



USING THE
SPLINTER
STRATEGY
TO SELL MORE
MEMBERSHIPS

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Mike Morrison:

What's up people? Welcome to episode 202 of the Membership Guys podcast. I'm your host, Mike Morrison, and this is your place to be for proven practical tips and advice on growing a successful membership website.

Okay, so today we're talking all about how to use the splinter strategy to sell more membership. The splinter strategy is where you take one part, one piece of content from your membership and you make it available to buy as a standalone product. But when selling it, you do so in a way that makes joining your membership a preferable option to purchasing just that one thing.

For example, you might take one of our courses, maybe you've got a library of 10, 15, 20 different courses in your membership. You may take one of those, or maybe bundle two or three of them together, and make it available to buy separately on its own for say \$99. But on the sales page, when somebody goes to purchase that one course, not only are they given the option to buy for \$99, they are also given the option to join your membership in order to access that course and everything else that you're offering for just \$49. So, that's going to be a no brainer for a potential buyer. You can either buy one course for \$100, or for \$50 a month you get that one course plus everything else that your membership offers.

So, this uses something that's called price anchoring. Price anchoring is where you position two different pricing choices side by side in a way that is designed to drive people towards your preferred buying option. So, your potential buyer sees two ways of getting their hands on this course. One that costs them \$99, and one that cost them \$49. And even though the choice is between a one off payment and a recurring subscription, people are going to be looking at and considering the immediate dollar cost, how much it's going to cost them today. And in that sense, \$50 versus \$100, it's obvious what people are going to go for. Both of those choices give you access to what you want today, plus the \$50 option gives you even more stuff. It's a total no brainer, right?

And it remains a no brainer even if it's \$50 for the course, or \$50 a month for the membership. So, it's the same price, but again one option gives you more, you're going to be drawn into that option, you're going to join the membership rather than buy the course as a standalone item. Even if your membership costs more than the course does, if the value proposition of the membership is heavily stacked, then by comparison it'll still seem like the more sensible option.

So, for example with masterclass.com, which is a membership that features courses where you have people like Aaron Sorkin, the guy who wrote West Wing, teaching screenwriting in a course. You have Samuel L. Jackson teaching acting. Gordon Ramsay teaching cookery, and so on. You can buy those individual courses from them for £85. Or you can join their membership for £170 per year and get access to everything.

So, again you've got that price anchoring. Even though the membership is more expensive, when people start doing the maths, it's only double the cost of one course, but what you get in exchange for it being two times the cost is about 50 times the value.





So, when you do the maths, the membership is still a no brainer despite being more expensive.

As a way of selling memberships using this splinter strategy can be highly effective, primarily because of that price anchoring. The way in which putting two price options side by side can help to drive people towards the choice that you ultimately want them to make. Taking this approach can really help you better communicate and really hit home just how much value your membership represent. And that can be a real powerful thing.

Another big benefit of this strategy is that it allows you to get really specific in your marketing. One of the most challenging things about memberships is that they're kind of an abstract product. Ultimately they're pretty much just a big box that contains a whole bunch of different stuff. And often this can make memberships quite difficult to market, because usually you can't just focus in on one or two things that your membership offers, because it doesn't really do it justice. But if you go in the other direction and you list out absolutely everything that's in the box, then it can be a bit of overkill. So, you might list all of the courses or workshops that your membership has on your sales page, but if you then went deep into listing out all of lessons in each of those courses, all of the deliverables, all of the outcomes, your sales page is going to be a mile long.

So, the fact that a membership can contain all sorts of different, awesome things is great for how much value your members get, but it's terrible for enabling you to adequately communicate that value in a way that's not just going to bore people to death.

So, using the splinter strategy helps with this. It gives you the context to be able to really zero in on one specific thing that you're selling. Really focus on the results that that one specific course, workshop, or whatever you're selling delivers. You don't need to worry about how to crowbar in all of the other things your membership does when you're writing your sales copy, when you're sending promotional emails. You can just totally zero in on selling this one specific item, drive people to a sales page because of their desire to buy that one thing. And then let the price anchoring work its magic when people are ready to buy.

And of course not only is this something which can help to drive membership sales, but it can also give you additional revenue from people who choose to just buy the course on its own. There will be people out there who would have never joined your membership site, for whatever reason. Maybe they're just averse to subscriptions, maybe they don't need all the different things that you offer. And so they think that they would be wasting money paying your full price if they're only going to use a small percentage of what your membership has. But those people might be perfectly happy paying for just one thing. So, that's revenue that you otherwise wouldn't be earning.

There's a few different ways you can utilize this strategy in your business. You could have everything out there available to purchase publicly. So, you choose a few great





standalone offerings from inside your membership, create separate sales pages for each of them, and then link to them from your main website, promote them within your sales funnels, and all of that sort of stuff. So, people coming to your site have the option to go off and join your membership, or they have the option to go off and buy these individual courses. Everything is out there on the surface available to anybody.

So, you just sell them like you'd sell anything else in your business. Or, alternatively, you can have those splinter products be something that you offer behind the scenes. Maybe you only direct people to your standalone courses once they've been on your email list for a certain amount of time. We actually used to do this with scottsbaselessons.com, and it was extremely effective. We would only promote these standalone splinter courses to people who'd been on Scott's email list for over six months and hadn't yet joined the membership.

The thinking was that during those six months, someone on the email list would have been exposed to the membership offering so much that if they hadn't yet joined, chances are they were never going to join. And so it made sense to promote something completely different to them, giving them the chance to buy just one course from the membership. And of course at the same time, that gave us the opportunity to try a different way of getting them into the membership, by using this price anchoring that we're talking about.

So, not only did this drive extra membership sales from a portion of the audience that otherwise would have been written off and potentially deleted from the email list, it also added thousands of dollars of additional revenue every month from people who then decided to purchase standalone courses too. And here's the rub, even if someone chose to buy a standalone course, that meant that we could still push the membership to them as an upsell once they'd spent some time working through the course. So, we'd still end up pitching the membership to them again using different messaging, different positioning, and so on, a month or so after they'd bought that standalone course.

And, we got extra membership sales from that too. And you can put various different spins on it, you could make a different course from your membership available each month for one month only. So, you're mixing in some scarcity too by highlighting the fact that this course is normally only available inside your membership, but for this month only you can buy it on its own for just \$100. That's we do have Scott's Base Lessons.

Maybe even tighten the time frame and turn it into a flash sale. So, every two or three months you do a 48 hour flash sale during which you make a course that was previously only available inside the membership, available for purchase as a standalone product. You've then got the triple whammy. You've got the price anchoring that we talked about. You've got the scarcity, due to the fact that the course is not usually available outside of the membership. And you have the urgency that comes from having a tight, 48 hours deadline.





You could even do this every time you release new content to your membership. So, for every new course, workshop, or tutorial that you add to your membership, you make it available for standalone purchase for the first two weeks of its release. Again, with the real push being towards the membership. This gives you the context to have a real big promotional push on that one specific thing to just talk about that one course, rather than trying to sell the whole package, the whole product.

You're able to do that without underselling everything else your membership offers. And again, this gives you the urgency and the scarcity elements to play with in your marketing too. So, there's all sorts of ways that you can play with this strategy. Could be a checkout abandonment strategy. Some maybe use retargeting ads on Facebook to show people adverts for standalone courses when they've been to your membership checkout but they've not actually completed the transaction.

Again, it's just giving you another avenue, another route to get people into the membership. Maybe you use this strategy as a way of winning back past members. So, again if somebody's left your membership, you could give them the option, six months, twelve months down the line, of purchasing individual parts of your membership site. And of course, once they go to the sales page for that one course, or that one workshop, you're trying to lead them into the membership too with the price anchoring.

Or maybe you use it as a Facebook ad strategy, where you target people who have visited specific articles, specific pages on your website. If someone's visited an article on a topic for which you have a course in your membership, you could start showing them ads on Facebook just for that course. And then, again, get them on that sales page, you get them intrigued in the option of taking up the membership rather than just purchasing that one thing on its own.

So, there's all sorts of different spins, all sorts of different angles you can use with this. And the great thing is that this is something which is really easy to test out without the need to completely overhaul your marketing and sales strategy, or to go all in on this idea of using splinter products.

So, you could start off by doing what we did with scottsbaselessons.com, and run a single one off promotion that is only sent out to people who've been on your email list, who haven't bought despite being subscribed for more than six months. So, this is very much in the background. This isn't something you're talking about publicly, you're targeting this promotion at a very specific subset of your email list.

Maybe you could even test it as a public flash sale. So, again, for 48 hours only, this one thing from the membership, or this one bundle of membership content is available for standalone purchase for 48 hours only. Normally the only way of getting this is by being a member. You can buy it on its own before this deadline, blah, blah, blah.

So, stuff like this is a real easy way of testing out this strategy without totally committing to selling standalone products long term. If you do a flash sale, or if you do a promo to your inactive, or your non-buyers from your email list, and then if it doesn't





work, you've not lost anything, you've not embarrassed yourself. You've not lost face, you just don't do it again.

Or, you can try a different approach, a different angle, a different element of your membership further on down the road. But if the strategy works, then you make it a bigger, more permanent part of your marketing. You can maybe automate the presentation of this splinter course offering into your email sequences, and so on.

Now, as for the tech side of doing this, most membership plugins will enable you to have courses and workshops and individual pieces of content from your membership also available to purchase separately. So, it shouldn't be too hard for you to setup. But if you want a total separation between the people who buy your one off product versus the people who joined the membership, you could add your standalone course to a platform like [inaudible 00:12:19]. So, when people click the button on your sales page to just buy the course on its own, they're taken off to [inaudible 00:12:24] to purchase it. When they click the button to join your membership, they get taken to your regular membership sales page. It doesn't need to be too complicated to get this all set up.

All right, so there you have it. We covered what the splinter strategy is, how you can use it to sell more memberships, and the various benefits of using things like price anchoring and so on. And I've given you a whole bunch of different ideas and angles for how something like this could fit within your overall sales and marketing strategy.

Now, if you do decide to give this a go, please be sure to let me know how it all turns out by hitting me up on Twitter, @MembershipGuys. Or give me a shout within our free Facebook group, just head to talkmemberships.com in your browser, or type in Membership Mastermind into your Facebook App. You'll find our group. It's got over 11,000 membership site owners in there, so jump in, jump into the conversation, let me know how you're using the splinter strategy within your membership. Or of course, if this is something you're already doing in your membership, or maybe it's something you've tested previously, I want to hear from you guys too. Give me a shout on social, let me know your experience.

All right, that's it from me for this week. Make sure you head over to the membershipguys.com/202 in order to get all the links and show notes from today's episode. And I'll be back again next week with another installment of the Memberships Guys podcast.

