there that one of the ways you bring people in is through free content on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram. Is that content that you're putting out there, is that content taken from the membership, or is this content that you're creating specifically for the marketing side of things?

Jared: There was a time we focused on creating content that was just to be released publicly. We've since changed. Now every piece of content we create, for the most part, I would say 95%, is for the membership. Then the marketing team will go in the membership. If they say this video will do really well to showcase what Drumeo is and what we do inside the membership we're gonna pull that and release it publicly. So that's our process now, but occasionally we do some shorter one minute Instagram stuff. I'm not gonna put a one minute video in Drumeo. It's like drive-through drum lessons. It's mainly just there to catch people's attention and do some branding.

Callie: And are you using those videos for things like Facebook ads and things as well?

Jared: Yeah sometimes. We don't do a lot of videos for Facebook ads, although we probably should. Our Facebook ads, we try and keep them fresh because they fatigue so fast. You hit the same audience so much and they're finally like we're just done with this. So we do more contests on Facebook. We're really using Facebook now just to target people and get them into our platform. That's our main goal because the way Facebook is changing and the way it's going to change over the next six to

twelve months, I think marketers are going to be a bit disappointed.

Callie: Yeah definitely. I think if you're purely relying on Facebook for marketing, it's going to be an interesting year for you.

Jared: It is.

Callie: But you mentioned contests there, so are you giving away things like free membership or are you giving away products? What are you using for those contests?

Jared: Yeah so when an artist comes out, we will get them to sign one of their items, so we have Rodney Holmes out, who he played with Santana. He played on the song Smooth. And after he was done, he signed the cymbal he used in that lesson and we gave that away. We have video of the artist playing it, we have pictures of the signed cymbal, him holding it, all this kind of stuff. That's worked really well if someone wants to try that.

Callie: And so have you found that, again you mentioned before that the audiences for each of these memberships is slightly different in their approach. So are you finding that the same marketing methods work for all of them, or are you having to approach things and try new things for the newer markets?

Jared: We definitely try new things like I mentioned earlier. With Pianote, we have to target on a smaller basis and I think that's where a lot of people make mistakes, especially when starting ... Like if you're starting on a membership today, if there's no one in your industry or no one in your market, then you're fine. You can go broad. But if there's like three to five other people, you need to really figure out what differentiates you. And for us, this has been one of the most challenging things, is entering the new markets.

We have a decent membership base. I have 35 people. I know there's a lot of people that have their solo printers or they have one or two people on their team. So it's very different in what

their needs are. But we have to make a certain amount of revenue, so we have to increase our membership, otherwise we're in big trouble.

So for us, we're really testing and banging our heads against the wall and being like okay how much targeting do we need to do on our marketing. How much niche of a niche of a niche do we need to do before we finally really hit that perfect market?

So guitar has been one of the really big challenging things. We have a great product. If you go in there and you've learned with that product, it's great. It's got achievements and people get badges. They get XP. There's game application in there. All the content is broken down into series and lessons plans and there's a really good forum. Everything's simple to use. But communicating that in a way that people understand is really tough. And getting them to see the value there. So yeah. We have to make lots of changes. We're still actively changing stuff every day.

Callie: And one thing I love about your sales page for Drumeo in particular, I'm not sure if you do it for the other ones, is you have that choose your level option in the header where it then takes somebody to a page specific for their level where there's an example lesson and you really highlight the features that were available for somebody at that level. Was that a conscious design to increase conversions, or were you just finding that people weren't sure if the membership was for their level, and so highlighting that made things a lot better?

Jared: It's definitely to increase conversions. A lot of our best results come from search marketing, right? People are trying to solve a problem, so they search for a solution on Google or wherever, and we want them to find that exact page that they're looking for. So if they search beginner drum lessons, they land on a page that says the best beginner drum lessons from the best drummers in the world, it's really hard to say, oh this isn't what I was looking for. This is pretty much what they're looking for, right?

We do that with a few other styles too. If someone's searching jazz or if someone's searching rock. What we found is that with drums, because we're so much more established that we're at the point here we need to go more broad, but we can't just go super broad. The homepage is the most broad, but we don't wanna remove all of this targeting with the niches. So we created these sub pages, which are essentially different iterations of the sales page that speak to whatever they're searching for. We essentially have everything in drums. If you go in the content, you can learn beats, African rhythms from this great drummer named [Tostan 00:39:02] [Aribasalo 00:39:04] from Nigeria. We have everything you need to learn. That's what we do. We really want to showcase all of that and sell it properly and so that's why we built out those sub pages.

Callie: Cool. So you're getting really specific there with the sales page and search and how people find you.

Jared: Exactly.

Callie: And so what's your favourite thing about having the memberships then? What's having the memberships enabled you to actually achieve?

Jared: I think a deeper connection with our students. That's the biggest thing. For me, I'm very much an operational leader and I'm an operational person. I like to be involved on a ... I still do direct support with the students. Then I still like to do the leadership stuff as well. But that's been the favourite thing for me. I still get to talk to the students and I still get to hear what they're struggling with and still get to help them. I still get to publish new lessons, so that's definitely my favourite thing.

Callie: Cool. And so you mentioned about interacting with the students, so what kind of a community do you have alongside the membership?

Jared: We have a forum inside of Drumeo, using IPB. In our other Guitareo and Pianote, we have a custom built forum, so we're

changing that to custom eventually just because the IPB and stuff, there's so many features. We find it slows down the website and it's hard to develop around it. We want to attach the forum to comments and other social features. I think forums are going out of style in some ways. I know a lot of people love to use them because they're simple. You can just install them on the website. But the easier it is, the less remarkable it will be for your users. We want to create a really integrated experience. Whether they're watching a lesson or whether they're chatting in a thread or wherever, we want it to be very social. I call our stuff social learning communities, so I want the comments to speak to the forum and everything to cross promote each other.

Callie: Awesome. So one thing I wanted to look into there is that you mentioned about the fact that you're doing some custom development now. So have the sites actually changed a lot and evolved a lot over the years that you've been running this?

Jared: We've changed a lot in that we're trying to create a more personalised experience. We're not just treating every student the same. So that's what we're really trying to adjust is allow people to create their own experience, and I think that'll actually keep people there longer. We're really building features around personalization and social engagement. And then obviously, as I said earlier, the content is number one.

Callie: Awesome. I have to say, having seen your onboarding process, I really love your onboarding and how particular and specific you are with that.

Jared: Thank you.

Callie: So let's switch gears a little and talk about life as a membership site here for a minute. You've already mentioned you have a big team. I think you said 35 people helping with the day to day running of the site. So what does a typical day look like for you? What are the tasks that you focus on?

Jared: Today I went and took my dog to get spayed in the morning. I have two kids, so they were fighting, so I had to stop them from fighting this morning. When I got to work, I basically went through some morning emails, and I started putting together some lesson plans. I had an idea to do lessons for kids, specifics. Before this I was researching animal costumes because I'd love to have animals dancing around the videos while I'm teaching. So a lot of what I do is the new ideas and when it comes to what products we're doing and that. Then I'll meet with each individual departments. So the marketing meetings. I have development meetings. I have production meetings. And then I have any sort of administrative, financial, or customer support meetings.

So my day is mostly spent up creating new products and services, or scoping out new ideas. Doing new research. And then meeting with all the different departments to make sure everyone's on track, and that happens weekly.

Callie: Cool. And so do you actually have an office where you have your team, or is everybody working remotely?

Jared: Everyone's here. I think it's like 6000 square feet, around that. And we're adding another 2000 or 3000 square feet. We don't have a board room because we have two studios, so all of our big rooms are used. We're gonna get a board room and a different office and more communal work rooms. We're putting in a gym so people can exercise because we just sit here all day. So everyone's here for the most part. I have one or two programmers. We might have just added another one in Romania. I have one full time staff member in Portugal, who's actually been with us for almost 10 years. And then I'm gonna have one employee in Japan who used to work here but wanted to move to Japan for a year.

We're fairly flexible with our schedule and stuff like that. It's a really cool team. If you ever come to Vancouver, you have to come say hello.

Callie: Awesome. Definitely will do that. It's on our list for next year.

Jared: Nice.

Callie: So what impact would you say having the memberships actually had on your life and your business then?

Jared: I can't say it's made me less, not stressful, but naturally I just really want to work hard and I'm not looking for a lifestyle business. I'm looking to create something big. For me, it all comes down to my personal goals. I like working every day. I like doing something every day. I grew up on a farm and I collected eggs every day since I was five or six years old. I had my row and I got up before school and I did after school. That's just the way I'm wired. I'm not looking ... I'm 36 and I'm planning on working another 20 or 30 years. I like hanging out with cool people every day. So it hasn't really ... I still work hard. If anything I work harder than I would. I think I'd be a terrible employee. I'd probably be lazy, especially if I don't believe in what we're selling.

So the fact that I get to do this, I'm extremely grateful. I think anyone who runs a website like this, whether you do it because you want to create something big, or whether you've just created the perfect lifestyle for yourself, it can offer both of those things, right? And that's what's so cool about the internet and that's what's so cool about the membership model. I think everyone needs to just be very, very grateful.

Callie: Yeah and I agree with you. I do think what you're doing with your memberships is quite different to what most people who are setting up memberships sites are aiming for because most people are going for the membership model to get that different lifestyle or the passive income that isn't passive.

Jared: Mailbox money.

Callie: Yeah to kind of live that laptop lifestyle and thing whereas you're in this to create this full empire business, and I love that.

Jared: Thank you. Yeah no, I watch other marketing videos selling membership model and they're saying it's the perfect lifestyle. You don't have to do anything. They make it seem like you don't have to do anything and just sit around on your ass all day, right? It's not like that. You gotta work hard. You have to try and be smart. You have to constantly learning. One of our mottoes is you keep pushing. You never stop. Regardless of how bad or how good it is. Never take your foot off the gas and just keep working hard.

Callie: Awesome. So is there anything that you wish you'd known earlier or that you'd do differently if you were starting again now?

Jared: I would have done a lot more research on the membership model before I got into it. I think a website like we have today is so powerful because it provides people with that foundation of information, which you absolutely need. No matter how much you think you currently know about business or anything, the membership model is completely different and it's something that has only been really popular for the last five or ten years. So I wish I would have really researched more because I think from the outset, I would have started working harder on retention. Originally we just said content's good enough. Let's just leave it right? So we didn't have any onboarding. Literally users just landed on the website. I didn't even know why people stayed. They probably didn't know what to do. I think I would have made sure that I got the proper education and did a little bit more research. Proper business plan. Because now that we know certain things, it's so much better.

Callie: And so, as we wrap up then, I'd love to know what's next for you. What's next on the stage for world domination?

Jared: Like I alluded to earlier, we're building that platform so we can scale and we'll basically be able to run everything from customer support, processing transactions, user management system, all the social features. Everything from one hub under Musora, and we'll be able to publish new content from there. It's a full blown

CMS as well. So the idea there is to then take Drumeo to China. I have a meeting coming up with a guy who's coming to Vancouver from China to talk specifically about that. That market is absolutely massive and they love the Drumeo content. So language is our big thing.

Another thing is we don't have an app right now. Everything's mobile friendly and really easy to use on iPads or iPhones, but not as good as it could be, so we want to create native experiences on IOS and Android and then all tablets. So that's the next thing. But the reason we built the platform is so we can create one framework for an app and then deploy it over all markets. So those are the two biggest things is new markets like home recording and different languages, and then becoming more omnipresent with how we're actually publishing and where we're publishing our content.

Callie: That platforms going to be a huge undertaking. But in terms of, just a quick last question sorry, in terms of moving into the different language markets, is that going to be something where you're essentially franchising what you already have and having somebody else translate and create that, or is that all still gonna be you guys?

Jared: Yeah because it's more of a service than a product, we need to make sure that we partner with someone who can actually provide the service. So when a drummer has a question, they can talk to them in their language. So we need to partner with someone. We don't need to necessarily just hire a staff member. So I don't know if it's like a franchise or a brand licencing thing. I'm just figuring it out as I go. I'll let you know when we actually sign the first contract and when we roll it out, but I don't know what form it's going to take. I need to meet with a few more partners and then go from there.

Callie: I'm looking forward to seeing where that takes you. I think that's going to be quite exciting.

Jared: Thank you.

Callie: So yeah it's been absolutely awesome talking with you. I think there's a lot more we could talk about still, but I'm conscious of the time. So if somebody wants to check out your sites, find out more about you, where's the best place for them to do that?

Jared: You can go to [musora.com](http://musora.com). That has links to everything. So M-U-S-O-R-A.com and then Drumeo is just drum with an eo at the end. That's where you can check them out.

Callie: I have to say, it's a beautiful sales page.

Jared: Thank you.

Callie: And so thank you so much for joining me and sharing your experience. Yeah I'm really looking forward to watching your empire continue to grow.

Jared: Thank you Callie. Say hi to Mike for me. I love your guys website and everything you do.

Callie: Thank you so much to Jared for joining me for this episode. And thank you too for listening. I hope you picked up some useful tips, and while I'm guessing most of those listening to this podcast aren't looking to create a membership empire like Jared is, I think there's a lot of great inspiration to be found in what Jared's achieved and what he's looking to continue doing. So hopefully this episode has made you think a little differently about what's actually possible with a membership site and maybe it's also allowed you to dream a little bigger as well.

I'd love to hear your thoughts on this episode, so let me know over in the free Facebook group at [TalkMemberships.com](http://TalkMemberships.com) and be sure to check out Jared's site over at [musora.com](http://musora.com) as well.

This is actually the last episode of season two of the podcast. So I'm gonna love you and leave you. And I hope you've enjoyed this season and you got a lot of inspiration, a lot of tips, and a lot of

new ideas from these episodes. We've covered a whole gamut of different membership sites and different models and looked at lots of different ways that people are making use of membership sites in their business. From membership empires like we've just heard with Jared to side businesses along full time jobs and sole businesses as well.

I'd love to hear what your favourite episode this season has been, so do let me know over in the Facebook group and if you want to catch up with any of the previous podcast episodes, then head over to [themembershipguys.com/btm](http://themembershipguys.com/btm) to find all the episodes from both season one and season two of the podcast. That's it for me for now, but I'm sure I'll be back with season three before you know it. Take care and thank you so much for listening.

Speaker 2: If you've enjoyed today's episode of Behind the Membership, we invite you to check out the [membersiteacademy.com](http://membersiteacademy.com) The Member Site Academy is the essential resource for anyone at any stage or starting, growing, and running a membership website. So whether you're still figuring out what your idea's 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 website. So check it out at [membersiteacademy.com](http://membersiteacademy.com)