



Mike Morrison:

Well, hello there. Welcome to episode 148 of The Membership Guys podcast. I'm your host Mike Morrison. This is a place to be for proven practical tips and advice on building, launching and growing a successful membership website. Thank you so much for spending part of your day with me. I truly, truly appreciate you listening to the show. If you are a first-time listener, go ahead and click subscribe on your podcast app in iTunes, Stitcher, wherever it is you're listening to us from. Hit subscribe to make sure you don't miss a single episode. And of course, if you're a long-term listener, thank you for sticking with us. I appreciate each and every one of you and hopefully, today's insights are gonna help you with your membership.

We're talking about how you can add a personal touch to your membership. One of the best things about the membership model is that it is one-to-many. You get to serve more of your audience without the typical time restraints and without the other constraints that you have, working with clients on a one on one basis. One-to-many models like membership sites move you away from the time for money trap, where you're constantly grinding out billable hours, and the capacity to grow your business and to serve your audience is limited by how many hours in the day you have to work. I'm a huge, huge fan of the one-to-many elements of memberships. However, it's not without its downsides.

When you have a one-to-many type of business, then without question, you lose a little bit of that personal touch. You lose a little bit of that one on one connection. As your membership grows and you get hundreds and thousands of members, it just gets harder and harder and harder to maintain a personal touch and a personal presence in your membership. But if you can pull it off, then it can go a long, long way. That's what we're talking about today. I'm gonna give you some simple ways of adding a personal touch to your membership. This is something which can really help set you apart from your competition.

Because honestly when it comes to membership sites, people don't necessarily expect a one on one connection. So, if you can find ways of actually offering that, then that's gonna push your membership site above and beyond. It's gonna help you form those relationships and establish the sort of connection with your members that makes it more likely that they stick with you, long-term.

The first way that you can add that personal touch to your membership is to send short personal videos to your members. This could be sending simple short recorded messages to welcome new members, to congratulate existing members on big wins or to celebrate milestones. This is something we actually start doing in our own membership about a year ago. We talked about this a bit more back in Episode 125. You can check that out at the [membershipguys.com/125](https://membershipguys.com/125), where we go into a bit more detail about how we used that strategy ourselves. But essentially what we do, we use a service called Bonjoro. This is an awesome tool that makes it really easy to manage the whole process of very quickly and very simply recording 30 to 40-second-long video clips on a per member basis, and then send these clips to individual members.

It's so easy and so effortless to do this, but the response that you get from the recipients of those messages is huge. One of the main reasons this works so well is that it's just so unexpected. If you go and you buy a Tesla, you don't expect to get a private video from Elon Musk. If you join a membership, you don't expect a personal video from its founder, especially if they're a big-name expert in their field where sometimes, those guys can be pretty inaccessible. You can deliver that personal touch even if it was just 30 seconds of well-rehearsed well-practiced spiel, welcoming someone to the membership. But calling them by name, maybe even making a little reference to where it is in the world that they are. So, if you can see from their registration that they're from Texas, making a little reference to the Super Bowl or something like that.

I'm not an American football fan. I've got no idea if Texas even has a team, let alone whether they made it to the Super Bowl, but you can quickly find this info out. It's very little effort, so little friction for you. But the impact, the response and the reaction that you're gonna get when people get that message out of the blue is going to be huge. That personal touch is very, very valuable. And again, this isn't just to welcome new members. If you see in your community that someone's just had a big achievement, send them a quick video. If you see that someone's celebrating a birthday, send them a quick video, someone's coming up to the yearly renewal of their membership, send them a quick video. When you see that they have renewed or before they renew. If you haven't heard from someone who was previously quite an active member of your community, send them a quick video. With Bonjoro, you can just do this on your phone.

Wherever you are, you could be out in a café. Pull out your phone, hit record, and you can make a big impact for 20 or 30 seconds of personalised video message. Bonjoro really does make it very, very easy to do that. We actually fairly recently switched to Bonjoro from a similar tool called BombBomb. Bomb,

as in exploring bomb, times two, which is a very similar tool. They're both great. We're loving Bonjoro so far. It's a little bit easier on mobile. But honestly, this is such a simple way of adding a personal touch. We highly recommend that you consider doing it for your membership. If you're not sure whether it's something you wanna roll out on a large scale, do a limited time trial. So, welcome every single new member you get in this next month by sending them a 30-second-long video, and just see how it changes the dynamic of those initial relationships that get formed when people are joining your membership.

That's a fast, simple way of giving that personal touch to your members. The second is having a new member questionnaire. This is where every new member joining your site is asked to complete a questionnaire. Now you don't want this to be war and peace. You don't want this to be an interrogation. But this is a good opportunity to get some key information from the people who are joining your site, about what their needs are, what their situation is. This information gives you an opportunity to personally email those people back and answer any questions that they have. Giving that personal attention to help these guys get off to the best possible start.

You can also use the answers to new member questionnaires and new member surveys to direct people to appropriate content. Either manually, so this could be something you do or a team member or virtual assistant. Or, if you have a ninja web developer, you can even whip something together that is going to be able to make those kind of tailored content recommendations automatically. If you can cut through some of that self-discovery that new members need to do, where they're gonna be looking around your site trying to figure out where the best place to start is. If you can cut through that with an email that takes you a couple of minutes to write, and you can get them straight into the stuff that's gonna help them the most, that's more likely to deliver a win for them, then that's gonna pay off big time for you in the long run. Because the sooner somebody starts getting results out of your membership, the more likely it is they're gonna stick around for months and years to come.

Now you can simply embed a Google Form, which is free to set up. You can embed a Google Form into your membership if you wanna go kind of low-fi. Or we recommend using Gravity Forms. Gravity Forms is a paid plugin, but it's not too expensive. It allows you to do a lot of cool stuff when you're setting up things like questionnaires. As an example, you can direct people to different pages on your website, depending on their choices within the survey. If you've got dropped down options or you were check boxes, you can actually set up your Gravity Form questionnaire, to direct people have two different parts of your membership according to the choices that they've selected.

If you're an Academy member, we actually have a tutorial inside the training library that shows you exactly how to do that. But whichever way you do it, adding a new member questionnaire is a real, real useful part of the onboarding process and it's going to give you that great early opportunity to apply a personal touch, in order to help your new members get off to the right start.

Third way of adding a personal touch to your membership is to use an in-app messaging system like Intercom or Drift. Now you've probably seen them yourself. You've certainly seen it if you are a member of Member Site Academy. It's that little icon down in the bottom right hand corner of the screen. Now, you can pre-program these apps to send messages based on member activity. If it's the first time someone's visiting a particular section of your site or inactivity. If it's been a long time since anyone's actually completed a lesson in a course or something like that. You can pre-program these in-app messaging systems to send messages, either through the sight or via email, based on member activity.

Now there's a degree of personalization in that, because it's reactive to individual activity and individual engagement. But where you really get that personal touch is through one of the features these apps have. That has the ability to actually use intercom or Drift as an onsite to a messenger tool. So, members can actually contact you via this tool. They can reply to the messages you send them. These tools obviously have controls for your availability, for out of offers messages, for whether you wanna make it so people can start messages to you or just replied to them. But that channel that affords an opportunity for a little bit of private communication where it's needed, again, it's an opportunity to provide personal touch and personal service to your members.

The fourth simple way of adding a personal touch is by having an introduction section in your forum. Now if you're using a Facebook group, it's a little trickier to have something that works as a permanent section just for new member introductions. But if you're using forum software like IP.Board, XenForo, bbPress, Website Toolbox, whatever, then you should have a dedicated section setup where members can introduce themselves to the community. And, you should be pointing all new members to that section and encouraging them to introduce themselves as part of your onboarding strategy. Now these kind of intro sections, again, it's a very straightforward setup, we do see that it works best if you're giving people pointers.

So perhaps, you provide a template, a set of questions for people to answer if they're struggling to write their introduction post. Sometimes that can be enough to put people off if they can't quite figure out, "Okay, well, what should I be saying? How can I describe what I do in an interesting manner? Do I need to be clever or do I need to be straightforward?" Give people some pointers or have a sticky thread. Have a topic that is pinned to the top of your intro section that says, read this first. And then in there, you can give them maybe four or five questions that you suggest that they address, or they answer in the introduction post.

This is similar to the benefits of a new member questionnaire, in that that gives you an opening and an opportunity to actually give someone a personalised response very early on in their member lifecycle. If you know something about them, about their experience about their goals. So, this is all info they're going to put into the intro thread. You know that stuff, then you've got something to

work with. You're not just sending a generic template response to someone, you are participating in a personal conversation that's taking place on your forum. Because it's an introduction section that is specifically designed to be where new members put their very first post, that's a great way of getting people started very early on in their membership with actually engaging in the community.

The great thing is, you'll get others from inside the community coming into those intro threads and saying hello, too. That's a great feeling for somebody new. It lets them know that they are welcomed, and that they're not just a number, they're not just another member, not just a line on a spreadsheet or an entry in a database. It feels personal. It's not just you giving that personal touch it, it's other people in the community going in there and saying hello and engaging on a personal level too. So, if you have a forum, make sure you have an introduction section for all members and that this is prominently displayed at the top of the forum, and you are directing people there as part of your onboarding to very, very easy way of getting people started and actually getting them into using the community. Because as we always say, members come for the content, but they stay for the community.

If you can get people into it very early on, it's gonna pay dividends in the long run. Sticking with forum sticking with community, depending on the software you're using for your community, you can create a private coaching section. This is a section of your forum where only admins of the site and the person who started a discussion can actually read that discussion. You as an admin, you can see all the threads, all the posts in this section. Your members can only see a thread that they have started. This is absolutely perfect as a private coaching section within your community. You have a whole section where members posting can't threads others have started, they can only see their own. That gives them the sort of private safe space to perhaps be more open and more frank than they'd want to be in public, where other members could see.

That's gonna bring people out of the woodwork who perhaps previously didn't feel comfortable with participating in a more open forum environment. It's also gonna result in better discussions, more transparency and a lot more value being delivered. And of course, a much greater personal connection. Now for you, you're still answering posts. Your experience is just the same as if you were answering stuff that was posted in the open areas of the community. But the potential value of that privacy and the more personal attention that that enables you to provide is a huge, huge thing for members. Now the big difference is that with posts in the public side of the forum, you don't need to be the one that answering all of them, but the members are going to weigh in. But with the private coaching section. It's all on you.

So, adding this sort of section into your community isn't a decision to take lightly. It's gonna result in a little more work. But in terms of how much value they can add to your membership as a proposition, as a value offering, then it's certainly something to consider. Because the value that having that private

coaching section creates is worth way more than the added time it'll usually require of you to put into it. Now this is something that we just started doing ourselves inside Member Site Academy. We've seen, and we've advised clients on using this strategy going back years, and we've experienced it all cells on the other side of things inside a membership we've been part of. In fact, it's a strategy that worked very, very well for James Schramko inside his SuperFastBusiness membership.

We've seen it working from both sides of the relationship, as a membership owner and as a member. Now, that is literally the only place you can get one-to-one coaching from us. Well, one-to-two technically, because both myself and Callie in there. But if you want that personal attention, we now have a place for it inside our community. That just enables us to work with people on a much more personal level, without it really dramatically changing our day-to-day routines. Because we're still just answering posts in the same way we would in public. It's just we have a lot more to go on, and we're probably going to be working with people who previously we haven't seen much on the community, who were drawn in by the private element of this coaching section.

Now obviously, the technological side of things is going to be a major deciding factor in whether having a private coaching section in your forum is doable for you. If you're using IP.Board, which is what we use, or XenForo, then both of those software have options for creating this type of private forum section. Most forum software doesn't. But an alternative, if you're not using IP.Board or XenForo, would be to use something like Intercom or Drift, which I mentioned earlier, where it has that messenger feature. So, you use the messenger element in order to deliver that coaching.

In fact, we were having a conversation with one of our members who does offer this kind of private coaching section and private coaching feature of their membership, and they're using Intercom. They've actually said that because Intercom sent an email notification whenever you have a message to both sides of the conversation, and you can reply to the messenger conversation by hit reply and an email, it's almost like they're delivering email coaching. They're not, they're still doing it through Intercom, but they've had their own customers, their own clients describe this as email coaching. So, the value perception and the actual value, the real personal attention you can deliver through having this kind of private coaching facility can be huge. While it may, in some cases, require a lot more work on your part, the payoff is often going to be more than worth it.

Now this is something that we're going to be discussing in much more depth in a future episode of The Membership Guys podcast. Right now, it's something that we are trailing, we are testing ourselves inside Member Site Academy. Because obviously if it turns out that you guys use it so much, that we are chained to a desk answering posts for 18 hours a day, then, sorry, that's just not gonna work. But so far, the private coaching section, we set it up a few weeks ago, it's off to a great start we'll be digging more into our own strategy, experiences and

lessons learnt in a few months' time here on the podcast. So, keep an eye out for that episode. In the meantime, if you want to experience it for yourselves and you want that personal attention from Kelly and myself at a private coaching environment, head on over the [membersiteacademy.com](http://membersiteacademy.com).

Okay, so that's method number five of offering a personal touch to your members. Method number six, sticking with the coaching theme. Another way of giving one-to-one attention in a one-to-many membership is by having regular member coaching calls or hot seats that you run live. This is where you are one on one with a member of your community. You're usually doing it live, and you're coaching them for 30 minutes to an hour. This will be anywhere from one member per week on these type of calls, to maybe even just one member per month getting coached by you, one on one for anywhere up to an hour. The twist is that the rest of your members get to be in the audience. They get value from observing somebody else being coached. These type of personal coaching calls are a great way of giving that one on one attention in a highly leveraged way that has value for your broader member base too. Because a lot of what you'll discuss during these calls will be relatable, may very well apply to other members who are watching.

Quite often when you're doing these kind of hot seat calls, after you've done your one-on-one coaching, usually you'll open the floor up to input from members who are actually watching the call live. They'll have other suggestions, or they'll have questions that help you to expand on and enhance the coaching that you've done. So, you get to combine that highly personal experience and that highly personal attention, while also bringing in your wider member base. So, there are lots of benefits to having these type of hot seats. These coaching calls. Now obviously there's various things you need to consider with this. It is, of course, a time constraint. The fact that you have an audience may actually restrict the type of people or the type of issues that are gonna be brought to the table on these coaching calls. But by and large, they can work very, very well as a way of adding a personal touch to your membership.

Another very simple way of offering a personal touch is to have a regular member spotlight. So, this might be a video. It might be a blog post that you put out once a month. Maybe it's even just a forum post that you post inside your membership on a monthly basis, where you shine a light on one chosen member. One particular member from your community. You give them recognition for doing good things, for their achievements, for their contributions, for their wins and so on. You might even go on further and have a member of the month. Where you actually hand-picked someone to receive a little bit of attention, and they get a prize or some sort of gift like a gift card or something like that. People love to be recognised and having something like a member of the month or a member spotlight can be something that's aspirational to other members, too.

Now there's a couple of ways we do this sort of thing inside the Academy. First and foremost, we shout out our member wins. Anyone who's launched their

site, people achieving certain goals. If someone's had a promotion that net them a whole bunch of members, or maybe they've finally finished working on their magnum opus course that they're gonna add to their membership. Anything that our members are happy about in terms of achievements and results, we shout these guys out every single month. We give them a pat on the back and we encourage all of our other members to do exactly the same thing. To share in each other's successes and celebrate the results we're all getting.

Now we do this every single month. It used to be done as part of our live Q and A calls. So, before we got to the Q and A section of our monthly calls, we'd go through any new stuff from the Academy in the past month. And then we'd have a whole section where we shout out member wins. But we've actually since then, we've split it out from the Q and A calls, and it now has its own segment on a brand new monthly Academy show that we're releasing at the end of every month. So, that's drawing even more attention to those member wins. And, as part of that Academy show, we've also started a member of the month scheme in our own membership too. So, our very first member of the month is a guy called Brandon. He runs a site called claritasu.com. He's had some great success with his membership, but we actually picked him as member of the month, for how generous he is with sharing the ins and outs of what working for him in his membership. The promotions that he's doing.

He's done this since day one of his membership site. He joined us before his membership was launched. And in the last couple of years, the posts that he's made in the community and what he's shared to the community has really delved in to the behind the scenes. Sharing his own insights, the lessons he's learned, what's worked, what hasn't and so on. So, he's basically over the years been giving members a multiyear case study that breaks down what he's done to reach several thousands of members in his site. He's just so generous to the community. He goes above and beyond, in terms of how much depth and how much transparency and how much he's sharing in the name of helping other members. So, he was a very, very easy first pick for his generosity to the community.

We not only gave him a spotlight on the show, we called them out, we give his membership a bit of attention and all that sort of stuff. We gave him that spotlight, but we also send them a little prize as a thank you for everything he brings to the community. Now the impact of that, the response we got from Brandon was huge. The response from other members was also huge. All round, it just added to the feel-good vibe within the community. It was such a great personal thing for us to be able to do that for one of our members. It's such a simple thing to do. So, think about ways in which you can have a member spotlight or even a member of the month programme inside your community.

The final simple way of adding a personal touch to your membership is to get on camera more. If you're not appearing on camera regularly in front of your members, you need to start doing it more. So often, we strive to increase the personal connection and the personal element and our member experience, but

then in the bulk of what's inside our membership in terms of content and all that stuff, we're completely hidden away. Most of the courses, webinars, and so on that people create and a lot of memberships that we see are screen casts. So, they are screen recordings. They are recorded PowerPoint presentations.

The easiest way to establish more of a personal presence and more of a personal connection is you actually get out from behind the PowerPoint presentation, and actually be on camera more. So, be on camera for your welcome videos. So, if you're showing a welcome video to new members, make sure that you're actually on camera for all of it or even just part of it, so the first thing someone seeing after they've joined your membership is you. You're establishing that personal connection right away. If you're doing live Q and A calls, do them on camera. Don't hide behind a PowerPoint, especially with Q and A calls. Because usually, there's nothing going on screen during Q and A calls when you've got a PowerPoint screen up. Usually, it's just the words, live QA or, time for questions, and that's sat up on screen for the duration of your Q and A call.

Even though it's probably impractical in some memberships to be on camera for your courses and for your webinars and so on where maybe you need to explain complex stuff, and so having text on screen is actually the best way of doing it, or you need to give demos or walk through were being able to actually see something and action is important. Even with those sorts of things, consider recording introductions and maybe even out roles for some of your lessons or your modules that you have within your courses. If you're doing webinars, go on camera for the first few minutes. And then when you open the floor to questions at the end, come back onto camera. Being more visible, getting more of a presence, putting more of you into your membership content. Not just educational content but content you use for onboarding, content you use when you're communicating with members and stuff like that. Like your welcome videos, tour videos, all that sort stuff.

Getting more of our visible presence increases the chances of people forming that connection to you. Feeling like they know you. that alone, can make for a much more personal member experience and deepen the relationship that that person has with your membership and with your brand. So, it's not just a membership they are part of, it's a community they feel connected to. Now I have a confession. This is a little bit of a self-rant, because we have been very guilty ourselves of not getting on camera enough at Member Site Academy and within the membershipguys.com marketing as well. So, getting on video more is certainly a big shift that we're making ourselves with Member Site Academy.

We're getting in front of the camera more. With our Academy show, we're on camera. We're now on camera for our monthly Q and A calls. We're recording a whole bunch of on camera stuff for the revamp of our membership roadmap that's coming in the future. We're redoing off thank you videos, our welcome videos, our tour of videos, and so on and so on, to get more of us into the membership. That, without question, even early on in making this shift, which is

still is for us with Member Site Academy, we're already noticing a huge difference and the level of personal connection that we're managing to get now with members as a result. So, if you've been hiding behind PowerPoint presentations and all that sort of stuff, getting in front of the camera and getting on camera more is definitely something to think about for your own membership.

Okay, so that's eight simple ways of adding a personal touch to your membership site. First one is to send short personal video messages to members. To welcome new members, congratulate them on wins, celebrate milestones, bonjoro.com is a great tool for doing that. Second, is to have a new member questionnaire that gets you the information that enables you to have an opportunity to give someone a little bit of personal attention, and send them off in the right direction to help them get to the best possible start. Three, consider using in-app messaging services like Intercom or Drift, to enable that private two-way conversation with your members when they need it. Four, an absolutely essential for anybody with a forum, have an introduction section and give your new members some pointers on how to actually make a good intro that helps you and the community get to know a little bit about them. That's gonna make it easier for them to actually integrate themselves into your community.

Five, is to consider adding a private coaching section to your site, where you can go much deeper and get much more personal and much more transparent with the conversations you're having with your members. And, essentially provide them with a small degree of one-on-one coaching. Six, is considered offering member hot seat. So, live coaching calls where you go one-on-one with a member every single month or every single week as frequently as you wanna do it, but the rest of your community gets to watch and then participated as well. Method seven is to have some sort of member spotlight or some sort of member of the month. A way of recognising, acknowledging and even rewarding in some cases, members for their achievements and their contributions to your site.

Finally, method number eight of adding that personal touch your membership is to get in front of camera more. Put more of you into the member experience and into your content. Now, of course I know that you're all very smart cookies. After all, you're listening to this podcast, right? So, I'm betting that the majority of you are doing a whole bunch of the stuff we've already talked about. But hopefully, this episode has given you some more ideas for how you can really deepen that personal touch in your membership in a variety of pretty straightforward, pretty simple ways.

I'd love to hear from you how you're making your membership a more personal experience for your members and for your community. Let me know inside our free Facebook group at [talkmemberships.com](https://www.facebook.com/talkmemberships). That's [talkmemberships.com](https://www.facebook.com/talkmemberships.com). Or if you're on Facebook, just search for Membership Masterminds. You'll find our group there. It's closing in on about 8000 members. No doubt by the time this

podcast goes out, we'll have passed the 8000 mark. 8000 membership site owners, and we're gonna be discussing how to add the personal touch to your membership in more detail there.

I'd love to hear your ideas. I'd love to hear if you already have some of the stuff we talked about in today's show in place. I wanna hear how it's working for you as well. And of course, you get to see what other membership site owners are doing in their own sites, too. Check that out at [talkmemberships.com](http://talkmemberships.com), or search for Membership Mastermind on Facebook to join our free group and chat more about this topic.

That's it from me for this week. Hopefully, you've enjoyed the episode. If you have, don't be scared. Don't be nervous to leave a nice little review on iTunes, only five stars will do, by the way. If you're thinking of leaving four stars or below, it's okay. Go do something else. It's fine. We only take five-star reviews. If the podcast has been useful to you, we'd love a review. We appreciate any feedback from you guys. I'll be back again next week with another instalment of The Membership Guys podcast.

