

# Membership Site Blueprint

Presented By: Stu McLaren

## Overview:

The purpose of the Membership Site Blueprint is to get you thinking about the foundational elements needed for a successful membership site. We will be exploring these areas in depth during the course but the more time you spend with this blueprint before the course begins, the more you'll get out of the material once we start.

With that said, if you get stuck or don't know how to respond to any of the proposed questions throughout this document, don't worry. The goal of this is to get you started – we will be going into much greater detail and I'll have much more explanation as we go through each module (and of course you'll have plenty of time to ask questions along the way).

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## Course Schedule:

<b>Module 1:</b> Monday, January 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2013		<b>Q&amp;A Call:</b> Friday, January 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2013
<b>Module 2:</b> Monday, January 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2013		<b>Q&amp;A Call:</b> Friday, February 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2013
<b>Module 3:</b> Monday, February 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2013		<b>Q&amp;A Call:</b> Friday, February 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2013
<b>Module 4:</b> Monday, February 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2013		<b>Q&amp;A Call:</b> Friday, February 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2013
<b>Module 5:</b> Monday, February 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2013		<b>Q&amp;A Call:</b> Friday, March 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2013
<b>Module 6:</b> Monday, March 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2013		<b>Q&amp;A Call:</b> Friday, March 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2013
<b>Module 7:</b> Monday, March 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2013		<b>Q&amp;A Call:</b> Friday, March 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2013

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## Your Private Consultations & Shell Site Setup

Between now and January 21<sup>st</sup>, my team and I will be working to put together your “shell” membership site. This will give you a tremendous advantage when building your membership site because you'll be able to update it and fill it with your content without the need to worry about all the technical elements that can often trip people up (like setting up a hosting account, installing WordPress etc.).

My goal in doing this is to make things easy for you to hit the ground running so that you can spend your time and energy focusing on the content being delivered during the course. This isn't meant to be your “final membership site” per se but it is designed to give you a massive head start. In fact,

you'll likely want to change a bunch of things around and really customize it for your subject matter – and I strongly encourage you to do that – but at least you'll be in a much better position to do so because so much of the “grunt work” will have been done for you.

Information on how to access your membership site will be delivered to you a few days before we begin Module #1 (January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013).

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The final piece of information I wanted to share was in regards to your private consultations. You'll be able to schedule these directly with my assistant and we'll guide you through how to maximize your time once you are on the call with me. Remember, it's better to have specific questions so that I can help provide specific answers.

You'll be able to begin booking these once the course begins (January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013) and we'll provide details on how to do this during Module #1.

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## What To Expect

I am thrilled (and honored) that you've invested your money with me but more importantly, I'm truly excited to help you experience the freedom (both financial and time) that comes along with owning a membership site.

If you're like me, owning a membership will become much more than just the dollar amount multiplied by the number of members. It's about helping more people and having greater impact in this world. No matter what your topic, you'll be able to do this on a much bigger scale with a membership site – and that's why I'm SO passionate about teaching this material 😊

There is a lot to share during the course and as with anything, you will get out of it what you put into it. Just know that I'll be here to help you along the way.

Also realize that I will be providing you frameworks and templates to make life easier and the more you follow along during each module, the faster and easier it will be to get your site up and generating revenue.

Although the course doesn't start until January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013, I strongly encourage you to spend some time with the rest of this document because it will help you clarify your thinking before we begin. By doing this, you'll be able to go deeper and make much more progress.

Just know that if you don't have the answers yet, it's ok – I will help you get them once we get started.

You ready?

Let's dive right in.

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# 1) The Master Plan

A builder would never build a new house without a set of plans and you should never start building a new membership site without your own “Master Plan” either.

The focus for this section is to get clear on who your membership site will be serving, what solution you’ll be offering and how you will be delivering that solution.

## WHO Will You Target?

The more specific you can get, the better. Remember, you’ll have much greater success if you focus on a smaller niche rather than trying to serve a massive market.

For example...

Massive Market (Bad)	Niche Market (Good)
Car owners	MINI owners
Fitness	Ab Exercises For Men
Dog Owners	Golden Retrievers
Make Money	Forex Trading

Your Turn:

My target market is: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Ex. Golden Retriever owners)

# WHAT Solution Will You Offer?

This is where you focus on the challenges your market is facing and the solution you will provide. Think about frustrations this market may have, difficulties they experience, hurdles they must overcome. Are there different challenges for “new people” in that market vs. “experienced” people?

Listen for language like: “I wish I could...”, “Is there a way to...”, “Does anyone know how to...”

Here’s an example of how to break this down:

Market: MINI Owners	
Challenge or Frustration	How I will help (Solution)
1) I wish I could find out more information about upcoming MINI rallies...	- An updated calendar listing all MINI - Notification when new events are added
2) Where can I find MINI parts and accessories?	- A directory members can search for parts and accessories in cities nearby
3) Does anyone know how to get in touch with other MINI owners?	- A member directory listing people by City, Type of MINI and Year of MINI - A forum where MINI owners can chat and share

Your Turn:

Market:	
Challenge or Frustration	How I will help (Solution)
1)	
2)	
3)	

# WHEN Will You Deliver The Content?

This question focuses on the Frequency and Format of the content you will be providing your members inside your site.

- Frequency** – Will you be providing new content every day? Every week? Every Month?
- Format** – Will the content be articles? PDF Downloads? Videos? Audio Interviews? Combination?

When you’re starting a new membership site, it’s very helpful to map out a “schedule” to help you get organized. Plus, if you break it down into little “chunks” of content, it becomes much more manageable.

So for the “Master Plan”, just get clear on WHEN you plan to deliver the content.

**BIG TIP:** Start with “less” and add more later.

Be careful what you commit to (especially in the beginning) because you’ll disappoint your members if you can’t keep it up. So plan ahead and it will help you keep things consistent and manageable.

Your Turn:

## Content Delivery Schedule:

File Type	Daily Content (ex. Article on X topic)	Weekly Content (ex. Recap video every Fri.)	Monthly Content (ex. Extra Bonus 1 <sup>st</sup> Tues.)
Articles			
Videos			
Audios			
Other			

# HOW Will You Deliver The Content?

For this section we are most concerned about the Membership Model you want to use and the Design/Layout of the site based on that model.

There are many different types of Membership Models but the amount of time it will take you to setup your membership will be dramatically reduced knowing this information BEFORE you start setting everything up.

## Membership Models:

Model	Description
Publisher	Publish new content on a regular basis, much like an online “magazine”.
UPS	Deliver a “package” of content/files on a weekly or monthly basis.
Micro Continuity	Fixed term membership that lasts for X weeks or X months. Content is spread out over the given time period.
Modular Course	A course with several modules. Members move from one module to the next based on a set schedule (ex. 1 module per week).
Protected Download Area	Members can login and download content or files they paid for.
Community Center	Discussion area (like a forum) behind a login.
Private Members Area	A private area to facilitate ongoing interaction and instruction.
Coaching Site	A private area to work one-on-one with a small group of clients.
Combo	Combination of “parts” from multiple models (Course, Publisher, Community Center).

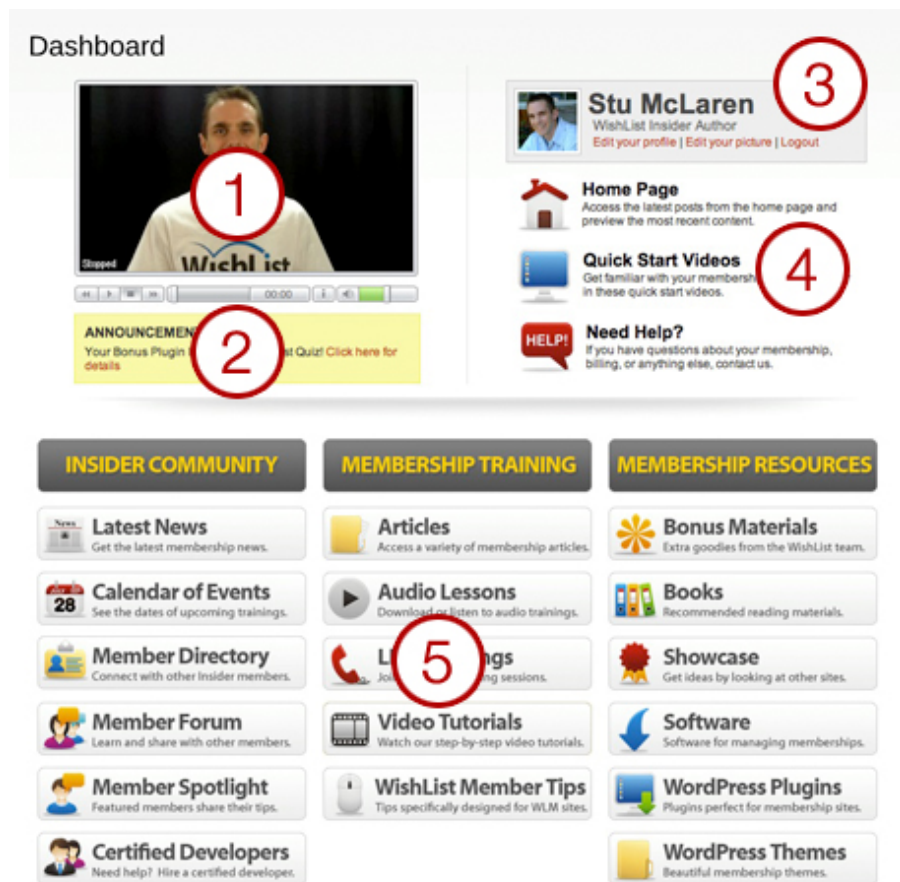
For a more detailed description (with examples), visit: <http://wplink.com/go/membermodels/>

## Site Design/Layout

The site design and/or theme you select will largely be based on what membership model you choose. The key however is to make sure your navigation is clear and that your members can easily find what they are looking for.

So always include navigation at the top, on the sidebar and make your “After Login” page (or Dashboard page) has links taking your members directly to the main areas of your site.

Here’s an example of what the “After Login” page for WishList Insider looks like:



- 1) **Welcome Video** – Include a welcome video to provide “next steps” for your new members.
- 2) **Announcement Area** – It’s important to keep your members up to date.
- 3) **Profile Information** – Make it easy for members to update their picture and profile.
- 4) **Quick Start Videos** – Get your members consuming content as early as possible with a series of “Quick Start” videos.
- 5) **Links To Main Areas of Your Site** – Provide “visual links” so your members can access content FAST!

This example is pulled from [WishList Insider](#)

Your Turn:

My membership model is: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Ex. A “Publisher Model”)

The main areas of my site include:

- |          |          |           |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1) _____ | 5) _____ | 9) _____  |
| 2) _____ | 6) _____ | 10) _____ |
| 3) _____ | 7) _____ | 11) _____ |
| 4) _____ | 8) _____ | 12) _____ |

## 2) Content Strategy

As mentioned above in the “Master Plan”, the first two areas to get clear on in regards to your content are the “Publishing Frequency” and the “Format” of your content.

**Frequency** – Will you be providing new content every day? Every week? Every Month?

**Format** – Will the content be articles? PDF Downloads? Videos? Audio Interviews? Combination?

Once you’re clear on this, you then want to shift your attention to making your content creation “easy” and “fast”. To do this, think about implementing:

**Content Segments** – Think of this as “ritualistic content” – meaning, certain content that is scheduled for a particular day of the week, time of the month etc.

For example, with WishList Insider, we have certain types of posts that appear every Thursday and Friday. We also release a new Bonus Plugin the first Tuesday of every month.

Another strategy that will speed up your production is to use “templates”.

**Content Templates** – Consider these a starting point if you are ever “stuck” for new ideas. You always want to be on the look out for article titles that can be turned into a “template”. The key is to save these into a big swipe file so that when you need some inspiration, the ideas will come much easier.

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Your Turn:

### 20 Article Templates You Can Use:

#### 1) Top 10 People Who...

Your Turn: Top 10 People Who \_\_\_\_\_

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#### 2) Top 10 Resources For...

Your Turn: Top 10 Resources For \_\_\_\_\_



### 3) Top 10 Ways To...

Your Turn: Top 10 Ways To \_\_\_\_\_

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### 4) How To Get More...

Your Turn: How To Get More \_\_\_\_\_

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### 5) How To Eliminate...

Your Turn: How To Eliminate \_\_\_\_\_

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### 6) How To Setup...

Your Turn: How To Setup \_\_\_\_\_

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### 7) \_\_\_\_\_ Of The Month (ex. Member of the Month, Website of the Month)

Your Turn: \_\_\_\_\_ Of The Month

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### 8) The Best \_\_\_\_\_ For \_\_\_\_\_ (ex. The Best Apps For Saving Time)

Your Turn: The Best \_\_\_\_\_ For \_\_\_\_\_

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### 9) The Future Of...

Your Turn: The Future Of \_\_\_\_\_

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**10) How I Went From \_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_** (ex. How I Went From Shy To Outgoing In 30 Days)

Your Turn: How I Went From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

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**11) Things Every [Your Market] Should Know**

Your Turn: Things Every \_\_\_\_\_ Should Know

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**12) Weekly Recap Of...**

Your Turn: Weekly Recap Of \_\_\_\_\_

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**13) 5 Unusual Ideas That Worked For...**

Your Turn: How To Get More \_\_\_\_\_

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**14) The [Celebrity Name] Guide To** (ex. The Eminem Guide To Becoming a Marketing Machine)

Your Turn: The \_\_\_\_\_ Guide To \_\_\_\_\_

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**15) Before & After \_\_\_\_\_**. (ex. Before & After Website Designs)

Your Turn: Before & After \_\_\_\_\_

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**16) 7 Steps To...**

Your Turn: 7 Steps To \_\_\_\_\_

### 17) The XYZ Formula For...

Your Turn: The XYZ Formula For \_\_\_\_\_

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### 18) What The \_\_\_\_\_ Can Teach You About \_\_\_\_\_

(ex. What The Playground Can Teach You About Social Media)

Your Turn: What The \_\_\_\_\_ Can Teach You About \_\_\_\_\_

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### 19) Will \_\_\_\_\_ Jumpstart \_\_\_\_\_? (ex. Will Geo-Targeting Jumpstart Twitter Advertising)

Your Turn: Will \_\_\_\_\_ Jumpstart \_\_\_\_\_?

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### 20) Two Important Lessons You Can Learn From \_\_\_\_\_

Your Turn: Two Important Lessons You Can Learn From \_\_\_\_\_

Coming up with compelling content ideas doesn't have to be difficult. Use these article templates as a launch pad and always keep an eye open for others that you can add to this list.

Also, another great way to guarantee you're creating compelling content is to watch for "questions" your members may have. These may come up in your forum, in your comments or perhaps in your support desk. Chances are, those questions could easily be turned into your next article ;)

## 3) Promotion Strategy

Successful membership site owners are continuously looking to attract new members to their site and in order to do that, you'll need to implement a variety of different promotional strategies.

One MAJOR mistake we see a lot of membership sites make is that they have a big "launch" but do very little every month thereafter to generate new interest.

So in order to keep new people coming to your site each month, you'll need to plan out your strategy for attracting new members.

That generally falls into three promotional categories:

**FREE Strategies** – These are strategies that don't cost anything to implement (except perhaps time) but yet have the ability to drive new eyeballs to your site.

Some examples could include things like submitting content to "Article Directories", "Video Directories" or guest posting on other blogs in your niche.



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**PAID Strategies** – This is where you slap down some cold hard cash in return for traffic to your site. Things like "Banner Ads", "Google Ads", "Facebook Ads" or even purchasing "Dedicated Email Broadcasts" would all fall into this category.

Just be sure whatever method you use, you're not just wasting your money. Be sure to track how much traffic you are getting and the results (signups) of that traffic.

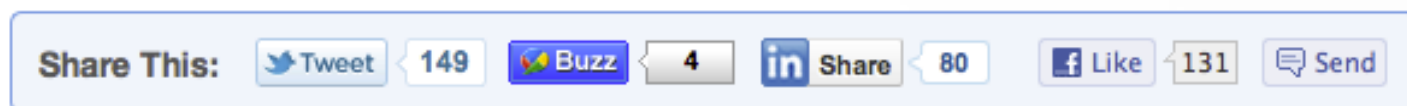


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**Content Marketing** – This is arguably one of the most effective ways to generate buzz and interest in your site because while it attracts new people, it simultaneously builds trust.

The strategy here is simple; create high quality content that demonstrates the value you will provide within your membership. This could be a series of videos, a special "whitepaper" report or some other content such as a checklist, mindmap or audio download.

The important thing to remember in this situation is that you want to make it easy for people to share the content with others on social media services like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Google +1.



When it comes to planning your content marketing, one method you might like to adopt is to create 12 pieces of high level content you can give away. Then you can focus on using one piece per month to attract new people.

This keeps the promotions “fresh” rather than using the same old piece of content over and over again.

Your Turn:

Start by adding just one strategy/month for each of the 3 categories:

Month	FREE Strategies	PAID Strategies	Content Marketing
Example	Submit 3 videos to YouTube	Implement PPC Ad Campaign	Write special report on XYZ
January			
February			
March			
April			
May			
June			
July			
August			
September			
October			
November			
December			

## 4) Conversion Strategy

Getting people to your site is one thing, but turning them into “paying members” is something totally different.

So that’s the #1 reason you need to map out your conversion strategy.

This can be done a number of ways but generally, your conversion tactics will fall into one of these categories:

**Selling Sequences** – The idea of a “Selling Sequence” is to take someone who has never heard of you or your site and turn them into a paying member. So it would look like this:

**Don’t Know You → Interested → Customer**

Think of this like a series of “messages” that are sent to people interested in your content. If you’re giving away “FREE” content as described above, then this would be the follow up messages (generally sent via email).

In your follow up sequence you may want to release additional high value content, link to “teaser content” on your site, share member “success stories” and create messages that highlight the benefits of joining your site.

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**Site Conversion** – This section refers to all the elements “on” your site that effect the conversion rate. Things like your sales copy, design and layout, price, guarantee and testimonials from other members.

World famous copywriter John Carlton is famous for telling his consulting clients to just keep your sales message simple:

- 1) Tell them what you’ve got
- 2) Tell them how it will help them
- 3) Tell them what to do next (click on the “buy button”)

We’ve also found that “visual” elements that give people a “sneak peak” into the membership work well to boost conversions. So screenshots and “tour videos” can be very effective.

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**Sales Triggers** – These are generally “time sensitive” elements that move people into taking action. The key for you is to plan these out well in advance so that you can use them to generate interest.

Think about things like:

- Limited Bonuses
- Special Pricing
- Deadlines

One effective “trigger” that we learned from an interview we conducted with one of our customers, Sean D’souza is called the “Disappearing Bonus”. This is where you create a bonus that is only available to members THAT MONTH. So if they aren’t a member that month, they don’t get it.

As such, you can then use this in your marketing to generate interest from people who haven’t joined as many will find the bonus enticing enough to join.

This is just one example of many that you could incorporate into your “Conversion Strategy”.

[Click To Download Sean’s Interview](#)

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**Member Triggers** – These are tactics you use within your membership to “graduate” members from one level to the next. If you have a “FREE” level and you want to move people to a “PAID” level, then you’ll definitely want to think about these ahead of time.

Make life easier for yourself by using features already built into WishList Member. Things such as the “Error Page Redirects”, “Private Tags”, or “More Tag Protection” can be used in such a way to entice your members to upgrade to the next level.

Use your content to allow people to see “just enough” of the paid content that when they click to “see more”, it redirects them to a page that says “Thanks for your interest in this content, but it is reserved for paid members. Click here to upgrade”.

**See the next page for a quick example of the  
“Non-Member Error Page” from [WishList Insider](#):**



**MEMBERS ONLY CONTENT**

The content you are trying to view is reserved for members of WishList Insider. If you are a member please login on your right. ➔

If you're not a member, please read below. ⬇

**MEMBER LOGIN**

## Premium Training, Resources and Support For Membership Site Owners



Join Now For Just:

**\$20/month**

**ADD TO CART**

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

VISA   MASTERCARD   AMEX

Your Turn:

## Selling Sequences:

Day	Link To (ex. Audio interview with Dave Smith)
0	
1	
2	
3	
7	
14	
21	
28	



Site Conversion:

What will you implement ON your site to boost conversions?

Ex. Short 2-5min sales video tour of the membership

Sales Triggers:

What will you do each month to incentivize new signups?

Month		Trigger	
Example #1	Early bird price discount	Example #2	Bonus Training on XYZ
January		July	
February		August	
March		September	
April		October	
May		November	
June		December	

## Member Triggers:

What will you do each month to upgrade “existing members”?

Month	Trigger	Month	Trigger
Example #1	Early bird price discount	Example #2	Bonus Training on XYZ
January		July	
February		August	
March		September	
April		October	
May		November	
June		December	

## 5) Retention Strategy

This by far is the #1 area most neglected by membership site owners.

They spend a lot of time worrying about what to do to generate “new” signups and not enough time thinking about what they will do to keep “existing” members happy (and that’s why so many of them lose a large percentage of their membership each month).

The 10% to remember about Retention is this:

“They come for the content, but they stay for the community”

Retention is built on two things: **Content & Relationships**

So with that in mind, you must ensure that your content continues to serve your members and that you help them form relationships with others within your community.

When you are designing a “retention strategy”, you’ll want to focus on two different categories of members.

Here are a few suggestions:

### **New Members**

- Have clear navigation so that your members can find what they came for
- Provide a good “Welcome Sequence” to keep their excitement going
- Give clear “First Steps” to help prevent overwhelm

### **Existing Members**

- Create compelling “content teasers” to draw members back into the site each month
- Implementing “points and rewards” to keep members motivated
- Create anticipation for future content by using consumption tricks like “overlapping”

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Your Turn:

### **Retention Strategy Ideas:**

<b>New Members</b>		<b>Existing Members</b>	
Ex. Create a “welcome video” for the Dashboard		Ex. Add a “coming next month” sidebar widget	

## 6) Engagement Strategy

One of the worst things to happen within your membership site or online community is for it to feel like a “ghost town”.

You know what we’re talking about... you login in to a membership full of excitement only to find the forum hasn’t seen a new post for 8 months, there are hardly any comments on new content being posted and it just feels “empty”.

That is a fast way to lose new members!

So how do you keep things vibrant and alive?

By implementing an Engagement Strategy.

### **What will you do each month to keep your members coming back and interacting with one another?**

#### **Here are a couple ideas:**

- Give people a **REASON** to come back (remember you want them interacting on your site). We continuously ask our members questions, their opinions and do things to get them coming back to the site.
- Introduce your members to each other (you are the **master networker**). This helps them form relationships with your other members and at the same time, it makes people feel "special" because you called on them.
- **Contests and rewards** are another great way to keep things fun and interesting for your members. The key here is to think of ways you can reward "more" members rather than just a select few superstars.

The more you can interact with your members, the more successful your site will be. People rarely cancel from something they've helped contribute to - so get your members involved!

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Your Turn:

## Engagement Calendar:

Month	Polls	Contests
Ex.	What do you think about XYZ?	Content Scavenger Hunt – 50 pts reward
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
July		
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		

## 6) Outsourcing Strategy

Inevitably, the time will come when you'll want to hire some help. In the beginning you're likely going to be wearing a bunch of "hats" but as you grow, you'll want to think about getting help so that you can take a vacation!

But what areas of your site can you outsource?

**Content** - Could you get others to contribute content? How often? Who could you reach out to now?

**Community Management** - Is there someone you could hire or incentivize to help manage your community and keep the conversations going? If possible, try to identify "Superstar" members within your community - they most often make the best "Community Manager".

**Marketing** - Do you want to hand this off to someone? If not all of it, perhaps parts like someone to manage your Blog Ads or Google Ads?

**Website and Design** - Although WordPress makes this side of things SUPER easy, sometimes it's just better to hand it off to someone who can take that "stress" off your plate.

**Accounting** - This was the very first thing we outsourced. But if you can't hire someone, you may want to look at using processing services like [Clickbank](#) because they handle that whole side of things for you.

The bottom line is there are options. In the beginning you're likely going to be wearing a bunch of hats but as things progress, make some goals and start outsourcing different elements as you grow.

# Conclusion

Now you have an outline that will help you immediately get started. Again, don't worry if you weren't able to fill in the blanks for some of these questions – that's one of the things I'll be walking you through.

We will be diving deep into how you can identify the best markets for your information (or the most profitable market for your info), what content this market will pay for and how to effortlessly attract them to your site.

And once you've converted them into members, you'll see first hand how to keep them as members with our 50+ Retention Strategies.

And if you already have a membership site but your members aren't really "active", I'll show you how to quickly solve that with all of my Engagement Strategies.

You're about to get

## **Lots of:**

- Real-world Examples
- Templates
- Checklists
- and Mindmaps

My goal is to give you the tools to help you hit make your site a success as quickly as possible.

Plus I'll have video tutorials for each module that will show you step-by-step how to implement everything you learn as we go through the course.

I can't wait until we "virtually" meet once the course begins and I look forward to connecting with you soon.

All the best,



Co-Founder, WishList Member

P.S. If you have any questions about the course itself prior to when we begin Module #1 (January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013), please email my support desk at [support@stu.me](mailto:support@stu.me).