

WHY YOU SHOULD  
KEEP THINGS  
**SIMPLE**  
WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP





- Mike Morrison: What's up everyone? Welcome to episode 179 of the Membership Guys Podcast. I'm your host, Mike Morrison. Thank you so much for joining me for this week's episode. I truly appreciate you taking time out of your day. If you all looking for insights, tips, and practical advice to help you take your membership business to the next level, then you've come to the right place. If you're a brand new listener, make sure you hit subscribe in whatever app, whatever tool you use to listen to podcasts. Or if you're a long-term listener, firstly thank you again so much, for your continued support of the show.
- Mike Morrison: If you enjoy the show and if it's helped you in any way with your own membership, I truly would appreciate it if you take a moment or two, to leave a nice, shiny positive review in iTunes, Stitcher wherever you're listening to the show. Just to help us spread the word and help us reach more in the membership world. I'd be truly, truly grateful and if you do leave a review, be sure to let me know on social. Hit me up on twitter @ membershipguys. To let me know, so I can thank you personally.
- Mike Morrison: Okay. Today we're talking about simplicity. So, this is where I'm gonna pull out the soap box a little bit. Because this is an area where I see so many people, whatever stage they are in their membership, making the same mistakes over and over again in terms of how they're approaching things, what their mindset is and so on.
- Mike Morrison: Now, this is an episode I've been meaning to record for quite a while and it was really inspired and sparked over a year ago by some comments. Just kind of casual comments that we received in conversation with one of our members where they talked about how complex the academy was, and they asked us whether or not we thought that was a problem because if our members are trying to kind of emulate and replicate us, then the academy is just such a complex Membership Site for people to be able to replicate and would that cause potential problems.
- Mike Morrison: Now, it's important to understand that Member Site Academy, is pretty much unlike any other Membership Site in the world, because it performs this strange sort of jewel role. On the one hand, it's an educational community where we are teaching people about memberships, where we're supporting membership owners and all of that sort of stuff, so that's version one of member site academy. That's essentially what it is, but it has this duality going on, because at the same time it's also a living, breathing case study of a membership.
- Mike Morrison: So, not only do people learn from the stuff we actually create to teach them, they also learn purely through observation of how we as Membership Site owners run our business. And that's a bit of a double edge sword, because you do get a lot of people wanting to emulate wanting to replicate what we do.
- Mike Morrison: So, that puts the pressure on a bit. And because of that, when those comments were made about the fact Member Site Academy is such a complex, is that going to cause problems for members who are trying to replicate you? I'd have to take a real good step back and really think about that feedback, because the last thing that we want is to make our members think that in order to be successful they have to have a really complex Membership Site.





- Mike Morrison: And it's not something we'd really put too much thought into before because we've never necessarily considered member's site academy to be a complex membership or a complex business and actually when we did dig into it and we did think about it more, that really reinforced that viewpoint.
- Mike Morrison: Member Site Academy is actually very simple. When you look at our content, you know, we don't have things like drip feeding. When you join, you get access to everything. We have just one single membership level. There's no two or three different tiers that aren't upsells, down sells and all that sort of stuff. We don't have quizzes or assessments or prerequisites that you have to complete in order to unlock more lessons. We don't have advanced gamification, anything like that. It's a fairly simple membership.
- Mike Morrison: Even things like the membership roadmap, which is our real kind of flagship piece of content. That's our course, so to speak. That's essentially our big signature course that teaches you how to go from having an idea all the way through to having a successful membership up and running. Even that is simple. Yes. Some of the graphical stuff, some of the way in which it's presented and lay it out is a little bit custom, but effectively it's just a course.
- Mike Morrison: Its text images and videos on a page structured lay it out and consumed just like a course, there's no prerequisites, there's nothing that's particularly advanced about it. Our forum is just a straightforward forum. Our content is straightforward content. Our courses are essentially just fairly basic presentations. Now, the content itself isn't basic, but the way in which is executed, it's straightforward.
- Mike Morrison: It's something anyone can do, it's something pretty Standard. Our lessons and our courses, they're videos with some text, some links, and sometimes some downloadable PDFs and workbooks. And even the way in which we market the academy is pretty simple and straightforward too. There's no magic to it. We don't have a really convoluted complicated funnel. Again, some of how we've laid things out, the design and stuff, his fancy, but it's not complex and actually even on the design front you can do quite a lot of similar things to what we do using our member only theme, that all of our members get.
- Mike Morrison: So this whole conversation and this kind of forced delving into how our membership actually runs and whether it's complex or not really did reinforce how important simplicity is to us. We have a simple, straightforward business model. We have a simple, straightforward membership, and that's implicitly really makes everything so much easier for us. It streamlines everything.
- Mike Morrison: And we can actually say the same about pretty much every successful membership we've been in involved into. The most successful memberships are ones which are straightforward, there's no unnecessary complexity. So, I really want to talk about this and instilled the value of embracing simplicity in your membership to everyone who's either thinking about building a new Membership Site or already has one up and running.





Mike Morrison:

Now, people seem to lean towards complexity. It's bizarre. I think in many cases, the reason for this, the reason people default to trying to make everything complex rather than just keeping things simple. I think it comes from a combination of two things. The first is overthinking everything, and quite often that comes from fear. Fear that they're going to get things wrong. Fear that if they don't use every single possible conceivable idea that pops into their brain, it'll somehow turn out that one of those ideas that they didn't implement for a feature or a marketing tactic or whatever, that idea that was left on the table was actually the super-secret silver bullet that their membership needed.

Mike Morrison:

And that they're actually going to fail, because they didn't incorporate that one thing into their strategy. Its fear and the truth is its nonsense. There is no silver bullet. A silver bullet simply doesn't exist. Your membership is not going to fail because you didn't incorporate that one idea.

Mike Morrison:

The second thing that causes people to gravitate towards complexity is the mountain of content out there about guaranteed five step systems, killer funnels, sales hacks, the tactics you most use, less your business, implored the software, but your favorite marketing guru tells you is a must have the flavor of the month strategy that you absolutely can't ignore all the shiny objects, all that noise. That noise creates chaos and it leads to complexity. Simplicity is the way to go.

Mike Morrison:

So, if you are planning out new membership features or maybe you're thinking about different types of content that you could offer to your members, the litmus test for all of that stuff should be 'can you make a legitimate business case that is verified and backed up by feedback and data for every single feature, every single change you may want to make in your membership'. Doing something because your preferred marketing guru told you to is not a good enough reason. Adding a feature because somebody else has it is not a good reason to add it. Adding something to your site because it looks cool or it seems slick and sexy, again, not a good enough reason.

Mike Morrison:

Can you make a legit business case that you can back up with data and with member feedback for every feature you may want to add to your membership? And the truth is that if you're still in the planning stage of your membership, you probably don't know enough to do anything other than take a simple approach. The greatest insights you'll get as a Membership Site owner come from your paying members. So until you actually have those and until you actually have feedback and data to work from, you're just throwing stuff at the wall and seeing what sticks.

Mike Morrison:

So when it comes to actually deciding on what features your membership should have, deciding on what content you're going to offer, simplicity is the best approach. You can start simple. It's gonna make it so much easier to execute. It's going to enable you to get up and running quicker and then, you can build complexity into the equation if and only if the feedback and the data that you're observing from how people are actually using your membership, if that stuff indicates a genuine, legitimate requirement for you to add a new feature, for you to add a new type of content and so on.





- Mike Morrison: And this doesn't just apply to the way in which your membership is structured and your features and content, it also applies to your marketing too. I see so many people worrying about how they're going to offer upsells and what technology they should use to have an order bump or add-ons during the checkout process. And they're worrying about all this stuff but they don't even have their membership set up yet. For those people, again, simplicity is key. Just sell one thing first.
- Mike Morrison: Stop worrying about how you're going to sell all the 10 different products and services that you have planned out in your long-term strategy. Stop worrying about how to sell those 10 different things all at once when you have not even sold a single thing yet. If you can't make one offering successful, you're not gonna have much more luck trying to make five things successful all at the same time.
- Mike Morrison: Start simple, do one thing, sell one thing, see if you can make that work and see whether or not you even want to develop other products, you even want to sell other stuff. Once you've actually got momentum, building up for the first thing for your membership, you may actually decide, "You know what? This is it. I'm happy just doing this." Stop trying to spin 20 plates at once. There's an old saying about not trying to run before you can walk, but actually, some people we see are trying to compete in triathlons before they even discover that they've got feet.
- Mike Morrison: That's how crazy some people get with making these real convoluted plans, these overly complicated funnels and ridiculously complex membership setups. The simpler things are, the easier they'll be to manage, the easier they'll be for you to actually describe, to promote and to sell, and most importantly, the easier they'll be for your members to understand and to actually use. Because if your members need an instruction manual to use your membership because you made it so convoluted, so overly complex, then that's not going to bode well for your business.
- Mike Morrison: The more time that new members spend having to figure out how to use your membership, the less time they'll spend actually using it and the less likely they are to stick around. And the same goes for your existing member base too. If you're constantly adding new bells and whistles, and chopping and changing everything, they're gonna get frustrated, they're gonna get confused, they're going to leave your membership. I urge you, if you're at the beginning of your membership journey, I urge you to start simple and ideally, stay simple.
- Mike Morrison: Again, unless you can make a legit verified business case for adding complexity, and those of you who already have your memberships up and running, you don't get away scot free either. You guys need to stay mindful of the complexity level in your membership. Every time you add a new little thing to your site, every time you have a great new idea for a type of content, are you actually enhancing your Membership Site, enhancing the member experience, making it better and making it easier for people to use, or are you just creating an ever increasingly complicated membership experience for no valid reason?





Mike Morrison:

Anyway, I'm gonna put the soap box away. As with everything, your mileage may vary on this or you may have the most ridiculously over complicated, extremely complex setup in the world, and maybe it's working like gangbusters for you. If so, fantastic. Not every membership is the same and as I'm always telling you, don't blindly follow the advice of Gurus and experts, myself included. If what you've got going on is working, then all power to you.

Mike Morrison:

But I still definitely urge you to stem mindful of how complicated you're making things and to try wherever possible to embrace the KISS principle. Keep it simple, stupid, or if you want a version where I don't call all my listeners stupid, keep it super simple. Maybe I should've went with that one first. Okay. That's it from me. I do hope that this has given you a little bit of food for thought and also encouraged you to just dig a little bit deeper into your thought process.

Mike Morrison:

When you look at a site like member site academy or when you look at other memberships and you think, "Wow, this is really complicated. I don't really know how I would that." Actually, think a little bit more because you might look at a site like member site academy and you might see the custom designed elements we've got going on and some of the cool things that we're doing, and you might assume that our website is really complex and that that's the way you should go in order to be successful. When you dive a little bit deeper, things are often a lot more straightforward than you might think.

Mike Morrison:

So, that's it from me for this week. I hope this episode has been useful for you. I'd love to hear what you think. Best place to do that is inside our free Facebook group. If you search for Membership Mastermind in Facebook, you should be able to find it, otherwise, type in talkmemberships.com into your browser, that will redirect you through the magic of Internet wizardry to the Facebook group. We've got over 10,000 Membership Site owners in there and I'd love to hear your thoughts on simplicity versus complexity when it comes to your membership business.

Mike Morrison:

Do you consider your membership to be particularly complicated? Have you been in a position where you've had to simplify what you were offering because it just got out of hand? Have you found that the more complicated, more convoluted stuff is actually working out better for you than the more straightforward stuff? I'd love to hear from you. Again, search for Membership Mastermind on Facebook, that will take you to our group. Let me know what you think.

Mike Morrison:

That's it for me for this week. Thanks ever so much for spending some of your day with me. Hopefully, it's been worth your while. I'll be back again next week with another installment of the Membership Guys Podcast.

