

4 WAYS TO IMPROVE **LIVE** MEMBER CALLS



Mike: Hey, what's happening? Mike here from The Membership Guys. Welcome to Episode 144 of The Membership Guys podcast. This is the show that helps you grow a successful membership website. Thanks so much for hanging out with me today. Truly appreciate you listening to the show, subscribing to the podcast. If you don't already subscribe, be sure to hit that button in iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, whatever it is you are listening to my voice in. Get subscribed to make sure you don't miss a single episode.

Today we're talking all about how to improve your live member calls. Now, a lot of membership owners offer regular live calls as part of their membership. This will typically be things like regular private member-only webinars or regular Q&A sessions that they do live with their members where they can turn up and ask any questions they have about the membership topic. Live calls are a great way of enabling you to add value to your membership without taking as much work and taking as much time as creating courses, creating tutorials, and things like that.

These awesome live calls quite often don't require anywhere near as much preparation, and people are typically more forgiving of things being a little rougher around the edges when you're doing it live. To some degree, they expect your live calls to not be as polished as your static content like courses, like video tutorials, and so on. When you deliver content live, you don't have to think about editing and all that sort of stuff, which can usually suck up hours and hours of time and slow down your ability to actually deliver value to your members. Live calls are a great addition to your membership content strategy, and I wanted, today, to share four tips to make your live calls even better for your members.

Tip number one is to keep the technology simple. For a long, long time online, if you were doing live webinars, then, typically, you were using the most common software, and that's something called GoToWebinar. Now, GoToWebinar is still an extremely popular piece of software for webinars, but the problem with it, especially for member webinars, is that not only do people who are wanting to attend the webinar have to preregister for that webinar, so that means they've got to give their name, and their email address, and all of that, but they also have to download additional software too just to be able to actually attend. That's a pretty big tech barrier. Then, of course, you have to register for every individual live call, and that's a major pain. If someone is a paying member, and they have an account on your



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membership site, then it's going to get so frustrating for them if they're also having to input their details for the live calls that you're doing every couple of weeks.

A fast, simpler alternative would be to use something like Zoom. Zoom is a relatively newish kid on the block in terms of webinar software, and it allows for group calls as well as for traditional webinars. While Zoom does still involve downloading additional software, the entire process is so much quicker, so much slicker, easier, and far less hassle than software like GoToWebinar, to the point where quite a lot of people are switching over to using Zoom for their member calls.

An even easier option, from a member experience perspective, is to use something like YouTube Live. Now, YouTube Live, which was formerly Google Hangouts, lets you directly embed a live video session, a live video broadcast onto a page on your website, so then people simply have to go to that link, which you can have protected by your membership login, of course, to make sure that only members can access it. They go to that link, and the video is right there in front of them. There's no software to download. There's no additional registration process. They just visit a page on your site, and they can watch without any hassles.

Now, inside our own membership, membersiteacademy.com, we also embed a chat room directly below the YouTube Live video. We use a service called Chatroll for that, so that's chatroll.com. Now, this enables members to be able to then ask questions and chat amongst themselves during the live session too, which makes the whole live session more interactive and a lot more fun for attendees. Again, there's no additional software. There's no extra hassle for them. They just hit the link, show up, and everything they need to take part in the webinar is there in front of them.

Of course, if you're using a Facebook group for your membership community, and I won't diverge into giving the pros and cons and giving my personal opinion on whether you should use a Facebook group for your membership, but if you are using one, then one of the big upsides of that is that you could use Facebook Live to do your member calls there. That's making things even easier for your members because the commenting system's all built in. They get to watch the live broadcast as they're on Facebook. In fact, with Facebook Live, you can click away from the main live broadcast and continue browsing around Facebook while the video continues running in a little window that's kind of anchored in the corner of your screen.

Another cool thing with Facebook live is that, once a live call is done, then it's automatically available for people to watch on a replay. You don't need to download the file or do anything with it. Someone who wasn't able to come along live will still see that video available to watch, from the beginning, if they come along later.

This all comes back to making that technology simple. If people are needing to download software, go through a whole registration process, jump through all sorts of hoops to attend your live calls, then unless those live calls are incredibly, incredibly compelling, they're probably not going to bother. So tip one, keep the technology simple. Remove as many tech barriers as possible.

Tip two, get your members involved as much as possible. The interactive nature of doing these sorts of live calls is one of the biggest selling points. The opportunity for your members to be able to ask you questions, get your direct feedback, your personal opinion, or even just to hang out with you and chat with you in real time,



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that would be a big motivating factor for actually turning up, so you should look for ways in which to get members involved as much as you can and feed that desire for interaction, especially if your membership is built around you as an expert, as a personal brand where your members want that access to you, they want to hang out with you, they want to be able to engage with you in real time, then any way you can feed that is going to really raise the bar with your calls.

Now, if you're doing traditional webinars, either with yourself or a guest expert, so this is where it will usually be just one person giving, essentially, a live presentation, a keynote speech, or a workshop for 30 to 45 minutes. If you're doing those sorts of webinars, then ensure you make time for a live interactive Q&A at the end. Depending on the software that you're using, you could even have your members call in so they actually come up on camera or their voice comes through. It's not just you reading out their question from a chat room. You actually get them there as part of the call. It's a great, great way of giving that sort of interaction and that personal touch.

Now, if you do live Q&As, again, the most important part of this is actually the ability for people to submit questions. Now, we always suggest that you give people a way of pre-submitting questions, so maybe have a form on your website, or perhaps you have a section in your forum, or you solicit questions through your Facebook group, or something like that. It's always good to pre-submit the questions, but you want to make sure that whatever software or solution you're using for the live call, that there is the facility for people to give questions live, whether that's in a chat room or, again, whether it's actually getting them onto the call to ask you their question in person.

You might also think about doing member spotlight or coaching calls where, every month, you hand pick one or more members who will either receive direct coaching during a live session with other members in attendance so they get to watch the coaching call, or you can get those members to submit an idea, a project, or a piece of work to be analysed and then fed back on live during the call. It doesn't even need to be a coaching call. You could do something like just having a member of the month section during your live Q&A calls where you specifically call out and praise a member for an achievement. Maybe you even get them onto the call as well and have them say a few words. The more your members are involved in your live sessions, the more they have skin in the game, and the more likely they are to show up.

Tip two is get your members involved in your calls. Even if they are the traditional webinars, which are all based around you or an expert delivering expertise, make some room to bring your members in on those calls and get them involved. If they feel part of the call, of course, they're going to want to show up, and they're going to interact and engage in a more positive manner.

Tip three is to get on camera. Honestly, this is something we struggle with ourselves, but if you can get out from behind a PowerPoint presentation, which is how most people deliver their webinars and their regular calls, if you can get out from behind those presentations and actually show your face on camera, it can drastically increase how well your member calls go. It's a change that we're starting to make with our own member calls, starting with our live Q&As that we do every month. People just respond and interact so differently when they can see you live and in living colour. It's a great way of getting that more personal connection, and that's



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something that's often difficult to do within the one-to-many environments of a membership site.

Sometimes, getting on camera, going face to camera just isn't possible or practical to do. If you're delivering a webinar or you need to give a demonstration or a walk through of a system or something technical, then it might not be practical. It might not be feasible for you to be on camera for the duration of that, but in those cases, consider maybe even just getting on camera for the introduction and then flipping over to a screen cast or a PowerPoint presentation and coming back on camera later on for some Q&A.

If you're a little bit camera shy or you're a bit neurotic about being on camera, you're worried about how you look, whether your hair is right, whether the lighting's perfect, how the background looks ... Honestly, it's kind of like myself and [Callie 00:10:31]. We're a little bit neurotic about being on camera. Really, you just need to suck it up. Bite the bullet and try it out. If you're not already going on camera during your live member calls, then there's your challenge. For your next member call, try this out. Try it just once, and you'll see what difference it makes allowing people to actually see your face during these calls.

Now, if you really can't bring yourself to it, and you can't conceive of appearing on camera during your calls, then I recommend you check out the work of our good friend Holly Gillen from hollygstudios.com. That's Holly with two Ls. Check her out. She puts out some great stuff about getting yourself in the right place and in the right mindset to make that jump into face-to-camera video. Check it out, hollygstudios.com, or check out the show notes for this episode, themembershipguys.com/144. We'll have all the links, including the link to Holly's website on the show notes. Tip three, get out from behind the PowerPoint presentation. Get your face on camera during your member calls.

Tip four, make sure you remind people to show up. Don't take it for granted that your members will actually remember when your live calls are or that they'll go out of their way to attend. Make sure you're reminding people via email, via inner messaging services like Intercom or Drift where you can actually pop up a message to anyone who's on the website letting them know when the next call's going to be, perhaps letting them know that there's a call in progress and giving them that link. Use these tools to make sure that people are aware that these live calls are happening.

Have a prominent spot on your site. On your member dashboard, have the date, and the time, and the subject of when the next live call is going to be with a link to either access the call, to register if you are using services like GoToWebinar. Make sure this information is prominently displayed on your site. You might even add a countdown timer. That's something we've got on our own website. A few days before any live call we do, a countdown timer is shown on our site, which is ticking down the seconds, minutes, hours and days until the live call happens.

You can use a service like addevent.com to create a link or a button that will let people put the date of your next call into their calendar app. In fact, addevent.com actually has a way of you being able to enable people to subscribe to a calendar so any calls that you do or anything that you put on this main master calendar automatically feed through into Google Calendars, into Outlook, whatever someone's using for their own personal calendar. They subscribe so those events are



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automatically added into their diary and, of course, through their calendar app, they're going to get reminders and so on through there too.

Now, the truth is you have to accept that most people won't attend calls live, especially if you're recording these calls and adding them into the archive, and we certainly encourage you to do that because it adds a lot of value to your site, but it also removes some of the necessity to be there live. Of course, you can try to encourage more people to come live through some of the tips that we've covered here, but as we said, some people just will never turn up live. Maybe it's a time zone thing. Maybe they just prefer to watch it on a replay. Don't worry too much about that. Just make sure that those people who would be inclined to come along live aren't forgetting about your calls, or they're not missing it because you haven't given them a reminder.

Those are my four tips to improve your member calls. Keep the technology simple. Get your members involved wherever possible. Get out from behind the PowerPoint presentations and the screencasts, and get your face on camera, and make sure that you are reminding people to show up. Don't just send out a single email and leave it at that. Send them a couple of emails in advance. Send the one on the day that it's actually happening. Get the date, time up on your website. Use Intercom. Use Drift. Use addevent.com. Make sure there's no conceivable way that your members could have overlooked or forgotten about the fact that you've got a live call coming up.

If you are doing live calls within your membership, hopefully, some of what we talked about today is going to help you to raise your game. I'd love to hear what you guys are doing with your own live calls. If you're offering things like webinars and Q&As, what are you doing to increase attendance, and what are you doing to improve the quality, and the enjoyability, and the effectiveness of the calls for those people who do come along? Let me know inside our free Facebook group, talkmemberships.com. We're going to be discussing this topic in more depth in there. If you're not part of that free Facebook Group, we've got over 7,500 membership site owners in there, and we're going to be chatting more about how to get the best out of your live calls, so head over to talkmemberships.com, join the group, and let your opinions, and experiences, and advice be heard.

That's it for me for this week. Thanks so much for spending part of your day with me. Hopefully, it's been worth your while, and I'll be back again next week with another instalment of The Membership Guys podcast.



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