

Where to **FIND YOUR** **AUDIENCE**



Mike: What's up, everybody? Welcome to episode seventy-two of the Membership Guys podcast. I'm Mike Morrison, one half of the Membership Guys, and this is the show where we dispense proven practical tips and advice for growing a successful membership website. In this show I wanted to talk about building an audience. You know with a membership site there's so much going on, there's so much to think about when you're planning and building your site. All this technology to wrestle with, all this time spent recording videos, creating content and making your website look, feel and function the way that you want it, that we can often neglect the fact that if you're building a product you kind of need to have somebody to sell it to, but yet so many people do this over and over again, they bury themselves in the planning process, building and creating content, and then they launch their membership site to the sound of crickets. Nobody joins because they haven't built an audience.

They haven't actually spent any time really diving into their market, figuring out what they want, and most importantly growing their own audience of potential members who are going to be buzzing with excitement and desperate to buy when the membership finally launches. The movie *Field Of Dreams* really does have a lot to answer for when it comes to online marketing because so many people out there subscribe to this idea that if you build it they will come, but that's simply not true. You need to invest time in building your audience, nurturing that audience before you open the doors to your membership site, otherwise your launch is likely to fall on its backside.

This is the first of two episodes where we're going to focus in on audience building. In this episode we're talking about where to actually find your audience. We're validating that first of all there's actually an audience out there that matches the people that you want to serve. You probably have an idea in your head of who you want to cater to, who this membership is being built for. We need to verify that these guys actually exist and that they're passionate about the topic, they have problems that are big enough that they'd actually be willing to pay for solutions that are provided through your membership. Of course we can only verify that this audience exists by figuring out where these people are and then going and spending some time in the places that they're already hanging out.



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Of course the first place you want to look is at your existing audience. What kind of audience, what kind of following do you have already? Do you have an email list of subscribers who maybe joined your newsletter through your blog? Do you have social media accounts? Followers, fans, connections? All that sort of stuff. We need to actually look at what you already have. Have you already started to build an audience, and if so are they relevant for what you're going to be doing with your membership? Because actually what often happens is you may think you have an audience that starts to take shape, maybe you have a huge email list already, but maybe they're from a different project, maybe they're from a blog that you ran several years ago and you haven't actually been keeping in touch with those people.

Really explore your existing audience, don't take it for granted that these guys will have an interest in what you're doing with your membership. If it's a case where you think that maybe some people in your existing email list or your existing social following might be interested but then there'll certainly be a mix of people in there who won't be interested, then there's various things you can do to actually separate the two. Give people a choice of following you in this new venture, maybe have them subscribe to a different list. Send something out to your audience to let them know what you're doing, what your new direction is if indeed it is a new direction, and giving them a way that they can choose whether to hop onboard with you and essentially build the foundations of your new audience, or whether they choose to simply unsubscribe and not follow along with what you're doing. Start up by having a good review of your existing audience.

Then expanding out from that you need to look at where your crowd, where your particular tribe are hanging out. Passionate people find each other and they congregate around various different places online. You want to be looking for online forums based around your topic, searching in Google for your topic or keywords related to your topic plus the word forum or community or online blog or discussion board. Finding these online forums, looking at the Facebook groups or LinkedIn groups, other social media groups again using the search tools that those different platform provides to find various different collections of people who have an interest in the topic you're building your membership around.

You want to be searching Twitter for hashtags or terms related to your topic. Maybe seek out influencers that you know exists within your market and look at the sort of stuff they're talking about, look at the people who engage with them, whether they are on any lists that other Twitter users have set up, where they are collecting together other influencers that maybe you haven't come across or Twitter accounts or blogs or other communities around your topic. Have a look on websites like meetup.com to see whether there's any actual physical offline meet-ups taking place where people who have the shared interest or the shared problems or goals are getting together.

Again this all verifies that there's enough people out there with enough of an interest in the topic to create communities, to attend meetings, to discuss this stuff day to day on the social platforms. You can use tools like BuzzSumo to search again for keywords or phrases around your topic and see how many blogs are out there that are covering this sort of material. How popular and how much are these articles being shared? Of course if you can identify a handful of the most popular blogs within your particular niche, then spend a bit of time around the



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comment sections. Look at what people are talking about, see whether some of the same names come up, the same problems, the same issues.

A lot of your initial audience building efforts is going to center around finding where your particular crowd are and hanging out with them, making sure you are in the same places, in the same circles, the same communities, looking at the same blogs as the people that you want to serve. You need to hang around with these guys, observe how they interact, look at what questions they ask, take notice of the problems they say they're having. Pay special attention to the sort of questions, the sort of issues and problems that come up time and time again. These are the most prevalent things that your audience will be telling you they want help with.

You can obviously tailor and adapt your membership solution to the problems and pain points that your audience members are going to have. All this information can inform not only your membership content, what your actual membership product is, but you can also use this stuff as fuel for blogs, for videos, for podcasts. You can mirror the language that your audience are using when they express their frustrations and their pains. You can take the language they're using and utilize it within the copy that you put on your sales page, in your emails, sales videos and so on as a way of demonstrating that you actually understand where they are, you understand the problems and the pains that they have. Find the social media groups that your audience is hanging out in, join them and take part.

Find the meet-ups that are going on in the real world and go along and attend one or two. Find the blogs people are commenting on, read the same stuff, listen to the same podcasts. Engage in the discussions that are happening on Twitter. Your audience are out there and if you want them to come to you you're going to need to go to them first to find out what their problems, pains, questions, desires, frustrations and ideas are and figure out from there how you can actually help them and how you can serve them best.

If you're still in that initial planning stage, or maybe you're preparing for launch and you know that you haven't invested time in really building and growing your audience or you've been meaning to but you just can't figure out how to actually connect and where to find people who are actually interested in the topic that you're building a membership around, then definitely take onboard what we talked about in this podcast. Research the blogs, the online communities. Try and find the social media groups, the meet-ups and so on.

If you're convinced, if you're confident that you've done all of this digging and that your audience simply aren't out there, then the harsh truth is maybe you're barking up the wrong tree with what you're actually doing with your membership. If digging around on Google, if extensive researching across the social networks isn't turning up these already existing communities, these pockets of potential members for you, then it may well be that you're creating something that nobody wants. Either the audience you want to serve simply doesn't exist, or they're just not passionate enough to join online communities, to comment on blogs, to attend meet-ups. If they're not passionate enough about a particular goal or a topic to do all that stuff that's available to them free then chances are they're not going to be passionate enough to pay to join an online membership.

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