

## The Membership Site Master Plan Notes

Source: [Yaro Starak's 72-page The Membership Site Master Plan](#)

Released April 27, 2009

Available in [PDF](#) format and [Audio](#)

His objective for this freebie is to build interest in his next Membership Site Mastermind group, which opens May 5...[more](#)

### Catherine's Take Away Notes:

Page 10...Yaro says he prefers to use a blog to build visibility and awareness to his membership sites. It isn't mandatory to use this method, just his preference.

Page 11...Perception of who you are and what you offer is important to signing up members. You do this by

1. Association with other people who have preeminence
2. Placing you in a position to create the perception of preeminence (for example coverage in the media, speaking at an event, etc.).
3. By delivering so much value, people refer to your materials as definitive.
4. By demonstrating proof. You have to show that you have done what you are advising them to do -- you have gotten the results you are promising. Testimonial case studies are one of the ways to do this.

Page 12...If you don't have this perception yet, the first step is to offer value by sharing what you know. In the information world, you start by publishing and wowing people. You can do this through your blog, running teleconferences, by speaking at events, by syndicating articles, by releasing videos on YouTube, by writing a free report, or any combination of these.

Page 13...Add lots of case studies and how to articles on your blog. Spread the message about their availability. Recommendation from other preeminent bloggers is important for positioning yourself as an expert in your field

Page 14...Distribution is the key to making money on the Internet, including a membership site. You must have: an email newsletter (email list) and the process in place to keep building it. The blog needs a sign up page and you need to drive traffic to the blog as much as possible (PPC, advertising, joint ventures, giving away free stuff to other experts who will use it for bonus material, etc.). And you need to keep it up. You also need to promote every change you have in everything you publish.

Page 16...The Sales Funnel (the process you create to convince people to join your membership site). The sales funnel begins at the first touch point with the person. This can be many places, such as the blog, PPC, advertising (see list in paragraph above). This is the conversation process. The email list is a pre-qualifying process.

Page 17...The key is marketing. You have to be able to communicate with your prospective members. You have to know:

1. Where your potential members hang out;
2. How to reach them;
3. How you will convince them of your value;
4. How you will construct your offer that answers what they want.

Page 18...Technology...For this you will need to know:

1. How to protect the member resources from public access.
2. How you will process payments, registration and deliver.
3. What content features the site will contain (audio, video, forms, chat rooms, teleconferences – what?).
4. What email service you're going to use to communicate with members.
5. Are you doing an affiliate program and how will you handle the process (track referrals, offer promo tools, pay out commissions, etc.).

### Page 19...**Membership Site Software**

This is the part I've been investigating. Password protection is one of the main elements the software needs to have.

List of program's he considered:

- [aMember Pro](#)
- [MemberGate](#) (pricey)
- [VisionGatePortal](#)
- [Membership Client Pro](#)
- [iSubscribe](#)

He found these too pricey, lacked good features or had a complicated navigation. He settled for aMember because it had some plug-ins that integrated with his blog and his forum.

After trying to do the set up himself and the launch date being pushed back months, he purchased Butterfly Marketing – a product by Mike Filsaime – half membership site software and half-marketing tool. It included a full home study course, software, and documentation for the marketing strategy. It also included a 30-day trial period.

He found later that this purchase wasn't great for recurring payments – something mandatory for a membership site. He also had technical challenges with their system. You should investigate this thoroughly it may be a match for you. It wasn't for him.

PayPal's script to communicate with Butterfly Marketing was difficult to set-up and didn't always work. You have to stay on top of double billing failures and manually chase up non-paying customers. You will want to outsource this process to a customer service person (a live human being) to do this.

Page 20...AMember is the dominant, low-cost membership site system. Even though it over complicates things, it's a solid option. He didn't go back to AMember because simplicity was one of his priorities.

Page 21. After all this trial and error, he found out that keeping it simple was necessary. So he simple used WordPress (a blogging site). The pro...it's simple set-up. The con is there were many automated scripts that worked with WordPress.

Page 22...He settled with the model of WordPress and its plug-ins, plus a live-person customer service delivery process.

### Taking Payments

He began by using PayPal. Unfortunately, it had a nasty habit of canceling subscriptions if their credit card has any problems. Otherwise PayPal is a reasonably reliable system, just be prepared for membership cancellations on members who didn't want to be cancelled. It also has billing failures if the credit card doesn't go through the first time around.

He tried several others and then moved on to Click Bank. Even though their fee was high (almost 10%) it had a build it affiliate program.

Page 23...The Click Bank affiliate program has a flaw—it lacks customization controls. In particular...being able to offer his affiliates multiple destination

pages for access to different free reports. He found a script for this called "EasyClickMate." This added more complication to the process.

His technology model at this point was:

EasyClickMate  
Click Bank  
AWeber  
WordPress

Page 24...He discusses [www.paydotcom.com](http://www.paydotcom.com) (Mike Filsalme's Click Bank clone). Cons...an additional fee on top of PayPal's normal fees. You still have PayPal's cancellation issue.

1shoppingcart.com has a lower month. Yet, it's technically not a payment process. You still need to plug into PayPal or a merchant account to take credit cards.

Page 25...Using PayPal is necessary.

### **Including Audio, Video, and Forums**

He uses Audacity audio recording and editing software with iTunes conversion. WordPress has a MP3 conversion and a downloadable MP3 version.

He uses Logitech QuickCam Pro 5000 Webcam for video capturing and Camtasia for screen cast video recording. And uses [vBulletin](#) forum software.

After this he switched to a MacBook Pro laptop because of it's easy to use methods for recording audio and video. On the Mac, he uses the screen recording software Screen Flow to record desktop presentations and iMovie (available on PC) to record his "face talking."

Training videos available at [www.getyourvideoonline.com](http://www.getyourvideoonline.com)

Live webinars: GoToMeeting and HiDefConferencing

Page 27 – Affiliate Management -- Don't need this, thus skipping section.

Page 28 – It boils down to him now only using AWeber, WordPress, and ClickBank. And he suggests you join the Membership Site Mastermind group starting soon to get the techie end of this.

Page 29 forward is about adding content to your membership site.

This is where you decide what content you're going to deliver. He discusses using an e-lesson focused model and recommends an affiliate link of his – which I'm not going to mention.

One model is to collect questions in advance from a member's forum and then respond through a delivery system (audio, video, info product, etc.)

Page 30...Forums. They are a lot of work so it's important to have volunteer moderators to deal with spam and provide educated answers. When a forum first opens, you will have a lot to answer, so tell the members there will a delay in your replying time while the launch finishes.

Page 31...Videos. Can use "talking head" or screen cast presentations. Video's can also be burned to DVDs and sent to members (this increase perceived value, affects pricing, but also increases expenses and production time. It's important to remember not everyone has the bandwidth or tech stuff to watch them.

Page 32...Be care not to deliver too much content but always deliver too much value. Feedback is your thermostat for this.

Page 33...Pricing depends on how hard you have to work and what resources you have to consume to produce it. Figure out what you're offering and how much it's going to take. And then on top of this, there's perceived value. How rare is the information? The rarer, the higher the price, of course. It also depends on the benefit to the customer.

Pricing needs to be tested, he says. (My note: I don't believe this is the right answer, since if someone pays X\$ and another pays something higher and the higher price purchaser finds out, oh sh\_\_ hits the fan. Your trust goes down the tube. You can go lower for an introduction price and then go higher – that's okay.

Page 35...Who is your target market? I for one know you need this "before" anything else.

He talks about a low entry fee of \$9.95 a month to target beginners.

Page 36 to 40...He begins talk about triggers. This info is good to have and works not just through a membership site but in every instance of marketing.

Trigger 1: social proof

Trigger 2: proof

Trigger 3: Reciprocity

Trigger 4: Risk Reversal

Trigger 5: Urgency

Pages 41 Prelaunch and Launch

Page 49...Dealing with Attrition

Page 54...Set your membership site on autopilot. This is going to cost you, so if you don't have any money in your budget to outsource stuff, then you may want to rethink having a membership site that runs without you.

Page 60...Selling your membership site. Not there yet. Too much will change in the marketplace to get into this yet. What's good about this section, it tells you what you need to track in order for you to sell it at a higher price.

Page 67...begins his sales pitch for the mastermind group starting. Since he's not opening the site until May 5, there's no price given.