

MEMBERSHIP TECHNOLOGY *Reality Check*



Thank you for joining me for Episode 106 of The Membership Guys podcast. I am Mike Morrison, your host for the show and you know what I think? It's time for a bit of a reality check when it comes to the technical side of building a membership site.

We see so many people who start building their membership and then six months later they are still stuck. Messing around with the technology, trying to muddle through it all on their own and trying to get everything perfect.

So today I want to give those guys a little bit of a verbal kick up the backside to get them back on track and to hopefully help those of you are who aren't yet out that stage, avoid getting stuck in the mud of building your membership site. And to do that we need to focus on two many areas.

A big part of avoiding getting stuck with the tech side through your membership is having realistic expectations. And first of all you really need to make sure that you have realistic expectations of what an off the shelf of membership plugin can and can't do.

I saw a post in our Facebook group recently from someone who would left a perfectly good service that we are using for their membership which they were 99.9% happy with but which didn't have the ability to do this one tiny specific think that they wanted and so they up stakes and they moved to another platform. Now they are wanting to move back because even though this other platform does the one tiny specific little thing that the other one didn't, now there's another tiny really specific thing that they now want which the new platform doesn't do. It's madness.

You have to accept that no off the shelf plugin and no paid platform or anything like that will do 100% of the things that you want, 100% of the way that you want them. It's simply not realistic to expect that.

This is why we advice anyone who is researching and trying to choose a membership plugin or a platform to use to make two lists: one list is your essential features, the stuff that you absolutely cannot budge on. Usually this is going to be things like integration with your payment processor or your email marketing provider. Maybe it's the ability to drip feed your content or to allow members to cancel themselves so that might be your essential must-haves. So that's the first list you need to make.



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The second are the nice-to-haves. Chances are most of the things that you think you need actually belong on that list. We advise people to do this because it is almost guaranteed that when it comes to choosing a membership plugin you will have to compromise on some things that you might like your website to do.

The thing is here's the big secret. Members don't really care what membership plugin you are using. Nobody joins your site based on your membership plugin. And those bells and whistles that people often drive themselves crazy trying to get right? Very rarely actually move the needle.

More often than not it's stuff that you want, not stuff that your members actually want.

If you are determined to add a feature into your website that isn't available through an off the shelf membership plugin or platform, then if that feature is important enough to you then it's worth investing in a developer. If you can't make that happen or you don't want to spend the money, then it's clearly not an important enough feature to have. Because if it was absolutely crucial, you would find a way to make it happen.

You have to remember that your time has value and it can be far better spent serving your members rather than satisfying your own need for that "must-have shiny bell or whistle" that chances are? Nobody other than you actually cares about. So you absolutely need to have realistic expectations in terms of what your membership plugin is capable of. And don't get into this really crazy situation where you are leaving a plugin or your changing your plans or you are still constantly spending your wheels for months and months on end, never getting your membership up and running because you are obsessed over the tiniest little feature that chances are isn't going to make any difference whatsoever to the success of your membership.

The second area where we need to get real is your expectations of what you should be able to do yourself without the help of an experienced web developer.

We live in an amazing time in terms of what the average non-technical, unqualified person can create themselves from scratch using Wordpress themes, plugins and in particular page building tools like Divi or Thrive themes, Beaver builder and so on and so on.

You can use these sorts of tools to DIY your way to a pretty impressive, powerful membership site without knowing a lick of code. But what these tools do is make people forget that actual web development is not easy.

Website design, development, programming is pretty blooming difficult. It's a profession comprising a multitude of extremely technical specialties and people spend years honing these skills. In fact, they never stop learning because of how fast technology moves. Chances are if you are building your membership website yourself rather than hiring a professional then it's because you don't have the budget and a professional would be too expensive.

There's a reason for that and that's not to say that you shouldn't build your membership yourself, indeed we provide courses and tools inside MembersiteAcademy.com to help you to do just that.

We are very much a fan of doing-it-yourself if you can. But you do need to understand that the sort of tools we've talked about; page building tools, plugins and so on, don't automatically mean that you can do all the sorts of things that a 10, 15, 20 year veteran web developer couldn't do.



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Manage your own expectations. Know your strengths. Know your limits and don't allow yourself to get caught up trying to get everything perfect and getting continuously frustrated that you can't do everything you might want to do yourself. Accept that there's a reason for that and either get somebody in to help you or simplify what you are doing so that you can do it all yourself.

Now that is a little bit of a rant but it was a rant worth having because we see this time and time again. People coming up with the craziest specifications and expectations of what they are going to be able to put together themselves for their membership and then constantly hitting the brick wall when the tools that they want to use; the page building tools and the plugins don't just magically do it all for them. You need to make sure you got realistic expectations about what these tools can do and what you yourself are capable of without assistance.

So if you have found yourself stuck or spinning your wheels hopefully this is a little bit of a shot in the arm. If you are not yet at that stage of building your membership site, then try to keep this all in mind. Keep things simple because no one joins your membership based on the tech. They join it based on how you are solving problems, based on member experience and all of that good stuff that actually matters. Not your choice of membership plugin.

That's it from me from this particularly rant-y episode. I'll be back again next week with another installment of The Membership Guys podcast.



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