

SEASON TWO - EPISODE TWO

BEHIND *the* MEMBERSHIP

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Callie: Welcome to season two episode two of Behind the Membership. Today I'm talking with Janet Murray who runs The Studio, a membership site helping business owners to succeed with marketing and PR. Now Janet actually has a whole ecosystem around her membership, with a different range of services and products on offer, and has focused on building a clear progression path for her members through her products.

And in this episode we dive into the role The Studio has in Janet's business, and how that membership has evolved over the last few years. Actually resulting in a rebrand and a refocus that Janet is currently undergoing at the time of this podcast. Janet also lets us know some of the things she's doing differently to help with both attracting new members and with keeping existing members. And I love that some of these things that Janet shares are definitely not commonplace in the membership world. You'll have to listen in to find out what those are.

Announcer: Welcome to Behind the Membership with Callie Willows. Real people. Real stories. Real memberships.

Callie: On today's episode of Behind the Membership I am joined by Janet Murray, PR and marketing strategist from janetmurray.co.uk and the Studio membership. Thanks so much

for joining me today, Janet. It's really great to get a chance to speak with you about your membership site.

Janet: Thanks so much for having me.

Callie: I would really actually love to dive straight in, so obviously I know a bit about the membership, but could you just tell our listeners a little bit about what the membership site is, what it offers, who it's for?

Janet: My membership is basically there to help small business owners who want support with their PR and marketing. So how I usually describe it to people is I help small business owners to promote themselves more effectively, so that they can make more money. That's generally how I describe it.

If I was to talk about my ideal client or certainly the kind of people that tend to be attracted to my community, they tend to be often female business owners who they just happen to be often kind of moms who are juggling their business with a family, and they're often frustrated when they come to me because they know that they should be out there online promoting their business or they know they should be blogging, they should be doing email marketing, they should be doing social media, they should be promoting themselves in the press, but it's not all quite coming together.

So as a result, they're not earning as much money as they'd like to, and so they come and work with me in my membership, which is at the studio and basically I support them with that, and we've got kind of like four main pillars in terms of how the content is organised, so at the moment, we've got four key courses. We've got a course on content, so blogging. We've got a course on email marketing. We've got a course on social media and one on press, so these kind of four pillar areas, but also I bring in experts to do twice monthly master classes on issues and topics that we want to go in a little bit deeper on. I also have a library of interviews with journalists from my live events that I run, which I think people find really useful.

We have a weekly office hour on a Wednesday where people can drop in and ask me questions and I also share my webinar content, so there's kind of about four or five different pillars. Actually, at the moment, I'm in the process of kind of rebranding and reorganising the content, which I can talk about little more if that's helpful, but does that kind of give you the general idea?

Callie: Yeah, yeah, that's great. So actually you mentioned it there so, tell us a little bit about the rebrand and the reasoning for that.

Janet: My background is actually PR, but it's interesting because I'm a PR person or expert, I guess, who's never, ever worked in PR, so my background is journalism, so I spent 18 years writing, editing for fashion newspapers like the Guardian. And kind of early on into my, well basically, I was kind of working as a journalist and then I kind of noticed that people were out there kind of sending these really kind of dreadful pictures and press releases, and I was on the receiving end and thinking, "God, this is awful." And what kind of really got on my nerves about these pictures and press releases, that they often came from PR companies that have been hired by small business owners, and as a small business owner myself I've always been freelance.

I was kind of a bit kind of irked by this and I thought, "You know, actually, I would really like to help these people and educate them on how to get press coverage and get in the press". So cut a long story short I started a blog and started sharing information about this, and initially it was how to write press releases and then it was how to write pictures for journalists, and how to find journalists, and all this kind of stuff.

And in the process of how to starting to promote my own business and my own services 'cause I started to help small businesses owners with that kind of stuff. I amassed all this kind of knowledge myself about how to promote my own business, so I ended up started a podcast. I ended up kind of really learning all about email marketing and social media.

So when I first started my membership, actually a couple of years ago, it was really focused on helping people to get press coverage. It was really focused on teaching people how to get in national newspapers, magazines, radio, TV and then I just kind of started to realise that you know, and looking at my own business and how I was creating my own business, that that's really only part of the puzzle. So I started then to help my members with things like email marketing, with blogging content, podcast, YouTube that kind of thing, social media.

And I kind of started to help people with PR in the broadest sense, so that's almost like kind of phase two of my membership. I'm now kind of in phase three. And what I've noticed recently or kind of the last six months or so, I felt like I was creating all of this really useful content to help my members promote themselves more effectively.

So I mentioned the kind of four pillars, blogging, content as I tend to call it, email marketing, social media press, but I felt like it wasn't really clear to my members what the outcome was for them and so I sat down one day and I just kind of worked out like what are all the PR and marketing activities that you need to do to get to certain income levels in your business.

So what sort of things should you be doing to get to one k a month, what sorts of things should you be getting to two and a half k a month and then five k and 10k. And I came up with this whole list of things and that's basically what I'm doing with my membership at the moment, I'm restructuring all of my content so that it's really clear for members when they come in what kind of activities they should be doing kind of at the first stage of their business, what should they be doing as they're getting more sophisticated and starting to grow their income, so I'm trying to tie in those kind of PR and marketing activities much more with financial outcomes.

And I mean I'm just in the process of doing it at the moment, I'm having a new site built and I'm re-organizing all of the content, but it feels like that's really resonating with my members because

suddenly it feels like there's the point and when you're teaching people about PR and marketing, I think sometimes people see it as a kind of activity or something else on their to do list that they have to do, but of course you and I both know that like marketing, PR is at the life blood of your business. If you're not promoting your business then you're not making any money.

So that's kind of phase three of my membership, does that kind of make sense?

Callie: Yeah. Yeah, definitely. And how long's the membership been running for now?

Janet: So the membership's now been going for about two and a half years. So the first year I was focusing mainly on teaching people about press so kind of traditional PR. Second year, I broadened out and helped people with PR and marketing in a much broader sense and this year is the new phase when I'm doing the same sorts of things, helping people with the same kinds of things but just tying it more closely to financial outcomes.

I've now got about 350 members at the moment.

Callie: Awesome. So it's kind of been quite a natural evolution then as the membership's kind of grown and as your business has expanded.

Janet: Yeah. I mean it's kind of like, frustrating about I think I've heard you and Mike say this before but the thing about having a membership site is that like it's never done is it? And so I was plotting out how I was going to re-organize all of my new content with this new membership site and kind of like new focus to my business and I was looking at like where the gaps were and new content I needed to create.

And then I was thinking oh God, about in a years' time this stuff is probably going to feel out of date I'm going to have to update this again. And I think I mean the thing about being a membership site owner is that you're constantly learning from your members and

they're showing you like where the gaps are, what they need help with and it can feel bit frustrating because you kind of feel if you're getting somewhere and you get on top of something and then there's something new that you feel you need to create, but I guess that's part of the fun, part of the challenge.

Callie: Yeah it's either creating new stuff or updating existing stuff.

Janet: Yeah. Exactly. Yeah.

Callie: Yeah. So I want to hit on something you said there actually about your why, your business so I know you've actually got quite a lot of strings to your bow, not just the memberships, so where does the membership actually fit in with everything else your business offers?

Janet: So I feel like my membership is at the heart of everything I do. So I also do live events, I do a couple of live events every year, so I've got one that I do in the summer which is called Media Influence Live, and that's where I get a group of journalists, high profile journalists, and also influencers, bloggers, podcasters, YouTubers, to come and talk about what they're looking for and how to get in touch, how to pitch and that kind of thing. And then I have a content planning masterclass that I run later in the year and I'd say about 50% is people who come to those events are in my membership.

I also have another small membership actually, so I have something called Media Diary Owners club and basically cuts the long story short a bit, a few years ago I bought out this Media Diary which is an A4 desk diary that you can use to plan out your content and it's got awareness phase, and key dates that you can use in it.

And after the first year, people were saying to me I really love your diary, it's really really beautiful, but actually some people were saying I didn't really use it, it was so beautiful and I just didn't really kind of make the most of it. So I thought okay what can I do about this? So I actually ended up launching another mini

membership called the Media Diary Owners club where they get a monthly email with additional dates, we have four course week group coaching calls and some additional content that actually I took from a live event. So I've actually got two memberships. I often forget that so that's another kind of source of income for me.

I've also got a couple of online courses, I also do speaking, I also do consultancy, I do one to one consultancy, but I also go in and do media training to various organisations. So, I've also got a book as well called your press release is breaking my heart, so there's lots of different income streams coming into my business but for me the heart is the membership, so I feel like I spend most of my time and most of my energy working with my members.

And I've just actually introduced a mastermind group at the top end of my membership because again at the end of year two, and I think I probably was a bit late to the party on this but I realised that some of my members were out growing the membership and they actually used quite a lot of the content, they were making quite a lot of progress and so I've set up a mastermind group for people to progress onto. So now the way I'm restructuring my membership, I've got, so my main membership is for people that are looking to get up to about two and a half grand a month in terms of income and then my coaching groups are, my mentoring groups are aimed at people who are looking to go to the five k a month or 10k a month.

So what I'm really trying to do is create progression because I think one of the challenges with a membership is that if you get people in a membership, and particularly people who are really keen and they're really motivated and so then they get through all the content and they start doing really well and where do you take them next? And I think if I was going back in time and redoing things I think I would've thought that through more carefully and now I'm trying to create this kind of clear progression route through.

And that's actually it's working really well because I've got people in my main membership who are saying like, I wanna be, this is probably not the most flattering way to put it, but they're like, rich bitches. Which isn't the most flattering way but I kind of like it you know it's kind of giving people like aspirations and they're seeing other people in the group who are progressing and two different income streams are quite a lot of balls to juggle but the membership is certainly, I feel like that's the centre of everything that I do.

If I look at my media diary, and who buys it, my books, and my media diary owners club, and my events, then you know I'd say the majority of people who buy those products and services are all in my membership so that's really the heart of everything I do.

Callie: Yeah and do you find that you also, you transition people that buy those products into your membership as well so it kinda works both ways?

Janet: Yeah definitely and particularly with my live events I always think that when I've got people in a room for a live event that is the ideal time to tell them about my membership and to, we always set a target actually and to, you know if we've got 100 people in a room and 50% of them are members, we'll set a target for how many people who are not members we'd love to get into the membership so I talk about it throughout the event. And one thing that I do at my event as well is we create a really nice physical programme, a hard copy of a programme and we put a picture of every delegate in there and all their social media handles and we actually label up which ones are in the membership. And so as I'm talking about the membership during the day I'll say and by the way you know if you are interested in joining then you know don't ask me, go and find some people in the room who are members and ask them what they think.

And generally we get a really good conversion of people at live events as one example who will then join the membership and often I find that when I think about my sales funnel, like the book for lots of people might be their first step, their first paid product

they buy from me, the media diary and the media diary owner's club might be the next one, then they might come into the membership and you know the way I'm sort of looking at it at the moment is ideally I'd like that to put people right through that journey so you know my book might be the first thing that they buy, my media diary and then you know hoping to take those people right through to my coaching and mentoring groups.

Callie: Yeah. So you've really got something to cater for everybody there and as you say that progression through the different products and stages which is great and I love that about you putting the members in the guide and saying to ask them as well, that's great.

Janet: Yeah. Well I think you can't do any better than getting your own members to sell the membership for you. So there's a couple of other things that we do is we have, I think I've mentioned this to you before actually but one of the most successful marketing strategies that I use, I have these things called open days. So I used to do webinars, and I found that they didn't really come that well so what we do now is we're actually still on an open close, open and close, we open and close maybe four or five times a year and what we'll do is we'll invite people who are on the waiting list to come in and to come to one of these open days where we'll show them in the back of the website, the membership site, show them what it looks like, show them the content.

And I'll actually get some of my existing members to come along on that call so we do it on a Zoom call. And I think there's something really powerful about that, you know I can say how brilliant the membership is and how helpful it is and I can put out blog posts and put out testimonials but actually to get on a call with people, to meet them in person who are actually members who can say yeah this is really working for me and these are the results I've had you know that's to me feels like a really powerful way to promote the membership.

Callie: Yeah love that, that's kind of like just real time testimonials really and case studies. And yeah that's really powerful.

Janet: Yeah. We also do things like we, when we were just about to open the studio we'll let members know that we're opening it up and say look if you've got a friend that you'd like to introduce then if you make a referral, then you get a little bit of time coaching with me. So in the past, and this is getting a bit unmanageable now as we're getting bigger, they might get a 15, 20 minute call with me as a reward for introducing someone. What we're doing now is we're turning those into group calls so you know like a group coaching call and if they refer somebody they can come and take part in one of those group calls, a mastermind styled call.

And that works really well as well because I think you know you can't do better than getting a personal referral that's the most powerful kind of referral you can get I think.

Callie: Yeah definitely. Definitely, and they work wonders for memberships as well.

Janet: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Callie: One thing I'm quite interested in is, you actually price your site in British Pounds, which obviously we're in the UK but you often see the pricing in dollars as the done thing for online businesses, was that kind of a conscious decision because you wanted to attract mainly UK business owners?

Janet: Yeah. It's something that I'm still kind of like grappling with at the moment and actually it's got, I mean I'm really keen to attract more international members cos it is mainly UK at the moment but I think when I started with my membership, I mean I sort of joked to Mike about this in the past, but I didn't really know what I was doing, I just had all this content. I was like I've got all of this valuable content, I've got all these kind of online programmes and these interviews with journalists which I think people would

find really useful, I'll just package them up and I'll turn them into a membership.

And so I'd just kind of like, I just kind of put something together and didn't really think about it too deeply and as the membership's grown, it's a question that's come up time and time again and I am wondering now, I'm at the stage now where I'm thinking well should I turn it into dollars because I do think it could possibly be off putting for people who are from other parts of the world. Another thing that's challenging as well and I guess you might come across this as well is that we have our afternoon, we have a group coaching call, we call it our office hour every Wednesday afternoon at two o'clock. And that's GMT or BST and you know obviously that could be tricky for people who are on the other side of the world.

I do have some international members but it's like where do we move that times, because whatever time you move it to it's always going to be inconvenient for somebody isn't it?

Callie: Yeah.

Janet: So these are kind of just, I'd be interested to get your perspective on it actually because these are the things that I'm actually grappling with at the moment and what would your advice be?

Callie: Well it's really interesting for us in terms of the live times because that is obviously something that we've struggled with as well and the majority of our members are you know I would say 70% of our members are in America so we always kind of did our live calls late in the day. So we did them you know between six and eight PM UK time, so they were kind of midday US time. And we actually did a poll of our members saying you know what time would work best for you guys? And we gave I think six different time options and the one that came out the best was actually two PM UK time, so we'd been presuming that for the US people doing it, timing it in our evening so that it worked for their kind of midday would be the best option but actually they wanted it early in the day cos apparently Americans tend to get up early.

And our UK people wanted it before the school pickup-

Janet: Right, yeah.

Callie: Kind of thing so we've actually gone from doing it at kind of eight PM to you doing it at two PM now based on that member feedback so the best thing I think with those kind of live situations is to ask your members to do a poll and see what kind of feedback they give you.

Janet: Yeah. One of the thing's really challenging though and I guess you have this as well, so recently somebody asked me whether I would move it to midday because they're in, I think they're in Denmark and, because it didn't fit with their nursery times or school pickups it was, but you know for some, another person would come along and say it didn't fit up with their pickup.

Callie: Yeah.

Janet: I chose two PM because I have a lot of mums who need to pick up kids from school basically. So two PM seems like a good time and it means that you know tend to wrap up on time as well and not overrun because everybody's got to go. But yeah no I think I will definitely poll and also about the dollars, I feel like I mean this is just my gut but I feel like in the UK we're kind of used to seeing things in dollars and we wouldn't necessarily find that off putting but I'm not sure whether my members from abroad would find it off putting to see everything in pounds.

I mean the members that I have got from abroad tend to be Anglophiles like they're kind of in it because they like the fact that a lot of the members are Brits so you know they're kind of in it for that.

Callie: Yeah I mean I think in our experience Americans especially you know if it's not in dollars, they don't necessarily, they're not as used to having to convert money.

Janet: Yeah.

Callie: It takes them a little bit longer to work out okay so what does that actually mean to me financially whereas I think us Brits are definitely a lot more used to kind of having to pay in dollars and kind of just mentally doing the math or kind of writing it off I think.

Janet: Yeah. Or just using an online converter.

Callie: Yeah.

Janet: Yeah.

Callie: So yeah so I think for international audiences we consistently see kind of dollars as being the better option.

Janet: Yeah. Yeah no I think that may well be a move that I make in the next few months actually as I'm rebranding.

Callie: Yeah. So what do you, you know we've talked about a few different things there but what do you think has actually been your biggest challenge so far with the membership?

Janet: Gosh that's a really good question, I think what I didn't realise when I started a membership site and what I'm learning more and more everyday is that not everyone's like me. So when you have a, you know so I recently joined a membership site and I don't need anybody to give me a tour of the site, I don't need anybody to kind of like send me a nurture sequence or whatever in my first 12 days of being a member or whatever. I'm somebody who's very much like I've joined it, I see it's my responsibility to just kind of get stuck in and go find what I need. If I've got a problem, I'll ask.

I think the one thing that I've learnt is, as a membership site owner is you can't run your membership site thinking that everybody's like you. And you have to really be sensitive and accept that everybody is very different. So I'm just learning things all the time about my members that are helping me to give them a better experience.

So for example we have this live coaching call, we call it the office hour on a Wednesday afternoon. Now it never occurred to me in a million years that some people might not want to join that call because they were scared of, you know they just didn't know what to expect so they, you know so we just put in the email it's a Zoom call. And we would say things like you know you will be on video or you know, we'd explain what Zoom was and how to get it and you know you may be on video but you don't have to be and you know we'd give you a bit of background but I realised that that wasn't enough.

And some people were actually not joining calls just because they were a bit scared of their first one and they didn't know what to expect. So I've learnt okay, so I need to create some content around that to help people. Also people who are in danger of leaving, I think I've got better at helping with that so we do a monthly thing now, we call it a reset call. So if we notice that there's people who haven't been engaging very much or haven't been in our membership area then we'll invite them to a reset call and just say hey come along, you know we'll show you back around the site, we'll let you know about some of the things that are coming up.

And that kind of thing's been really really popular. I've also created some key blog posts as well like, again I just didn't realise that people would need like a blog post which is how to get the most out of your membership, of being in a membership site. Or I've even got a blog post on what to do if you lose your mojo with the membership site and the more that I learn about my members and the things that they're struggling with, the more content I've created to support them with that and there's always more things that you're thinking, I think they could really do with a video on that and they could really do with a blog post.

But I think that I've you know the kind of things that I just wouldn't struggle with myself but as a membership site owner I've learnt that the more sensitive I can be to other people's needs, and instead of thinking oh well I don't need that, I think okay well people are asking for that so I'll create that for them.

And the more I think that you can support people to get the best experience then the more likely they are to stay, the more likely they are to tell their friends about the membership and feel good about it.

So I think what's really, really hit home to me, I think particularly in the last year is that, like the most important thing for me is customer care and just kind of looking after the members and you know it's hard when you've got quite a big group but helping them kind of feel seen and feel like they're not just a number in your group you know.

So we've like you know we've had a few members unfortunately have had bad luck recently, they've had bereavements or they've, we had one lady broke her arm, we've had good news, we've also had some babies and things and we try and send our members flowers or cards or you know try and support them. And that's obviously as you get bigger and bigger that gets harder.

The other thing as well is people asking questions about, so I've actually recently taken somebody on in the membership who I'm calling our membership care manager. And her job is literally to kind of hang out. We use a Facebook group for our community and her job is literally to hang out, when people ask a question that we know we've got content to help them answer that question, she'll just jump in and say hey have you looked at session four of the content course or have you looked at this really great masterclass with Mike Morrison or something that will help answer your question?

And so yeah I've just really learnt that customer care and just looking after the members is the key to making sure that they stick around and hopefully they progress as well.

Callie: Yeah. Love that. I mean I think it's always so much easier to put effort into keeping the members you already have than just consistently trying to get in new members and I know you mentioned before that you work on a close model anyway so

you've kind of got that additional time to a certain extent to nurture those existing members.

Janet: Yeah. And I think it's interesting because I came along to, I did a really fantastic mastermind session with you and Mike and some other membership owners in London a little while back and I think I decided at the end of that session that I was gonna go open all the time for my membership, and I still haven't managed to do it.

And the reason is because, well a few reasons so first off I think because we've been taking in maybe 50 or 60 new members at a time then they need a lot of care and you know we do like induction calls and lots of things to kind of help people settle in. So it's about like, well it takes a long time to kind of get people settled and make sure they're happy and they know what's what and know where to find things.

And so I do want to kind of move to kind of having it open all the time, however I don't know if it's something just about my audience and I think I do need to experiment with this but they do seem to find it quite difficult to make decisions. And just having the membership open and saying look it's only open til Monday and it's only going to be open for a week this time round then otherwise it's going to be closed again, it does encourage people to make a decision otherwise I think I might have a lot of fence sitters.

But I know that Mike's got quite strong feelings on these things and I know that you've done research as well and you've tried both ways out and you've looked at stats. So I definitely want to experiment with it. But yeah and that's what I mean, that is one of the things I find hard actually as a membership site owner is obviously having lots of new members coming in at the same time and I know that's one of Mike's arguments for why you know why you keep yours open all the time and I've chatted to him about it.

But you know it's hard work. You know inducting new members and helping them to kind of feel settled whatever, so it would be

nice to kind of spread that out but yeah as you can probably hear this is something that I'm still a little bit undecided on.

Callie: Yeah. I think there's arguments for both approaches really and it just a lot of it comes down to what serves you best, what serves your members best and I don't think there's necessarily a right or wrong to that.

Janet: Yeah no, it's certainly something that I want to try but actually I've been so busy inducting new members that actually finding a space we can actually try it it's actually quite a challenge.

Callie: Yeah. So what's actually been your favourite thing about running the membership then? What's kind of been your highlight?

Janet: I think it's the relationships that you build with members which sounds a bit corny doesn't it, and it probably sounds a bit clichéd like but I think that's really true. I was worried actually when I started the membership because my background is journalism so the way I've worked for years and years is you get an assignment, you do the research, you speak to the people, you do the interviews, you work the article, and then you move onto something else. And you move onto something else and move onto something else.

And so I'm a bit of a commitment phobe so in my professional life I'm a bit like I kind of just like to do a project and get it finished and move on so that's where I thought I would be more naturally suited to online courses. But I felt, I had got an online course, I had done them and I just feel frustrated because I feel like when people do a course or something they've always got questions, there's always things that come up again and again. So I think that the membership, although it's almost kind of opposite of the natural way that I like to work, I feel like I've actually been able to make real relationships and real friendships with people in the community.

And like just seeing them soar, you know seeing them sort of come in and they're a bit unsure of themselves and they're not

you know they're kind of like not really sure how to market themselves effectively and they're making a lot of mistakes, and then just kind of seeing them just start to fly and start to flourish. It sounds corny but that's really nice and when you're kind of taking that journey with somebody and I think being a part of a membership means that you can kind of almost hold their hand over a much longer period of time.

And now like I'm getting to work with some of them in my mastermind coaching groups, you know that's amazing because you know I was doing a coaching call earlier on with some of my members and I just got that lovely feeling at the end of it when you're just all, it's so exciting because you just had a really good call and you feel like people have like you know really made progress.

So I like the fact that I'm sort of growing, I like working with the beginners but also I like the fact that I'm also kind of growing this kind of group of high flyers if you like that I can go a bit deeper with. And also I think like people ask me all the time about my membership and how much time I have to put into it and if I'm really really honest, because of the way it's structured, because of the membership you have to have a structure so like Wednesday is our membership day and that's the day that we put together our newsletter, that's the day that we have our group call, that's the day where we do a lot of our membership work.

And because we've automated a lot of the email sequences and actually I'd say in terms of the hours that I spend, it's probably the thing that I spend the least time on day to day, although there's been a lot of up front set up if that kind of makes sense?

Callie: Yeah.

Janet: So it feels like a real win win if you know what I mean?

Callie: Yeah, and let's just talk about that a little bit more then, so what does a typical week as a membership site owner look like for you now?

Janet: So I have organised my working week because I'm very much a morning person, I like to get up early as you know. Cos we've been out like in the, we were out in San Diego weren't we a few months ago and you saw me running alongside the sea at some ridiculous hour in the morning. I'm very much a morning person so I try to do my content creation, and that might be blog writing, that might be email marketing whatever it might be in the morning and then I do calls and podcast interviews and coaching in the afternoon.

So in terms of my membership I might be doing, I'll tend to go to my membership every afternoon, so and I'll go and see what members have been posting, going and help them with things, but the main day, it's just this one day a week so there's Wednesday that we tend to work on membership, we tend to put the newsletter together. Obviously we've stepped things up like you know we have conversation starters everyday in our Facebook group and I'll kind of like jumping in and looking at those as well.

But yeah it's mainly kind of like this one day a week that we're putting most of our resources. I've also been able to outsource quite a lot of the, I mean I mentioned some of the roles that I've got already. I've got Hannah who does my membership care and her job is literally to kind of you know I paid her to watch all of the content, and so basically when somebody has a question she can send them to exactly the right video, exactly the right class or whatever it is that they need. And she's, it's brilliant.

My assistant now, collates, because we send out on a Wednesday we send around everybody's wins, we celebrate what people have, we get them to post what they're really happy about that week and we send out that, those. And my assistant she looks after that for me, she collects them all together, she knows quite a lot of my members anyway. And yeah so a lot of it is kind of automated. The induction sequence is automated, the, I've outsourced my induction calls to my assistant, a reset calls I still do those, I do the Wednesday but basically yeah the only time I have to kind of really show up in person is for one hour a week on

a Wednesday afternoon. The rest of the time, often it's just kind of jumping into the group and helping people with things.

I'm just about to create a whole load of new content because I'm reorganising content on the site. But yeah it's actually fairly kind of, because it's kind of well organised I think and I've got people helping me with the key things, it's actually kind of fairly low maintenance and that's probably doesn't really, do you know what I mean? What I'm getting at?

Callie: Yeah. Definitely and I think that's great because you tend to see that some membership site owners like yourself they've got everything really organised, it's not a huge strain on a day to day basis and things to keep the membership going. And then you have the other side where maybe you're working on it everyday and constantly busy with the membership so I think it's really interesting how you kind of have those two opposite sides really and I think having that organisation in place that you have there you know obviously cos you've got all these other streams to your business as well, presumably it's really important to make sure that you can focus on those too.

Janet: Yeah. And the other thing as well is that we have these two expert masterclasses every month, so twice a month I'm usually bringing someone in who isn't me to deliver a class on something that you know I'm not an expert on. And I guess, you know again I get my assistant to, I'll say to her oh I'd really like to get this person and she gets in touch with them and asks them and she sets it up and sets up the Zoom call and all that kind of stuff. So a lot of this stuff can be outsourced, if you know what it is that you want to achieve, I feel that my time is best spent actually helping the members and working with them and giving them advice.

One thing that I still do, which I do need to change, but actually it's so valuable is when we get new members in I do, if they want it, I give them a 20 minute induction call where I will actually personally like you know get on a call with them. I've had some people say to me that I shouldn't do this, this is too much of my personal time, too much access or whatever but actually for me I

feel like it gives that member a good start, they feel cared about because they get on a call with me and I talk to them about their business.

I also feel I can direct them, I can say to them look you know I know there's a lot of content in there but actually this is the best thing that I think for you to start with I can give them some quick wins. And I know some people would say that maybe that isn't, you know that isn't the best use of my time but I feel like I learn so much from those conversations, I learn so much about what the members need, I learn about what they don't need more of and for me it's been also really good in terms of growing the mastermind and the coaching groups.

Understanding which members, cos essentially it's almost like a discovery call, so when I get onto that call with a new member, essentially it's like a discovery call for the mastermind because some of them I will spot straight away and I will say to them at the end of the call, look I can see that you know in three months, six months time I think you're gonna be ready for something more, are you interested in finding out more about joining my coaching, my mastermind group? Cos actually I think you might be ready for it.

And it helps me identify the people that might be ready for more, it helps me identify people that might struggle, so I do think there's quite a lot of value in it. But obviously you know that does take up a little bit more of my time but I think it's kind of useful use of my time but as we get bigger I'm gonna have to rethink it because I think it's just not gonna be practical.

Callie: Yeah. But as you said as long as it's sustainable and it's helpful for both you and the members, then you know I don't think that's a bad thing at all because if nothing else, it deepens that relationship with the members as well and as you said helps you to get them off to the best start.

Janet: Yeah, exactly. And I feel if you get people off to the best start and they feel like you actually do care about them and they've got to

talk to you as the membership site owner, I feel they're much more likely to be loyal. And another thing we've started doing as well is we've started offering exit calls so when somebody says that they want to leave the membership we say you know that's fine, but if you want you can book a call with me for 10, 15 minutes and I'll just have a chat with you just to kind of give you some you know, just to, it's not even a kind of like I want to find out why you're leaving, it's just like would you like to have a chat with me before you leave? I'll give you a few pointers about some things you might want to think about.

And in that conversation you know I might say to them you know I've noticed that you're doing this and it'd be really good if you did more of that and you know I'd really like to see, you know so I'll give them some pointers. But I've also managed to, to a few people who have got off the call and said oh actually I think I want to stay and so I think that that's probably quite valuable. Not everybody takes it up but it's something that we offer.

Callie: Yeah that's really interesting. I'd be interested to see how many people do actually take that up from you and how well that actually works for either getting people to stay or getting people to come back later on.

Janet: Yeah. I think that's the thing as well. I think you have to think that people might you know they might leave for now but if you can kind of keep that relationship like you know on a good footing and you know I mean I try not to be too heavy handed and like oh I really wanna know why you're leaving or whatever because I think that can make people feel a bit uncomfortable and a bit, and actually we didn't touch on this before but one of the things I do find hard as a membership site owner is that balance between when people aren't interacting, when you notice that somebody hasn't logged on for ages or they haven't been in the community, like I find that quite challenging because on one hand you know they're your customer and if they're not getting the most out of it you want to reach out to them and say hey I've noticed that you haven't logged in recently bla bla bla, do you want any support? Is there anything I can help you with?

But I've noticed that some members, they find that like, they find it a bit of a pressure and it can actually be kind of like, make them a bit cross and a bit angry so I think you have to kind of like, I've had a few members who've got a bit angry that we've done that because I think it can kind of trigger emotions in people where they feel embarrassed or whatever that you've noticed that they weren't participating. And also I think the other thing is that some people join memberships, like I know some people join my membership because they want to be connected with me, like you know they might want to speak at one of my events in the future or maybe they want to be on my podcast or something like that.

And there'll be some people who will be quite happy to pay the annual fee just to maybe have that 20 minute chat with me or to be on my radar for my podcast or something like that and so I do find that quite a tricky one to navigate and that's the same with the exit interviews as well, I think you can't get all heavy handed with people and start kind of interrogating them about why they're leaving. So I try and kind of just keep it positive and kind of say you know I just kind of wanted to have a chat with you about where you are with your business and you know give you a few pointers about a few things that you might want to think about and you know if you have got any feedback, great, but don't worry.

And that seems to be working. We're quite early on so you know in three months, six months I might be able to give you a bit more feedback as to how well it's working but I've certainly, a few people have decided not to leave as a result of that call.

Callie: Excellent.

Janet: Yeah.

Callie: That's what you like.

Janet: Yes definitely.

Callie: So what impact would you say having a membership site has actually had on your life and business then?

Janet: I think as I've touched on before, it's actually, it's kind of helped my workload to become more manageable I think because if you set up a membership in the right way, I've certainly been very inspired by the content that you and Mike put out on that, then it can almost kind of run itself, where you know like I say we have our Wednesdays where we do our membership stuff and I have the Wednesday afternoon call and I pop into the group every afternoon.

And but actually it's kind of ticking along quite nicely and it means obviously you've got regular income coming into your business. I have actually much more annual members than I have monthly members and I kind of prefer annual members because I feel like they're more invested, but as my price is going up I'm getting more monthly members. But it's nice to have that recurring income, it gives you a little bit of stability and also it gives you a funnel of people who might buy, you know in my case they might buy my other products and services. So it feels like it, there's a kind of stability, there's a security as I've touched on, it's not without its challenges like you know I'm in my kind of third version of my membership and you know I'm getting there.

Like it may well go through some sets of other phase, as I learn more about what works and get better at what I do you know it will change again. But I do think, I think I've said it a few times now but stability you know and that kind of like predictability which, if you're running online courses and you're constantly on that kind of launch up and down type thing but I feel this has given me just kind of sort of stability but without kind of feeling like I'm kind of trapped in some kind of job or something if you know what I mean.

Callie: Yeah and it gives you that as you said before that platform for everything else that you're doing as well.

Janet: Yeah. Exactly yeah, definitely.

Callie: So if you could go back to the start of setting up the membership then and the business, is there anything you'd actually do differently?

Janet: Oh my God, like loads, like everything. So the first thing I did was actually because I am the kind of person that, I mean I'm a big believer in kind of like minimum viable products so you know don't like with my Media Diary Owners club my little mini membership that I set up, it literally is a little bit of content, four coaching calls and a couple of pages in the back of my website because I'd not done it before, I didn't want to spend loads of money hiring developers and stuff.

You know and I see a lot of people who are starting membership sites, actually a lot of my clients and they spend huge amounts of money like you know getting membership sites built and everything and you know they don't even know if people want what it is that they're offering so I'm kind of like the opposite. So while that's good because I move very quickly and I set things up very quickly, the downsides are I sometimes make mistakes.

So because I basically had all this content, I could see that I could turn it into a membership so I just did that and I used Teachable to start off with to host my membership and I kind of wish I hadn't done that because I had to kind of then move everything off teachable and you know once I realised that company was you know, I wanted to have it all on my website, I had to kind of move all my content off and move all my members over and that was like a right faff. I wish I just could've started having hosting it all on my website.

I also think that I, well possibly, that maybe I started too low. So I've actually got some members in my group who are paying as little as £15 a month for their membership, legacy members, because I initially I just kind of wanted to test the concept so I kind of put it out there as like £15 a month and I got loads of members. And actually loads of them are still with me unsurprisingly because they're on these like legacy memberships, and some of them are on kind of annual versions of that. So I

don't know actually if that was a bad thing or a good thing because and again I've heard Mike talk about this on the podcast before but I wouldn't dream of putting the prices up for those people because they're loyal and they've stuck with me all along you know through all these different changes or whatever.

And yeah I think actually they're probably only the main things. Like using teachable I think was probably a mistake because it's right kind of faff to undo it. Maybe undercharging little bit to start but actually that did mean but I got I think one of the challenges when you first start a membership is a lot of people are worried like what if I've only got like 10 people in it or something. It meant I was able to start with a like a really good group of people who could bounce off each other and it felt like a community right from the off. So they're probably the two main mistakes. But everything else I think like I've just got better and better.

And I've learnt more, I think the key thing I've learnt is that, and this is what I'm trying to do now is just to link the content much more to the outcomes. So why do people want to learn about PR and marketing? Well they want to learn how to do that because it can you know that's the lifeblood of your business, that's what helps you make money. If you're not out there promoting yourself, but I think I'm only really starting to kind of like get that message across in how marketing my membership and as a result you know I'm getting better and I'm getting you know, always got a waiting list of people who want to join.

But they're probably the main things I think in terms of mistakes and I don't think you even asked me about mistakes did you? You just said what would you change and then I started telling you about my mistakes.

Callie: I think it's kind of essentially the same thing though, a lot of the time cos a lot of the time if we were going to do something differently it's because maybe it wasn't the best decision in the first place. But as you said you know your membership's evolved so much over the last few years as well as any membership site

will that what you have now and the decisions you would make now would be very different from when you were first starting putting your toe in the water kind of thing.

Janet: Yeah and of course you learn so much and you learn particularly, you learn from your members. You know and they tell you what they want and they tell you what they need more of and less of and so, and I've got better at listening to them and got better at kind of noticing them and still got loads more to learn on that. I think it is a constant learning curve.

Callie: Yeah definitely, I think the as you said the listening to your members is such a key to when you are going through those evolutions of actually making sure that you're evolving in the right way.

Janet: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Definitely yeah. But also sometimes I think you have to be kind of like brave and bold, I know I'm going through a kind of whole brand change at the moment and I know that there'll be a little bit of a kick back from some of my members and not just my paid members but members of my wider community. But I know I did this with my book actually, but I remember like I put out all these ideas I have for my book cover and the one that I went with, which has been really really popular and actually a lot of people said they said they bought the book just because they love the cover so much.

Some people saying you're making a big mistake, you know if you choose that book cover it's going to kill your business, it's like the worst thing ever. But in my gut I knew that that was the right thing. And I think sometimes as well, I think I do listen to my members a lot but I think there's some decisions that you have to listen to your own gut and your experience as a business person. And I think some of the changes that I'm making now, I think, once I think once my members have kind of, they see the new site and they see what I'm doing they're gonna love it because it's all gonna be so much easier for them.

But I think if you ask people sometimes about things changing a lot of people just want things to stay the same way don't they? And I think sometimes you just have to be a bit brave and bold and you have to take a decision that you think is best for the membership as well. So it's a bit of a balance.

Callie: Yeah definitely. And I think you know as you said it is that balance because you actually want to listen to your members but them telling you something if that doesn't necessarily correspond with what is best for you or the membership as a whole, then it is finding that balance between making sure the membership works for you and your goals, and that it also is delivering what the members need as well.

Janet: Yeah. And I think also you've got to look after your own wellbeing as well like you know one thing I've never done is I've never held sessions in the evening, like masterclasses or coaching calls. Some of my members have said to me that they would like that and again it might be something that I have to rethink if we do go more international but it sounds like if your members are anything to go by that maybe I won't have to but I feel for my wellbeing that I need to just keep my evenings free so I can go out running or I can like go shopping or whatever I need to do. I think that my wellbeing would suffer if I felt that I was tied to the membership in the evenings as well as during the days and I think I might start to feel resentful. So that's one place where I thought yes I'm going to listen to my members but actually the best thing for me is not to run classes in the evening and not to have workshops and group calls in the evening.

Callie: Yeah. I think that's so important to, as you said have this work for you, for your lifestyle, for your goals, for your family, otherwise you're just gonna end up resenting doing it.

Janet: Yeah. Exactly. And I think you know I really love the membership at the moment and I love the way it works, I love the members, so anything that would make me feel resentful, it's not good.

Callie: Yeah. So other than the rebrand, what does the future hold for the membership kind of how would you like it to look 12 months from now?

Janet: Well I think there's going to be a big period of change. As I say I'm organising the content so that it's much more tied to income goals, so I'm hoping that when members come in, depending on where they are in with their business they'll be able to kind of pick out the content that you know, are they looking to earn one k a month, two and a half k a month, five k, 10k, but that will very much become kind of part of the culture of the group. I really want to grow the mastermind coaching side of it and I just love, I wasn't sure if I would actually, and I think I brought this up at our mastermind, I wasn't sure if I would, but I'm really really enjoying working with smaller groups.

So I've got a group of 10 people that I'm working with at the moment who we're calling our, they're like our rising talent and top talent groups. And I'm just really enjoying being able to spend time, because you know sometimes when you own a membership and you feel frustrated because there's a member and they're struggling with something and you think God you know if I could just grab like half an hour with them on a call I'm sure I'll be able to sort that out or sort them out with that problem, it's kind of quite frustrating.

So I would love, I think by the end of the year, I would love to have maybe 12 people in my top talent group and maybe as many as 24 in my rising talent group, so that's my kind of five k a month. And there's even been talk that we might have an emerging talent group, because one of the bits of feedback that came from the members is that some of them, they were kind of like well it's a bit of a jump from two and a half k a month to five k a month, you know, could you offer something in between, we might do that but I think I'm hoping that my top end will have grown basically.

And thinking longer term than that, ideally at the end of the day we'd love to have a seven figure group. But I need to get the

seven figures first myself. But you know I'm now starting to think a lot more strategically, when I first started out it was just like hey I've got this content and I'm just going to kind of create this membership and see what happens, but now I am very much thinking well I may well need to, hopefully might need to have seven figure group in the future, what might that look like and what I don't want to do with the membership, I guess there comes a point where maybe people will have done everything with you and you know there's no more to do.

But I'd like you know the member journey to be at least a few years and you know one thing that I've said to the members already is that I don't really want to see them staying in the main membership for longer than a year or two because I want them to progress and I want them to kind of like really earn what they're worth. So I think that you know, sort of growing at the top end I think and the coaching and mentoring working with smaller groups as well that's something I'd really like to grow.

Callie: Awesome, yeah. I'm looking forward to seeing that and I've got no doubt that you'll be able to continue to grow it like that. I really appreciate you joining us to talk about the site, I think you know there's a lot of great nuggets in there for everybody. And if someone's interested in finding out more about you or the membership, where can they find you?

Janet: The best place to find me is at my website which is janetmurray.co.uk, I'm also very active on social media so you can find me on Twitter at Jan_Murray, I'm over on Instagram at Janmurrayuk and you can find me on LinkedIn as well and yeah just get in touch.

Callie: Yeah and if you ever get the chance to go to an event where Janet's speaking as well, she's an excellent speaker so definitely jump at the chance to go and see her live as well.

Janet: Thank you that's really nice of you to say, thank you.

Callie: Yeah so really just thank you so much for joining me today Janet, and sharing some of those behind the scenes details. I love that you're doing some things a little bit different to other people in terms of having the open days, I think that's a really excellent idea and the exit strategies and things and how you're working those top tier masterminds into things, it's you know, you're doing a lot of great stuff from the sounds of it.

Janet: Thank you and I'm very much inspired by you and Mike and the content that you're putting out there.

Callie: Well thank you, I'm really looking forward to seeing how the membership continues to grow and hopefully we can get you back on next year and see how things have gone.

Janet: Yeah I'd love to, thank you.

Callie: That's it folks, massive thanks to Janet for joining me on today's show and sharing her membership journey with us. A great takeaway from this episode is actually how Janet has listened to her members and their needs and gradually expanded the membership to benefit members even more. I think the clear progression Janet has from membership to higher level mastermind is absolutely brilliant and there's a clear focus on really wanting to help members achieve those two k, five k, 10k months and more. I hope you picked up your own takeaways from this episode and I'd love to hear what they are. Let me know over in the free membership mastermind Facebook group, and if you're not yet a member there then head on over to talkmemberships.com to join.

If you'd like to pick up the transcript or show notes from this episode then head over to themembershipguides.com/btm12. And if you'd like to find out more about Janet, then head on over to Janetmurray.co.uk. If you're a business owner then she has a great podcast that you're really going to want to check out. That's it from me for this week, join me same time, same back channel next week for another episode.

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