

THE CONVERTKIT GUIDE TO

Launching a membership that runs itself

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Can a membership community help you break through your growth plateau? Yes—and it's way less work than you think

We've all been there—after a period of rapid growth, it all becomes a little stagnant. Growing still, but not nearly as fast as you've grown accustomed to. And none of the tactics you used before are giving the same results it used to. The panic is starting to set in...

Your thoughts move to that membership idea you had when you first dreamed up your newsletter. But the extra work and 24/7 commitment stopped you.

The good news—with rapidly changing technology, it's **RADICALLY** easier to launch and grow a membership today.

Even better news—this new breed of self-organizing membership community is one of the easiest and most compelling ways to offer the people you've brought together with your content more value with no additional work.

From funnels to flywheels

You're probably familiar with the classic marketing *funnel*. You bring someone in at the top and pull them through by education and building trust and authority until they subscribe to your newsletter or make a purchase. To be successful, you need to work hard at filling the top of the funnel with as many people as possible.

The problem is that funnels aren't working nearly as well as they did even a few years ago.

With a membership, you don't just build a funnel—you create a *flywheel*. This is where your members get so much value *from each other* that they are motivated to bring in new members themselves.

People are still coming for your content, but you're also offering them a membership to go deeper with each other in ways that deepen the impact you can have on each person. They're not just consuming your content, they're engaging and creating their own *experiences* around your content—with no additional work from you.

Together, your members share insights, strategies, and support for each other. They begin to see results and transformation. And what do people do when they have a great experience?

They talk about it.

They share their success stories with other people, and generate *new* members through word of mouth.

Those new members join, and contribute, and see results...and tell *more* people.

Growth plateau, solved.

From Creator to Host

Moving from funnels to a flywheel has other benefits as well.

If you want, you can stay focused on the best parts of being a creator—writing, exploring ideas, and sharing knowledge—while expanding the impact of your work.

But something else can happen when you start to see the impact you're having with a membership that runs itself.

You may find yourself moving from creator to host.

A host doesn't just share ideas. A host helps people turn those ideas into new habits, repeatable practices, and frameworks that get your subscribers results and transformation they simply can't get from a newsletter alone.

And it's because of you.

This kind of impact is infectious—and it's why more and more creators are expanding what they offer to a membership community *and more*.

What happens when you start to see yourself as a host?

A course becomes less about creating hours and hours of perfectly produced video content. Instead, it's going live in your membership community a few times a week and helping people approach a challenge in a new way with the support of other members.

An event isn't a huge production with a ton of costs and logistics to sell tickets. It becomes as easy as a weekly catchup with other members who are craving those connections.

Unlike life as a creator alone, as a host you just need to set the stage, not occupy it.

Sounds delightful, doesn't it?

Everything becomes easier when you can translate even just a handful of your *subscribers* to *members*.

In the next section, we'll show you how to attract the subscribers who will lead your membership into a self-organizing flywheel of goodness and value.

What's the one simple question you need to answer to launch a membership community from your newsletter?

The first thing you need to define is simple—who do you want to bring together?

But there's a trap to avoid.

One of the biggest mistakes people make when creating a membership for the first time is going *broad*.

"My membership is for women."

Or, "My membership is for entrepreneurs."

Here's the problem—if your membership is for everyone, it's actually for no one.

Remember the flywheel? If you go too broad, it's not clear to your prospective members who your membership is for, why they should join, or how they're going to contribute, and what kind of results you'll see together.

Instead, challenge yourself to get as niche as you can possibly get for your membership's ideal member. A great way to start is to draw from your personal story and background.

Let's take those two examples we just mentioned. Instead of "a membership for women" imagine you've been writing a productivity newsletter for years and you yourself are a busy mom of two under two.

You bring together moms of young children who are feeling burnt out and struggling to get everything done, so that they can learn and apply simple productivity tips designed

for busy parents, support each other during this overwhelming time, and reclaim some sense of balance.

Boom. Reading that, a prospective member can see themselves and their challenges. They understand how they can contribute to your membership community, and what they're going to get out of it.

Now, let's try it for that membership for entrepreneurs. Perhaps you're a seasoned executive in the tech space who has been writing a newsletter about technology trends and you've recently gone down the AI rabbit hole.

You bring together experienced entrepreneurs who are grappling with the potential impact of AI on their companies and roles. The goal is to help them cut through the noise to find trusted sources of information and experiment with new strategies. By sharing their on-the-ground insights with each other, they can future-proof their companies and stay relevant.

Again, reading that I know immediately if that's a membership I want to be a part of and I can imagine what it's like to contribute to it. I can start to envision where I'll be and the results I'll see in a year after joining.

Some real (and really profitable) membership examples

We stole this framework—"who do you bring together?"—from our friends at [Mighty Networks](#). Their software is designed to help you create a community that runs itself. And to prove to you that you can't go *too* niche, we asked them to share some insights.

Here are a few descriptions of *real* memberships on Mighty—making thousands or even millions of dollars through their subscriptions.



The Steak & Butter Gang

I bring together committed ketovores who want to conquer their weight loss goals to stay accountable to each other, find new motivation, and share delicious recipes so that we can transform and maintain our bodies and our health for the long term.

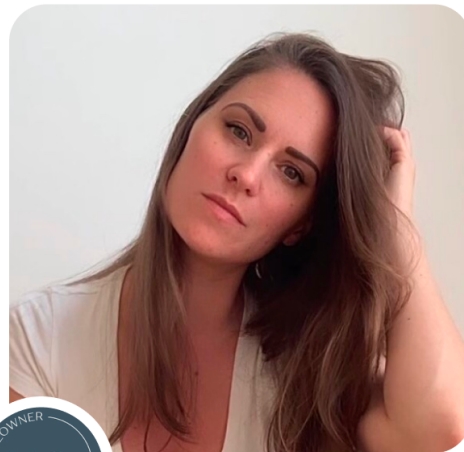
Bella Ma, [The Steak & Butter Gang](#)



Personal Productivity Club

We bring together people who are passionate about personal productivity, to explore innovative ways to maximize our potential and transform our lives through time management and other personal productivity methods and tools.

Ray Sidney-Smith, [Personal Productivity Club](#)



Homeowner HQ

We empower new homeowners to save time, money and headache during their new build or renovation project by taking the stress out of a difficult process with resources to hire professionals, manage their budget and create their dream home.

Chelsey Morphy, [Homeowner HQ](#)



Modern Day Rifleman

We bring together modern day riflemen to support and encourage each other in our shooting endeavors, so that we can take our skills to the next level and inspire others to do the same.

Kassandra Wojcik, [Modern Day Rifleman](#)



Grown Folks' Business

I bring together Gen X professionals who realize that if they just keep doing what they're doing, they'll never be happy and never be able to retire. They learn how to turn their knowledge and experience into an online education business so that we can achieve financial freedom AND have lots of free time to enjoy it because we're no longer trading our time for money.

Lenzy Ruffin, [Grown Folks' Business](#)

Bonus: Create your membership community in under 60 seconds

Inspired? Once you have an idea of who you serve—head to cohost.mn.co.

You can put in your ideal member and Mighty will generate a statement like the above, a name for your membership community, a landing page, and your community home—all in fewer than 60 seconds.

A proven formula for setting your membership price

Now that you have your ideal member in mind—and the results they'll achieve alongside other members—you'll want to set a membership price. Let's start with what *not* to do: don't undercharge.

It's tempting, especially if you're anchored on the average price of a paid newsletter (at ConvertKit, that's \$11/month). Our friends at Mighty call this the "cup of coffee" mistake:

"If I charge just \$5 a month, everyone will join—that's just one cup of coffee!"

Here's the thing—if you anchor your membership to the price of a cup of coffee, no one is going to believe it will get them the results you're promising. And the fact is, people *will* pay more for results. It's why so many creators are turning to the paid membership model.

On Mighty, the average price for a paid monthly membership is \$48 a month. That's *more than four times* the cost of an average paid newsletter.

And here's why you can charge that much, with confidence. It all comes down to three things: Results, replacement, and focus.

Results, replacement, and focus.

Grab a piece of paper and start to picture your ideal member. Think about the challenges they're facing and how your membership can help them navigate those.

With that in mind, start to think about the results they'll get and the concrete value of those.

For instance, if your membership is focused on career or leadership, could it help them get a raise? A new job? Break into a brand new industry?

Or if it's focused on relationships and communication, what would it mean to have a better marriage? A better connection with their kids? Less stress while parenting?

Or health and wellness—how could your ideal member quantify the value of more sleep? Fewer chronic health symptoms? Lower anxiety?

You start to see how for some of these the value might be in the many thousands of dollars, or even priceless.

Quantifying those results is often an "aha" moment for new membership builders and can give you a huge boost of confidence when setting your price point at \$48 or even higher.

But don't stop there—consider the current cost of all the other things your ideal members are paying for today in their quest for those results.

This may be the price they are paying for a gym membership, audio books, therapy, telehealth, seminars, other online courses, career counseling, or yoga instruction.

Replacement costs may also include the price they are paying for *not* achieving the results they seek. This may be in the cost of vices, fleeting purchases meant to fill a need they can't fill by buying it, or the time spent in unproductive activities, or unhealthy relationships.

Finally, **think about focus**. One indisputable fact is that *people pay attention to what they pay for*.

What price will help you *and* your members commit to making changes and contributing to a community? If you

price it at \$1 a month, for example, there's not much incentive for your members to actually get anything out of it. It's easy for them to forget they're even paying for it. And it's certainly not worth it for even you—the host—to pay attention to it and provide value to its members.

But if someone is paying 10x that—\$100—for a membership they're going to show up ready to put in the work to get value out of it. And you'll be motivated to provide that value for them, too.

Confidence from the data

Here's one final data point from our friends at Mighty to help you move forward with confidence.

We've shared with you the average price of a paid membership on Mighty—\$48 a month. What's even more compelling is that 77% of the hosts who offer paid memberships on Mighty have made a sale.

That's a pretty stunning conversion rate.

Plus, these paying members renew their subscriptions at a rate of 80-90% versus an industry average of 40%.

You have a clear vision of your ideal member. You know what the results might mean for them. You can set your price and be unapologetic about it—and be successful.

Next, we'll help you plan out a full *year* of your membership community—that will essentially run itself— in just an hour or two.

How to create a year's worth of membership programming in one hour

Wait—we started this guide feeling underwater about my stagnated audience growth and now... we're asking you to create a whole year's worth of things for your membership?!

We get it—but don't panic. This is so much easier than you think.

Because remember, your goal is not to produce tons of content. You're a host, now.

You're setting a few things in motion that will make it easy and exciting for your members to come together and contribute.

You'll start by envisioning a year in the life of your members, move on to monthly themes, a weekly calendar, and some great polls and questions.

Grab a coffee or tea and a piece of paper, and let's go.

Your "Year in the Life"

Your goal for your members is to come out transformed after a year in your community. So start by defining that transformation.

What are your members able to do in a year that they can't do today?

What have they learned from you? What have they learned from each other?

What does a day in their life look like?

Write down the answers to those questions. Think of this as a road trip, and those answers represent the final destination. Everything works backward from there.

Your monthly themes

To get your members those results and get them to that destination, there may be some obvious themes to explore.

For instance, there's a host on Mighty Networks who runs a membership community for moms who are exploring an alcohol-free lifestyle. In a year, they want their members to be confidently sober in social situations, to have stronger relationships with their children, and to be able to handle life's challenges without turning to alcohol.

Their monthly themes include "Creative Drink Alternatives & Recipes," "Building Small Habits Towards Alcohol-Free Living," "Creating Accountability," and "Navigating the Holidays Without Alcohol."

You can see how all of those themes ladder up to that end goal for their members.

Get into brainstorming mode and give yourself a half hour to write down every theme that comes to mind. This is your map for your road trip.

Weekly calendar

And what's a road trip without some fun stops along the way? Think of your weekly calendar as your membership rituals—these are the moments that keep your members coming back and building a habit.

Start with just a few activities and nudges—that membership community for sober moms has a weekly accountability check-in, a member spotlight, and a “Monday mocktail” recipe.

You can see how those weekly activities can run through the year and work with any of their monthly themes.

Questions and polls

“But what about daily activity? How do I keep the conversation going?”

We get it—this is a different approach and we don’t blame you for thinking that you’re going to need to be sharing links and articles and writing long posts every day to keep engagement humming.

But you’re a host, remember? Have you ever been to a dinner party where the host talked *the entire time*? No. Because that’s not a party anyone wants to go to.

Instead, the best hosts know how to ask a *great question*. That’s your magic elixir and how you get members contributing.

Mighty Networks let us know that polls and questions are actually the *number one* activity successful memberships do to keep members coming back again and again.

So, you’re going to want to punctuate your weekly calendar with a few polls and questions that align to your weekly theme. Ideally you’re using a platform like Mighty so you can even use a built-in polls feature and schedule them in advance.

BONUS: Mighty is offering ConvertKit creators a [free guide to 1,000 Great Community Questions](#).

Copy and paste them as-is or tweak them as needed. Done and dusted!

A quick recap

Hopefully you’re beginning to see the possibilities here. Let’s recap.

1. Creating a membership can be much less work than you may think.
2. A successful membership creates a flywheel that organically brings in more members—causing it to spin faster and faster.
3. To start your membership, you only need to answer one key question: who do you bring together?
4. You can set your price and charge much more than you initially thought—with confidence.
5. And you have a simple framework for programming that builds a habit for members and brings them back to engage again and again—a membership that runs itself.

To make it even easier, we asked our friends at Mighty Networks to share some starting ideas for membership communities based around that key question (“Who do you bring together?”).

And remember, you can use their community AI, Mighty Co-Host™, to create your membership community in under 60 seconds.

Just start with these ideas and go from there. A profitable membership is waiting.

50 profitable membership ideas to steal

1. We bring together visual artists ready to dip their toe in NFTs to understand the basics so that we can make more money from our art.
2. I bring together teenagers like me who are excited to make it as YouTube creators.
3. I bring together Gen Xers who want to shift to a plant-based diet to develop our skills and experience with plant-based menus and shopping.
4. We bring together newly minted technology account executives (AEs) and sales development representatives (SDRs) to learn from seasoned sales veterans, and share best practices.
5. I bring together 1960s Ford Mustang enthusiasts to unite around our shared love of America's most iconic muscle car and get inspired for our own restoration projects.
6. We bring together former college athletes who miss the camaraderie and focus of competitive sports to organize local leagues and reconnect over our competitive spirit.
7. I bring together couples with young children to establish a core set of values and create healthy rhythms, so we can more completely enjoy our marriage and family and connect more deeply with our kids.
8. We bring together local families learning martial arts so that each of us can take on any goal we choose with focus and confidence inside and outside the dojo.
9. We bring together mid-career women working in education to define new paths to career success *and* educational efficacy, so that we can set an example for the women that follow in our footsteps.
10. I bring together people doing the work of emotional healing and growth to develop a practice of comic sketching and journaling, so that we can gain a better understanding of ourselves.
11. We bring together empty-nesters to define their personal plan for living the next 30+ years with focus, inspiration, energy, and good health, so we can reconnect with our zest for life.
12. I bring together successful online entrepreneurs seeking to become "extreme" early risers (4am+) to change their sleep practice and set clear goals for their newfound time.
13. I bring together documentary film editors to share thoughts, experiences, and mastery, so that we can redefine what it means to be successful in film today.
14. We bring together new parents on leave from their consulting careers to successfully navigate the return to paid work, so that we can alleviate the stress of trying to do it all alone.
15. I bring together those navigating mental illness so that we can use the power of this community to help each of us find peace with our daily struggles and surface moments of joy.
16. We bring together seniors struggling to adapt to new technology in a safe place so that we can more effectively participate in the digital world on our own terms.

17. I bring together creative entrepreneurs to embrace a strong legal foundation for our businesses, so we can protect and grow our intellectual property.
18. I bring together parents of newborns to learn about what to expect in the first nine months, so that we can raise happy, healthy babies and lean into the power of community.
19. I bring together professional dog trainers to learn positive reinforcement techniques, so that we can successfully compete in events.
20. I bring together young women in their senior year of high school to submit admission-worthy applications, win scholarships, and effectively manage their time and energy, so that they can gain acceptance to their dream schools.
21. We bring together sound engineers to develop our skills and experience so that we can work on bigger, more exciting events and generate more income.
22. We bring together parents of tweens to foster a sense of independence in our growing children so that we can set them up for success.
23. I bring together hobbyist photographers ready for a new challenge to push each other toward new forms of expression.
24. We bring together "DAO curious" entrepreneurs and organizers to understand and apply the basic framework of DAOs to their use case.
25. I bring together parents of toddlers to help navigate the "terrible twos," so that we can parent with confidence..
26. We bring together financial professionals who are losing their creativity to help each other think "beyond the spreadsheet" and broaden our career paths.
27. I bring together people leading children's faith formation in Catholic parishes to become effective and confident bridge builders between the Church and the community.
28. We bring together medical clinicians to reflect on the journey of becoming a physician, and spark a movement to humanize the medical profession.
29. We bring together entrepreneurial bootcamp alumni to inspire and hold each other accountable in implementing what we've learned, so that we can bring our projects to life.
30. I bring together youth ministers to define what it means to be a fantastic youth minister today, so that we can reach as many people as possible.
31. I bring together dentists and hygienists to shed outdated thinking and develop wellness-driven dentistry practices, so that we can make money doing the right thing.
32. We bring together client-facing, growth-minded CPAs, tax consultants and accounting advisors to grow our firms and maximize our impact in our clients' lives.
33. I bring together Anglican and Mainline preachers to attend weekly sermon prep sessions, and continuing preaching education classes, so that we can preach the Gospel more effectively.
34. We bring together aspiring IT professionals in the early years of their careers to find a fit between their strengths and the right role, so that we can get bigger promotions, more trust, and ultimately create our dream IT career.
35. I bring together freelancers, consultants, and solopreneurs to develop a "value-based" approach in selling and pricing our services, so that we can stop undercharging with hourly billing.
36. We bring together single women who are making six-figures to learn how to effectively manage and grow their money so that they can maintain their independence throughout life.

37. I bring together professional visual artists to adopt successful business practices while gaining exhibition experience, so that we can easily connect with collectors and sell more artwork.
38. We bring together improv actors from all disciplines to reach their maximum potential as performers and teachers.
39. We bring together students and teachers of Judaism to enrich our knowledge of Judaism so we can ultimately find peace and energy in our own understanding of the meaning of life.
40. I bring together self-identified creatives to develop habits and rituals that enable us to complete our creative work with confidence and ultimately define art and impact on our own terms.
41. We bring together solo female travelers across the world to discover new destinations and experiences and get the most out of our journeys, so that we can feel more inspired and connected as humans.
42. I bring together experienced clowns to explore new skills and techniques, so that we can improve our craft, derive more satisfaction from our passion, and land more gigs.
43. I bring together manifestation and mindset coaches so that we can learn from each other how to better serve our clients and grow our client base while spreading joy.
44. We bring together aspiring leaders to learn fundamental leadership skills and develop a solid business network so that they can confidently step into their next role.
45. I bring together new graduates and professionals entering the work world to learn a better way to do resumes, so that we can easily and clearly capture one's work and education history, navigate our goals and aspirations together, and secure our dream jobs.
46. We bring together people with no formal business training who want to become entrepreneurs to learn the mechanics and mindset of running a sustainable and profitable business.
47. I bring together business owners transitioning from big corporate careers so that they can unlearn bad habits and quickly grasp what it takes to bootstrap a business.
48. We bring together people who are ready to take control of their anxiety, support each other daily, and hold each other accountable.
49. We bring together early to mid-career architects to learn the dynamics we didn't learn in school so that we can continually improve our technical and leadership skills, while building strong relationships with others in our field.
50. I bring together first time English learners to help them overcome speaking fears in a supportive community of daily conversations so that we can interact safely and confidently in English with anyone.

Start your membership community today for free at [Mighty Networks](#).

[Mighty integrates with ConvertKit](#) so you can seamlessly bring together your email marketing with your new membership model and break through your growth plateau.