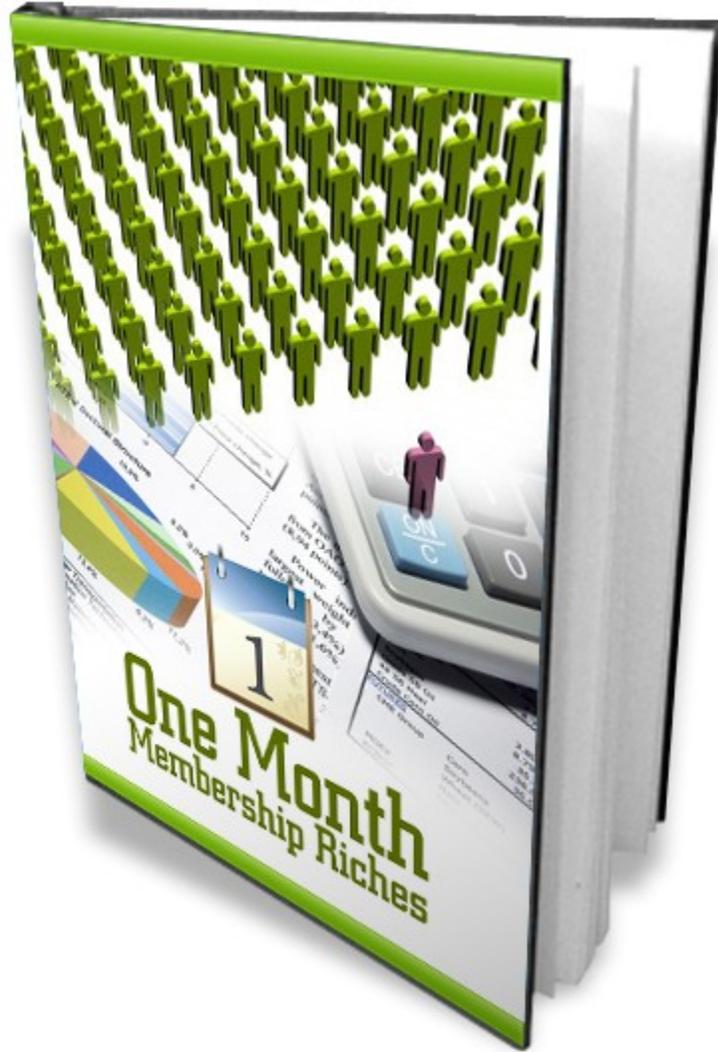


# 1 month membership riches



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## Introduction

For many people, owning and running their own business is a dream. Many online marketers and entrepreneurs never saw themselves starting an internet based business, and now it is a fact that there are thousands of online business success stories.

Starting an online business has many advantages over doing so in the traditional business world. The start-up costs of an internet based business are extremely low, as you do not need new offices, inventory, staff, machinery or any other of the things that you might need to get a real-world business off the ground.

There are some disadvantages to running a business on the internet as well. It is worth considering these downsides now, because 'forewarned is forearmed'.

When you are doing business transactions over the World Wide Web, it is harder to build relationships with your prospects and customers than it would be if they were able to walk into your office or shop. After all, it has to be easier to get acquainted with someone who lives 100 meters away than it would be to get to know somebody on the other side of the world.

For your online business to be successful, it is essential you do everything possible to earn the trust and respect of your prospects and customers. It is only by doing so that you can make money on a consistent basis.

The majority of online businesses are based on selling products and services, although there are a significant number of people who make money from paid advertising as well.

Both of these business models have one basic flaw, related to the fact that every 'deal' is a one-off, so you must always be selling, or bringing new visitors to the site where you feature paid advertising, in order to make a living.

If you have progressed to the stage where you can create your own digital information products, you will have periods when you're not bringing in very much money – during the product creation period, for example – balanced by times when your product is selling well and there is money pouring into the bank.

The intrinsic problem with this particular business model is that there is no consistency, and there is no reliable income.

There is another inherent risk which relates back to the notion of building trust.

If you are selling your own products, there will be people who buy your product and do not like it. They may ask for a refund, and may not buy from you again because they don't trust the quality of your products.

From the customer's point of view, they have given you an opportunity to impress them with your value and quality but you have failed to meet their expectations. It is unlikely that they will give you another chance.

It would be far more logical and profitable if you could run a business that overcame these problems. How much better would it be if your business could bring in a regular cash flow, and presents you with multiple opportunities to impress your customers at the same time?

Such a business model exists, which is one of the reasons why owning and running membership sites has become so popular over the past couple of years.

If you have a membership site where the members pay a regular subscription, then you automatically have regular cash flow coming in. Because you deliver to your members on a regular basis, you also have many opportunities to re-emphasize the value of what you offer.

This is only scratching the surface of why running your own membership site is such a good idea.

Before getting into the real 'body' of this report, let me start by dispelling a common myth.

## **Membership sites do not have to be difficult...**

This report is entitled '1 month membership riches' for a specific reason. It is feasible to launch a successful membership site in less than a month, because starting a membership site is not as expensive or as difficult as many marketers would have you believe.

There are some professional membership software programs available on the market that range in price from [less than \\$30](#) right up to [five dollars short of \\$30,000!](#)

You might question which software package you need, because spending a five figure sum on software to get a new business off the ground would price the average online marketer out of the membership game before they even got started.

The answer is that software isn't needed to set up your membership site at all. You don't need anything that you wouldn't use to run your business already.

It is possible to set up a membership site using nothing more complex than an autoresponder. While a professional autoresponder account requires a monthly subscription, it is a tool that you need to run your business anyway.

There is no need to make your membership site any more complex than necessary. While some of the membership software programs available have some great features, many of the features offered are not essential, especially in the beginning.

You can set up a new membership site quickly and easily.

Most of your members are not going to be concerned about how you run the membership site. The mechanics of running your membership is not the primary factor that will dictate how successful your membership business is.

Your business will succeed based on the strength of the content of your membership site, not on how it operates.

As the experts say about online businesses, 'content is king', and this applies to membership sites just as much as any other internet based businesses.

## **What kind of information will your membership site provide?**

At a very basic level, there are two different types of products that you can offer members through your site. It could be a service, but I am going to focus on products in this report.

The first option is to provide tangible, physical products to members, and there is no reason why you could not run a membership site of this type online.

However, I am going to assume for the purposes of this report that your membership site is going to be based on supplying information products to your customers. This is because supplying information is easier, quicker and more profitable than supplying physical products - where sourcing the goods, delivery and other associated factors make the operation much more complex and time-consuming.

You know that you are going to supply information, and people will pay you for that information on a regular basis.

### **What is your market?**

The first questions to answer before going any further are: "What kind of information are you going to supply to your members?", "What is the focal point of your membership site going to be?" and "What market are you going to move into?"

The answers to these questions may be straightforward if you have already established a successful business in a particular marketplace. In this situation, it makes sense to open a membership site in the marketplace in which you are already familiar and successful.

However, if you do not have a marketplace in mind, then finding one is the first requirement of running a successful membership site.

This does not need to be a complicated or involved procedure. Do not fall into the trap of spending weeks trying to come up with a market or membership site idea. This is a waste of time because there is no such thing as a perfect market or idea.

However, unless you have a great deal of patience and money available for marketing and promotion, I do not recommend launching a membership site that provides internet marketing or online business related products. There is no such thing as a saturated marketplace, but membership sites that provide internet marketing related products are as close to it as it is possible.

Providing internet marketing related products through a membership site is a competitive marketplace, one where there are already hundreds of membership sites trying to make money and many of them are failing.

On the other hand, there are thousands of 'real world' market niches where people are desperately looking for information, which can be packaged as the benefits of being a member of your site.

### **Your initial idea...**

Try to think 'pain' and 'need'. That is, try to think of groups of people who have a *pain* in their life who *need* help to get rid of that pain.

For example, try to think of people who are getting older and hate every single minute of it. These people would do anything to offset the worst effects, the *pain*, of aging. If you can supply the information they *need* to help them, you have the basis of a profitable membership site.

Here is another example. There are thousands of people who are trying to lose weight but failing miserably, so a membership site that presents usable weight loss information *that works* on a regular basis would be successful.

Other markets can be found for people who looking for a partner (online dating), those who cannot locate a suitable school for their children (home schooling), those who want to better themselves (self-improvement), or those who are looking for 'wellness' related information.

Every individual member of any of these groups has a degree of pain in their life, an area in which they are dissatisfied or unhappy. If you can provide the help they need by supplying a solution to their problems, you have the basis of a successful membership site right there.

There are lots of ideas like this. Even if you do not come up with anything off the top of your head, there are plenty of websites full of ideas and information.

However, before considering these 'ideas sites', we need to address a few more considerations.

### **Additional things you *must* know before diving in...**

After having to come up with a list of ideas that satisfy the basic 'pain' and 'help' requirements, it is necessary to do a little more research before diving in. There are a few more questions that you need to address before you can say whether or not your ideas will be successful.

The first question to consider is: "Are there people in the market where you are considering launching a membership site who are willing to spend money online?"

There are ways that you can check to see if there is money being spent in a particular market place.

First, you can run a Google search to see if there is any advertising featured on the search results page. For example, if you were considering launching a membership site in the weight loss market, you would search Google using the phrase 'weight loss':

The screenshot shows a Google search for "weight loss". The search bar contains "weight loss" and the search button is visible. Below the search bar, there are navigation links for "Web", "News", and "Blogs". The search results page displays several advertisements. A prominent yellow banner in the center reads "<=== Lots of Ads! ===>". On the left side, there are three ads: "Is A Genix International" from LocalAdLink.com, "Weight Loss Scam Exposed?" from TheWeightLossReview.org, and "Jenny Craig Weight Loss" from JennyCraig.com. On the right side, there are two "Sponsored Links" sections. The first section has a heading "Weight Loss" and lists "Healthy Weight Loss centers" and "Providing expert Weight Loss help" from LiteForLife.com. The second section also has a heading "Weight Loss" and lists "Eat more, exercise less, and lose up to 30lbs in 6 weeks, Guaranteed!" from MyBodyMakeover.com, "2009 Diet Of The Year" from AcaiBurn.com, "NutriSystem-Official Site" from NutriSystem.com, and "Weight Loss Pill Reviews" from a site looking for max weight loss pills.

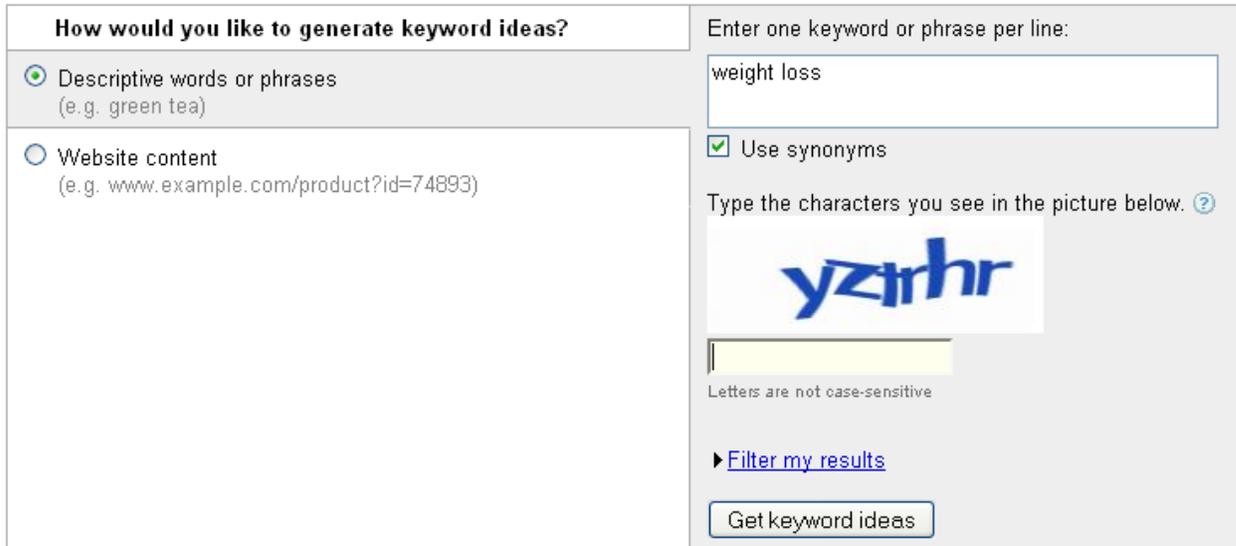
As expected, there are plenty of advertisements on the search page, which immediately tells you that there are plenty of companies willing to spend money on advertising. Advertisers do not spend money unless people are spending money with them. Here is instantaneous proof that there is money being spent by consumers in this market.

For further proof, look at the second results page. If there are advertising materials featured there, this is confirmation that this is a market where money is definitely being spent online.

How much are these advertisements costing the advertisers? If you knew that, it would give you a clear indication of how much money there is in the marketplace. Advertisers who promote their business using AdWords are willing to pay per click on their advertisement.

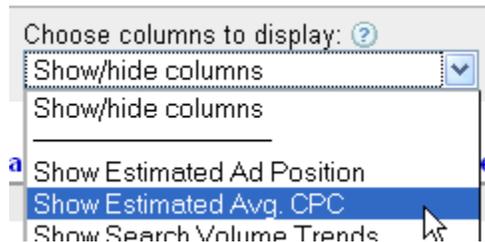
Given that they might only land one sale for every 20 or 30 clicks, knowing how much each click costs them would give you an indication as to whether this is a big money market or one where they are paying only a few cents for their advertising.

Using the free [AdWords keyword research tool](#), you can find the answer to this question instantly. Type in the keyword phrase that you want to research before clicking the 'Get keywords ideas' button:



The screenshot shows the AdWords keyword research tool interface. On the left, under the heading "How would you like to generate keyword ideas?", there are two radio button options: "Descriptive words or phrases (e.g. green tea)" which is selected, and "Website content (e.g. www.example.com/product?id=74893)". On the right, there is a text input field containing "weight loss". Below the input field, there is a checked checkbox for "Use synonyms". Underneath that, there is a CAPTCHA image showing the characters "yztrhr" in a blue, stylized font. Below the CAPTCHA is a text input field for the characters, which is currently empty. A note below the input field says "Letters are not case-sensitive". There is a blue link "Filter my results" and a "Get keyword ideas" button at the bottom right.

This action produces a list of keywords. Above this list of keywords at the top right hand corner, you will see the 'Choose columns to display' drop-down menu box. Click 'Show Estimated Avg. CPC' from this menu:



This will add a column to your keyword list table, which shows the average cost of grabbing the number one advertising slot for every keyword term in the list. Sort this list so that it shows the most expensive keywords at the top, and from this you can gauge how much money is being spent in this market:

Keywords related to term(s) entered - <a href="#">sort by relevance</a> ?		
weight loss surgery	\$8.50	
weight loss system	\$7.06	
weight loss camps	\$6.96	
weight loss aid	\$6.29	
weight loss diets	\$6.17	
weight loss solutions	\$6.05	
weight loss program	\$5.69	

The top weight loss related term is costing \$8.50 per click, so there is clearly money being spent on weight loss related products and information. The next thing to know is if there are enough people looking for information in your marketplace to justify launching a new membership site.

You might have the most exciting idea in the world, but if there are only a handful of people who are interested in what you have to say, then your business will struggle.

This is easy to answer and it costs you nothing to find the information. Open the [free Word Tracker keyword research tool](#), and use the same search term once again:

## weight loss

19,543 searches (top 100 only)	
Searches	Keyword
4259	<a href="#">weight loss</a>
1498	<a href="#">fast weight loss</a>
1351	<a href="#">weight loss plans</a>
1061	<a href="#">quick weight loss</a>
913	<a href="#">arbonne weight loss</a>

According to Word Tracker, there are approximately 19,500 people who search Google every day for information related to weight loss.

Therefore you know right away that plenty of people are searching for weight loss information every day, because they have a problem and they want a solution to that problem right now.

The final criterion is: "Do you have the ability to get your information to these people?" We will look at this in a little more detail later.

If the answer is in the negative, it would be a waste of time to consider building a membership site.

## **If you are short of ideas...**

I have already mentioned a couple of markets where there are people who have a pain and need help to get rid of it.

However, there are thousands of similar ideas, and it is a matter of coming up with a list before running the 'criteria checks' you read about in the last chapter.

If you are short of ideas, it is not a big problem. There are dozens of places where you can find inspiration and recommendations.

For example, people who are seeking answers to questions or a solution for their pain, often use [Yahoo! Answers](#) to pose their questions to other Yahoo! members.

Look at the questions that are asked regularly, because that will help you to come up with several new ideas.

I recommend looking at [43Things](#) to see what goals and objectives site users have. Many of these are objectives that people *want* to achieve. Many others are things that they *have* to do for their own happiness and satisfaction.

Look to see what the best-selling products are at [Clickbank.com](#). This is the number one digital information affiliate network site, and you can be sure any products that are selling well from this site are making a lot of money.

Study the sales pages for the most successful products, and search for independent reviews using a Google search based on 'product name + review' (without the '+' sign). These two things should give you a clear idea of what the product is all about.

This is the best-selling digital information on the market. A membership site that supplies similar information, but does the job better and supplies that information regularly, should be a winner.

What are the current bestsellers at [eBay](#) and [Amazon.com](#)?

The screenshot shows the Amazon search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a 'Shop All Departments' button and a search bar containing 'All Departments' and 'best sellers'. Below the search bar, the left sidebar lists various departments: Books (52,320), Home & Garden (223), Electronics (19), DVD (21), Health & Personal Care (222), Apparel & Accessories (215), MP3 Downloads (177), and a '+ See All 28 Departments' link. The main content area is titled '"best sellers"' and shows 'Related Searches: best seller list, bestseller list, new'. Below this, it says 'Select Results from All Departments'. The first result is 'The Last Lecture' by Randy Paus, with a 'LOOK INSIDE!' button highlighted by a red box and a red arrow pointing to it. The book cover is visible, and the price is shown as 'Buy new: \$21.95 \$13.17'. Delivery information states 'Get it by Monday, Feb 9' and 'Eligible for FREE Super Saver'.

Many of the best selling books at Amazon allow you to take a 'Look Inside!' so you can see what the book is all about.

It's a bestseller, and people are seeking this kind of information. The question to ask is: "Can you realistically supply it to them on a regular basis, but do so in a way that is better than what the competition can offer?"

If you can find what is already selling, you have an indication of the kind of information that people are willing to spend money on. If you can take the idea behind that information, improve on it or find some unique angle that you can apply to that information, then you have everything you need to launch a successful membership site.

## **Narrowing down your focus...**

It is good to suggest numerous sites to pick up ideas, but at this stage the ideas are very general. It is essential to understand why people are seeking information that they are willing to pay for.

We have established that people who pay for information on the internet are generally looking for help. Now we need to know: "What kind of help do they need?"

As a general rule, most people who buy information on the internet are looking for guidance on 'how to do' something, whether it be something as mundane as how to tie a necktie, to something serious such as how to offset the worst and most painful effects of arthritis.

The most effective way of presenting information is to follow their line of reasoning, telling them how to do whatever it is they need to do.

However, attempting to set up a membership site where you advise your members on how to lose weight is probably too generic and unfocused to be a success for several reasons.

Within the general 'weight loss' category, there are dozens of sub-categories where people have specific problems or requirements.

For example, there are some people who are simply a few pounds overweight, but at the other end of the spectrum there are also people who are clinically obese. The requirements of these two groups are very different. If you try to include them both in the same membership site, you run the risk of supplying information to members that is too general to provide help to anyone.

People who suffer from eating disorders are generally categorized as having a 'weight loss' problem, but their needs are different from someone who just wants to shed a few pounds and get fit.

With your general area of interest in mind, narrow down the focus so that the information you provide to your members will be targeted to their specific requirements.

For example, rather than trying to start a membership site based on weight loss, it would make sense to target your membership to those who have eating disorders, teenagers with weight problems or another specific group.

Doing this enables you to target your information more accurately, which ensures you are able to keep your members happier for longer.

Satisfied members tend to keep paying their subscriptions longer than those who feel that you are not offering value, so narrowing your focus will put extra money in your pocket.

## **Positioning your membership site...**

When you eventually launch your membership site, it is important that it has a clearly defined position in the marketplace and a unique selling point (USP) that will encourage people to join.

You have already seen one aspect of this in the previous chapter, but now you can take this idea one step further by establishing what your USP will be.

Return to Clickbank and study the top-selling products again.

Most of them are focused on a narrow niche within a popular market such as weight loss, Forex trading or internet marketing.

Rather than trying to compete on a generic level, try to improve on their products while keeping the original concept focused on the niche market you have chosen.

By studying the product details made available by Clickbank, you might be able to find top-selling products that complement each other. These products have probably been produced by different people, and it is likelt that neither of these people has ever thought of combining the two products into one.

However, if you were to do so, you might have enough material to keep your members happy for many months.

When you find successful products, search the internet for additional information and content materials about the same subject matter on which that product is based. If there are plenty materials available, by combining them with the content from the original product, you can have high-quality materials to build your membership site around.

Of course, I am not recommending directly copying either the original product or other materials you find on the internet. All of these materials will be copyrighted, and if you copy them directly you are plagiarizing other people's work and setting yourself up for a lawsuit.

However, there is no copyright on ideas and concepts. If you can find suitable materials to satisfy the requirements of people in a narrowly targeted niche, all you need to do it rewrite those materials in your own words to generate content for your membership area.

Other possible approaches would be to offer bonuses of significant perceived value as a way of differentiating your membership site from other similar sites in your market.

If there are other similar membership sites in your market view this as a positive sign. It suggests your hunch that people might be willing to spend money for a regular supply of information is correct.

In addition to giving away bonuses to make what you are offering different, you can spend a little money to join competitor sites and find out what they are doing. If they have been around for a while, you already know that they are successful. It will pay to find out exactly why people are happy to keep spending money to continue to be a member of those sites.

This will put you in a position to improve on what the competition is offering, without having to guess what they are doing or why they are so successful.

Whatever market you are operating in, there are other online entrepreneurs in the same business, many of whom have been building prospect and customer mailing lists for a considerable amount of time.

Many of these individuals will publish a regular newsletter or e-zine, and some of these e-zines are likely to be very popular.

That popularity is a result of the quality of information being provided in the newsletter. I recommend to get on the mailing list to see what kind of information people are supplying in your niche. Take a look at a site like [BestEzines.com](http://BestEzines.com) for a list of the most popular newsletters in your niche, sign up for those that look most appropriate, and study the information being provided.

Everyone who is on this marketer's mailing list will have access to this information, but the majority of people in your market will not. If the information is of high quality, you can use it to enhance the quality of information that you are supplying to your members. This will help you position your membership site as one that offers superior quality with an advantage over the competition.

## **Giving your members what they want is critical...**

No matter what marketplace you are operating a membership site in, the secret of success is always the same.

If you give your members what they want and you continue to do so on a monthly basis, your existing members will continue to be happy and keep paying their subscriptions, while recruiting new members will become even easier.

If your existing members are impressed with the information you are providing, it is likely that they will recommend your membership to others they know who have similar problems to theirs. Your membership base will expand exponentially by word of mouth, as existing members recommend your services to others.

The key is you have to give both new and existing members exactly what they want.

So, how do you know what they want? The best way to find out is to ask them!

There are several ways to do this.

If you are planning to launch a membership site in a market in which you already have a presence, then you have already built a mailing list.

Because you are operating in the same marketplace, you know your list members are prequalified as potential members of your new membership site.

You can send them a simple e-mail questionnaire asking what kind of information they want, how often they want it, how much they would be prepared to pay for it and what bonuses- if any- they would be interested in receiving.

If the members of your mailing list are responsive, asking them what they want via a questionnaire will elicit enough replies to tell you what you need to do to keep your members happy.

If you do not have a mailing list, there are forums in the market niche where you are planning to launch a membership site.

Forums are a vastly underrated research resource, particularly for a project like this, because everyone who is involved in a niche market forum is by definition very interested in that niche. These people are a good source of background information, and it should not be difficult to use a forum to establish what kind of information people are looking for in your market.

To find suitable forums, try searching Google using 'your subject + forums' as your search term. If we were searching for people who come together to discuss eating disorders and related issues, we would search 'eating disorder forums':

Results 1 - 10 of about 1,030 for "[eating disorder forums](#)".

There are not a huge number of forums, but since you can be involved in only four or five at a time, this should be more than enough.

Google sorts search results in terms of popularity, and the forum sites that appear at the top of the results page are the most popular in your niche. Starting at the top of the list and working down is the best way of researching further.

What you are looking for is a forum (or forums) where there are members getting involved on a daily basis, a place where there is plenty of activity and questions or comments are being 'pinged' between members regularly.

From the questions that people are asking on a regular basis, you should be able to establish what kind of information people are seeking quickly. By joining the forums that are most active and getting involved yourself, you can ask questions to further clarify exactly what people need to know.

The third (but most expensive) option is to use a site like [SurveyMonkey](#) to create an online survey, and then use Google [AdWords](#) advertising to direct visitors to that survey page.

While there is a free SurveyMonkey option available, it is limited:

	Basic	Monthly Pro
Recurring Cost	Free	\$19.95/month
Number of responses allowed	100 per survey	1000 per month
Response overage charge	N/A	\$0.05 each
Number of questions per survey	10	unlimited
15 types of questions	✓	✓
Collect responses via weblink	✓	✓

You may want to upgrade to the 'MonthlyPro' level, depending on how long you want to run your survey.

There is another reason for doing so that you might like to consider. You don't want your membership site to be a short lived, 'here today

and gone tomorrow' phenomenon, so remember that people's attitudes and requirements change over time.

It could represent money well spent to keep your 'advertising and survey' campaign running indefinitely. This will ensure that you are always keeping up with exactly what people are looking for from a membership site like yours.

You can also make certain that your membership offer is always at the cutting edge of your marketplace, which provides you with another unique selling point.

## More member content from Public Domain materials...

There are some successful sites that offer a wide range of Public Domain materials you can use as content for your membership site. Public Domain materials are those that were never initially copyrighted or the copyright has already expired, meaning that you can download and use them in any way you like (subject to any site specific limitations).

Many of these Public Domain materials are dated. Although the writing style is often archaic, the information that is contained in many Public Domain materials is as accurate today as it was when it was written several years ago.

However, it is not only written materials that are available in the Public Domain. There are hundreds of movies that are now in the Public Domain, some of which are very famous. For example, many of the early Disney movies are now Public Domain materials.

Public Domain materials should not be ignored as a source of content, and do not hesitate to use these materials just because you can access, download and use them for free. Most people are not aware that content materials of this nature even exist, never mind having the ability to look for them. Do not assume that your members will have the same degree of knowledge as you.

If you are looking for written Public Domain materials, consider using a search term such as 'public domain books' or start with the library of 27,000 Public Domain books available on the [Project Gutenberg website](#).

In a similar manner, you can search for 'public domain' video materials using Google, and there is no shortage of information available:

Results 1 - 10 of about 10,600,000 for [public domain movies](#).

## How much should you charge?

### Over-delivery is vital...

When it comes to setting up your membership site, one of the single most difficult issues to decide on is how much money you should charge for membership. There is no preset formula that will enable you to come up with a perfect price every time.

However, there is one credo that you should always remember, something that should enable your site to be profitable right from the outset.

Regardless of how much money you are charging for membership of your site, or how regularly your members are expected to subscribe, it is absolutely essential that you over-deliver value. You must do so in a way that makes it obvious to your members that you are over-delivering, every time you supply content to them.

If you are running a membership site where you supplied ready-made content materials that had a predetermined value before you obtained them, this would be easy to do.

In this scenario, you would obtain five or ten \$20 products and supply all of them to your members in return for their monthly \$19 subscription. You are supplying five or ten products for less than the price of one, and the value of the site is clear to your membership.

However, in most of the examples we have considered this far, we have focused on supplying unique content rather than materials that you have bought 'ready made' with a price tag already attached.

If you have created your own content materials for your members, then you can assign any value you like to those materials.

For example, if you bought two \$49 e-books from Clickbank, combined them and then doubled or tripled the amount of information available by importing additional content from other sources, you have a 'baseline' from which you can decide an overall value.

Given that a package of this nature is made up of a considerable amount of content materials and information, you can use this as the basis of what you send to your members over a period of several months.

In this example, you spent \$98 on content materials and imported a similar amount of information from other resources. So you can assume that both content materials have a similar value to those you paid for.

If you spread this information over a period of five months, each month's edition is worth nearly \$40 as an approximate cost price. It would be reasonable to assign a resale value of \$59 or \$69 to each monthly edition.

If we are still talking about your \$19 a month membership site, the value of membership should be clear. You can try to supplement this main product with additional valuable bonus materials.

Also there is something else to be aware of besides bonus materials.

Far too many new membership site owners make the mistake of trying to do too much for their members from the beginning. Rather than starting by supplying a limited amount of information and then expanding from there as time and resources allow, they try to do everything at once from the beginning.

To continue with the previous example, instead of providing one main \$69 report plus many readily available bonuses, they try to 'bolster' the strength of their offer by including videos, MP3 interviews and podcasts.

While over-providing value in this way is commendable, if you do this it is easy to become overwhelmed very quickly, which is no good to anyone. It is much better to start small, and build your capabilities up as you go along.

### **What is the correct price point?**

This is a very difficult question to answer, because what works best in any individual market will to a certain extent depend on the unpredictability of the market. It is a question of establishing an initial pricing point, and then testing to see whether it is the right one.

At the bottom of the scale, if you are providing a low-end product that has a broad appeal to a mass market, you should be pitching for somewhere between \$5 and \$10 per month. You are not going to make as much money on individual membership subscriptions, but you are aiming for numbers rather than a small collection of high net worth individuals.

If you're looking a little further up the scale, in the \$10 to \$30 range, then you are still operating at a level where if you provide good quality information to end-user consumers, your business will be a success.

At this level, people are not going to worry too much about the cost of subscription. As long as the content materials do the job that your members require this should work.

I have found that \$49 a month is pretty much a 'cut-off point' below which prospects are willing to invest money in online products almost without thinking.

However, above this, you have to provide a lot more than a few special reports or a newsletter to justify the cost.

The same credo of over-delivery still applies at much higher levels of monthly membership subscription. For example, at the time of writing, [this membership site](#) had set the initial fees at \$147 a month, which seems like a great deal of money until you see the range of products and services that are being provided at this price.

If you can create a membership site of this quality, then you are justified in charging the same level of subscription fee.

However, you need many people to work on a site like this full-time to keep the membership happy. Unless you can do this by paying a team of assistants, it is not worth thinking about for the time being.

Add this to the fact that, as with starting any kind of business, running your own membership site can represent quite a steep learning curve. So it is clear that your first membership effort should be focused on learning the ropes with a business that provides great value and quality for \$10-20 a month.

Only after you are confident that you know exactly what you are doing and you can afford people to help you, then you can become ambitious with your own premium quality membership sites.

The bottom line is that you can create a membership site that is to a certain extent 'cheap and cheerful', or you can build something that represents premium quality. Both will work, as long as it is clear to current members and prospective members that the overall value of what you are providing is many times higher than the amount they have to pay for membership.

## Special offers to pull in new members

In general, most membership sites work on the concept of charging a subscription on a monthly basis. As a result, most individuals who you invite to join your site will feel the most comfortable subscribing in this way. It would not make sense to try to do things differently if this is what everyone who might join your site is already comfortable with.

Therefore, monthly subscription fees are the best way to go.

However, in addition to providing new members with high value for the subscription fee they pay, you might consider further 'sweetening the deal' by offering some kind of special offer. This will encourage everyone who sees your offer to subscribe.

For example, if you are providing information to members on a monthly basis, then you might offer a one-month free membership, so that prospective members can gauge the quality of your materials before they spend any money.

People love 'freebies', so this step could double or triple your subscription rates in a very short period of time.

If you offer one month's free membership and your subscription rate is low, your cancellation rates are likely to remain low. This happens because after the free month has passed, many members will forget that they signed up for your site. Even if they remember, it may be more hard work than it is worth to cancel membership just to save \$15 or \$20 a month.

Alternatively, if membership of your site is priced at a higher level, you may want to offer a significant discount on the first month's membership. For example, if your standard charge is \$97 a month, you might offer the first month for only \$47.

However, if you do so, make sure that the new member does not have access to all the materials from your site at the same time. If they do, they will be able to download everything and then cancel before the 'normal' subscription rate kicks in.

Surprisingly, it can be even more effective to reverse this scenario by charging an increased subscription in the first month, with reduced payments in subsequent months.

For example, you might charge an initial monthly subscription of \$59, which reduces to \$29 for every month thereafter. While this might seem like a bizarre way of going about things, there is some sound psychology behind it because this creates some exclusivity.

People like to think that they are exclusive and special in some way, and they are happy to pay \$59 to be a member of a site that the people who can only afford \$29 cannot join.

While you might have an idea of how much you would like to charge for your membership site, you should test various price levels before deciding on a final subscription figure.

Do this by publishing a 'dummy' sales page that lists all of the products that you are going to include in membership to your site. Then include a question in your survey, or pitch it to forum members, asking how much people would be willing to pay to be a member of your site.

## Constructing your first membership site

So far, you have collected content all of which is focused on a specific topic that you are going to try to build a membership site around.

For the time being, we are going to keep this membership site as simple as possible, because this enables you to build your membership site in less than an hour. You can 'test market' this site to assess how popular it is going to be, without having to worry about the amount of time, effort or money that is spent on putting your site together.

This is important because it is a fact that not every membership site that is ever created is going to be successful. With plenty of background research I talked about above, you can minimize the chances of your site being unsuccessful but you cannot remove them altogether. You should spend as little time and money as possible on the site creation process, allowing you to focus the majority of your efforts on marketing your new business.

The first thing that you need to get your membership site live is a domain name, one that is directly related to the subject matter around which you are going to construct your membership area. In our previous example, an ideal domain name would be EatingDisorders.com, but that was been claimed by someone else a long time ago.

I recommend you try to come up with a shortlist of similar domain names for your site, each of which you should check using a domain name registrar like [The Internet Company](#):



Note that I've included the main topic of the site in the domain name, which is something that should always be done. Click the blue 'Search' button to check whether this particular name is available.

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 **EATINGDISORDERSCARER.COM is available!**

It is, so go ahead and register it.

Next, open a web hosting account so that you can 'rent' space on their server from where they can show your website to the world. While there are hundreds of web hosting companies, one of the most online business friendly, which is very important when you're running a

membership site, is [Hostgator.com](http://Hostgator.com). Their 'Baby' account is \$7.95 a month, which represents an outstanding value.

Open your Hostgator account and when you get a confirmation e-mail that your account is ready, the final step is to tie together your hosting account and domain name. This ensures that when anyone types in that name, they are automatically redirected to your site on the Hostgator servers.

Detailed instructions on how to do this can be found approximately two thirds of the way down this [Hostgator support page](#).

You now have the tools in place to start building your site, so the next step is to create the pages that you need to add to that site.

However, before doing so, let me explain exactly how your membership site is going to work.

Your membership site itself only needs to have two pages to start with. You can add additional pages as you go along, but in the beginning, you only need two pages to get your site launched.

The first page that you must have is the sales page, the page where you send visitors to convince them to join your site. The only other page that you need is the 'Thank You' page where your new member gets their instructions on how to receive the content for which they have just subscribed.

On the sales page, you are going to need to have a payment button, to have a method of collecting subscription fees from your members.

If you are going to give them a one month free trial, you still need to have a payment button so they can register with your system. To do this and in the interests of keeping everything as simple as possible, look no further than using [PayPal](#), because most of your potential members are already familiar and comfortable with using PayPal.

Finally, you need a way of delivering content materials to your customer, and for this you can use an autoresponder account. There are dozens of different autoresponder systems. I recommend that you use the best, which means either [Aweber](#) or [GetResponse](#), because your business depends on your autoresponder.

That is everything you need to set up your membership site. Let's consider each step in a little more detail.

### **Your site**

The first thing you need is a sales page, which details everything that the new member will gain when they join your site. If you looked at the best-selling Clickbank products suggested earlier, you already have an

idea of the kind of information you need to include to create an effective sales page. The best selling products almost always have the best sales pages.

Copy the style of the most successful pages by including testimonials, a money-back guarantee, and bullet point lists. For money-back guarantees, the longer they last the more effective they will be. If you have any HTML skills, creating a sales page of this nature will be very easy for you. If you don't, then you can either download a [free template here](#), or there is a free sales page creation program available [from Download 3000](#).

You can download a free HTML editor from [Kompozer](#), which will enable you to make the changes you want to your sales page before adding it to your site.

The second page of your site is straightforward. When someone joins your membership site from the sales page, you can set up PayPal so that it automatically sends them to your 'Thankyou' page.

On this page, there will be an autoresponder subscription form together with an explanation that the new member has to subscribe to your mailing list in order to receive the content, which they have just paid or signed up for, if you are offering them a free trial.

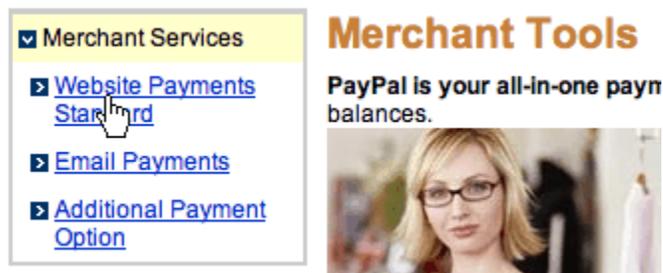
And that's all you need for site creation to get started.

## PayPal

To create a PayPal payment button, log in to your PayPal account before looking for the 'Merchant Services' tab at the top right hand corner of the page:



Next, you want 'Website Payments Standard':



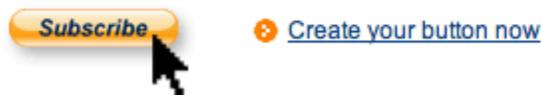
Followed by the 'Subscribe' button that you will find almost half way down the page:



And then you need to confirm that you want to create a subscription button:

### Buttons for subscriptions and rec

To bill customers on a regular basis, charge membership dues installment plans, add a Subscribe button to your website. [See](#)



Clicking this link will bring you to the first of three pages you need to complete in order to set up your PayPal payment button. Pages 1 and 3 of this button creation form are the ones you need to pay attention to.

On the first page, you need to set the currency and the subscription amount before confirming that you want a monthly billing cycle.

In this case, I want to offer a free trial, so I check the box further down the page as shown:

Currency  
USD ▼

Recurring amount to be billed  
19

Billing cycle  
1 ▼ month(s) ▼

After how many cycles should billing stop?  
- ▼

Try to bill a customer again after a failed attempt?  
 Yes  
 No

Offer a trial to your subscribers

Amount to bill during trial period  
 Free trial  
 Lower rate  
[ ] USD

How long should this trial period last?  
1| [ ] month(s) ▼

On the third page, I have to add the details of the pages that I want PayPal to redirect my new members to immediately after the payment process has been completed:

▶ Step 1: Choose button type and enter payment details

▶ Step 2: Track inventory (optional)

▼ Step 3: Customize advanced features (optional)

**Customize checkout pages**

If you are an advanced user, you can customize checkout pages for your customer section.

Do you need your customer's shipping address?

Yes  
 No

**No shipping needed - change the default 'Yes' to 'No' as shown...**

Take customer to a specific page (URL) after checkout cancellation:

**If they cancel, take them to a sales offer!**

Ex: <https://www.mystore.com/cancel>

Take customer to a specific page (URL) after successful checkout:

**This is the URL of your 'Thankyou' page**

Ex: <https://www.mystore.com/success>

If the customer decides to cancel at the last moment, you can either take them back to the original sales page or to another sales offer. More importantly, make sure that you add the URL of your 'Thankyou' page as shown, because this enables PayPal to send the new subscriber directly to that page after the payment process is completed.

### Your autoresponder

Using your autoresponder, you create a mailing list sign up form. This is added to the 'Thankyou' page on your site, so that your new subscriber must join your mailing list in order to receive their content. This immediately enables the autoresponder to start sending them the content for which they have subscribed.

Your autoresponder account should be set so that it sends out the content on a monthly basis, meaning that each of your subscribers receives their content every month automatically.

And that's the essentials of your membership site set up, with the only cost being the monthly fee for the autoresponder. An autoresponder is an essential business building tool that you need anyway, and this should not be seen as something that is only for your membership area.

## Traffic is the key

Consequently, there is no point in starting a membership site if no one knows that it exists, so getting traffic to your sales page is one of the most important things you can do to get your business off the ground..

The first and quickest way to get visitors to your membership site is to encourage members already on your mailing list to join your membership site. As these people are already on a targeted list, they will want to take a look at your membership site sales page when you ask them to.

Not everyone has a mailing list, but this is why having an autoresponder is so important for your business. It is the tool that allows you to build the all-important mailing list, which you can use to generate additional sales in the future.

Beyond this, there are three ways of getting visitors to your site.

There is free traffic, using [articles](#), [videos](#), or posting to forums as a way of sending visitors to your site.

These are good ways to generate traffic to your sales page because they do not cost anything besides a little time. Using articles, videos, forums and the like to drive visitors to your site is an effective way of attracting visitors, because once your materials are published, they will remain on article directory sites like [EzineArticles](#) or video publishing networks like [YouTube](#) indefinitely.

However, using free traffic generation tactics like these is a 'slow build' process that does not happen overnight, and there is a good deal of work involved in creating these kinds of promotional materials.

For example, writing an article may take half an hour, but submitting it to article directory sites may take a couple of hours more. There are several hundred article directory sites, and the time required will depend on how many sites you want to submit your articles to. The more sites you submit them to, the more traffic you will generate to your site.

You can [use software](#) to help you submit your articles, but it is a time-consuming way of driving visitors to your site.

Every time you create new content materials, no matter where they are published, send details to the major social networking sites as well. Social networking sites have the ability to send visitors to your site. Publishing your links on social networking sites will create one way incoming back links to your site, and these links will improve the search

engine ranking of your site and drive even more potential business your way.

Use a mass link submitter like [OnlyWire](#) to submit your information every time you publish a new article or video. It is the quickest and easiest way of making sure that the social sites pick up on what you are doing.

Another thing you can do is recruit affiliates to promote your membership site for you. Affiliates act as independent salespeople for your business, and there is no cost until they make a sale after which you pay them a share of membership fees as a commission. Because there is no cost unless they make a sale, using affiliates to promote your program is another effective 'no cost' option.

When you run a successful affiliate program, you will need software to keep your day-to-day administrative burden down to a minimum. There is a free version of [this software](#) available, and [this program](#) is also free.

The second option is to use paid advertising to pull visitors to your site, which has the advantage of being an extremely quick way of generating traffic.

By using something like [Google AdWords](#), you can have visitors on your site within an hour of placing your advertisement. As long as the advertisement that you are using is keyword targeted, the visitors that you pull in will also be targeted, and the chances of them signing up for your membership site will be very good.

While you want to keep your initial outlay to a minimum, I still recommend to start your advertising campaign by using paid advertising, because it is the most effective and efficient way of testing your sales page. Keep a very tight rein on how much you are spending with an initial budget to \$50 or less, but use paid advertising to test the effectiveness of your sales copy and to get members to sign up for your site.

The final and most valuable traffic strategy is to form as many joint ventures (JV) as you can. Joint ventures are always the most effective and profitable way of generating traffic.

Depending on the market you are working in, they can also be a very quick way of generating traffic. If you find the right people to form a joint venture with, they can have an e-mail going out to their mailing list members later the same day.

Within your industry, you are looking for the people who have influence, the well-known names that have already been building mailing lists for

some time. These people will be the owners of forums or noticeboard sites or leading marketers in your niche.

It is a question of e-mailing them information about what you have to offer and then taking it from there.

In some markets, such as internet marketing, the experts and industry leaders will be booked up months in advance, so send them notification about what you are going to be doing as soon as possible. These people are incredibly busy, and there is no guarantee that you will get the positive response that you want.

However, in other markets the situation can be very different, and the chances of landing JV partners are much better.

If you can land a JV partnership with a leading expert in your market, suggest a couple of different ways that you could both benefit from a suitable partnership arrangement.

If your new-found partner sends out one e-mail announcement to their list about your membership site, then you will grab plenty of new members but it will only happen once.

However, if, you can convince the expert with whom you are working to include information about your membership site in the series of e-mails that they have loaded to the autoresponder, every member of their mailing list will receive information about your site at some point and the benefits will be continual. You will enjoy a steady flow of new members, and the expert with whom you are running the JV will benefit from a steady flow of commission checks.

You already know who the experts are in your industry, but if not look at the main forum sites in your market.

Take a look at the most popular e-zines in your niche. E-zine publishers all have mailing lists, so use a site like BestEzines to find those that are most popular in your business.

There are hundreds of expert authors to be found at EzineArticles. See who are featured as the best known writers in your market and get in touch with them.

The most important thing to understand about joint ventures is that when you find someone who has a mailing list and is willing to send their members information about your membership site, they are doing so with a personal recommendation of what you have to offer.

The conversion rates from joint ventures always exceed conversion rates from any other kind of promotion by a large margin, meaning that it is the easiest and quickest way to build your membership without

having to go to the trouble of writing articles, posting to forums or making videos.

## Conclusion

There is no doubt that having a regular income from owning your own membership site is a benefit to you. As long as your site continues to provide high-quality content to members, this will be an increasing income.

While it is a fact of owning and running a membership site that some people will leave, as long the number of incoming new members is more than the number of members that are leaving, your income will increase steadily on a monthly basis. In this eBook we have given you the tools necessary to start and maintain a successful site.

Despite what you may have read or heard elsewhere from other online entrepreneurs, starting your own membership site is straightforward. As you have seen in this book, the mechanics of setting up a membership site are simple, and there is no need to spend money on special software to establish a membership site of your own.

However, after reading this eBook the advantages of creating your own membership site are very clear.

One myth of creating a membership site is that it is difficult to build and maintain. As we learned in this report membership sites are surprisingly easy to set up and sustain. You can construct a site in one month, and all you need is an autoresponder and software you probably already own. There are many sites available to help you verify domain names and set up payment methods.

After coming up with an idea for information you want to sell via your membership site, refine your idea and confirm it is possible. Ensure that there is a market for this information, and there are people are willing to pay for what you want to provide. Good ways to do this are visiting online forums, following advertisements and conducting surveys.

We also recommend once you find an area to narrow down your focus, because if is too broad it will not meet anyone's needs. Also make sure that the market is not saturated, and there are still consumers out there looking for what you are going to offer.

Once you know what specific niche you are going to fill, it's time to look for the information you will deliver to your members. Public Domain materials are a great place to start. Although sometimes they are written in a different style and the content may need to be updated, these materials can provide background and save you a lot of time and trouble. Two places to start searching are Google and Project Gutenberg. If you can find information from public sources to then edit

and update yourself, this is better than starting from scratch unnecessarily.

After you compile the information deciding how much to charge is the next, and some say the most difficult, step in setting up your membership site. Remember it is essential that you over-deliver on value. As long as you can always do this, there is a very good chance that you and your membership site will become enormously successful.

Never lose sight of the fact that you must always over-deliver both quality and value to your members, because this is how you keep your members subscribing. Your members should always believe they are getting a deal, and paying a lot less than what your product is actually worth.

Ask around to forums and see what people would be willing to pay for your product. This will help you decide on appropriate cost points. We also recommend offering bonuses and special offers, because these are good ways to entice people to continue their membership.

Remember not to bite off more than you can chew in the beginning. The most successful membership sites start with a smaller amount of information, and expand as they develop the resources to support this growth.

The last aspect of running a membership site we discussed was traffic, and the most effective and efficient ways to get people to visit your site. Free traffic, such as articles, forums and videos, is the easiest but also the slowest way to get the word out about your products. Paid advertising is much quicker than free traffic and is a useful way to test your sales page and related materials. You can also form partnerships and joint ventures with established experts in your market, who can inform their membership about your site and get things off the ground quickly. This is by far the best way to generate traffic for your site.

Now that you have seen how straightforward it can be to create your own membership site in less than one month, there is no reason not to create your own membership site starting right now.