

Building a Membership Community — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a launch. You will validate your concept with real intent, pick a platform, design and price your tiers, build an onboarding flow that activates members fast, and install the retention rhythm and churn playbook that protect your recurring revenue. Work through each section as you finish the matching module, and use the templates to track real numbers from your own community.

Foundations: Why Memberships Beat One-Off Sales

Define your membership, prove demand with a pre-sale, and choose the platform you will build on.

Exercise: Write Your Membership in One Paragraph

Draft a single clear paragraph that defines your membership. You should be able to read it aloud and have a stranger understand who it is for and why it is worth paying for every month.

- Who exactly is this for, in one specific sentence?

- What ongoing transformation will members make toward a goal they value?

- What access do members get from you or an expert that they cannot get elsewhere?

- What belonging or peer group does the membership provide, and why does it matter to them?

Worksheet: Pre-Sale Validation Plan

Plan your founding-member pre-sale before you build anything. Fill every field, then run the pre-sale and record the result. If you cannot hit your go threshold, fix the offer before building.

One-paragraph offer (who, outcome, what is inside, monthly price)

Founding-member price and what it is locked at

Waitlist promotion channels and the dates you will run them

Go threshold: minimum paid founding members before I commit to building

Actual waitlist sign-ups

Actual paid founding members

Go or no-go decision and why

Checklist: Platform Decision Checklist

- Listed my model type (course-heavy, discussion-heavy, events-heavy, or mixed)
- Started a free trial on both Circle and Mighty Networks
- Recreated one space, one event, and one paid tier on each platform
- Spent at least an hour using each platform as if I were a member
- Checked current pricing pages and the plan needed for the features I require
- Compared transaction and payment fees, not just the headline subscription price
- Committed to one platform in writing with the reason recorded

Designing Tiers, Pricing, and the Value Ladder

Architect your tiers, set defensible prices, and model the MRR, churn, and LTV math.

Exercise: Justify Every Tier

For each tier you are considering, write the single distinct member need it serves. If two tiers serve the same need, collapse them into one. Default to launching with a single tier unless you can defend more.

- What job does my base tier do, and is it genuinely good on its own?

- If I have a premium tier, what distinct need does it serve and what does it add?

- Could I deliver the premium tier every month forever without degrading the base tier?

- Am I adding tiers for a real member need, or just because three tiers looked normal?

Worksheet: Pricing Decision Sheet

Lock your prices deliberately. Anchor to the value of the outcome, calibrate against comparable communities, and set annual and founding rates on purpose rather than by reflex.

Monthly price for the core tier

What one good month inside is worth to a member (the value anchor)

Two or three comparable communities and their prices

Annual price and the discount it represents (for example two months free)

Founding-member rate and how long it is locked

Premium tier price and what justifies the gap, if applicable

Planned future price increase for new members (and confirmation existing members are grandfathered)

Checklist: Numbers Baseline Checklist

- Calculated current MRR as members times average monthly price
- Calculated monthly churn as members lost divided by members at month start
- Calculated average member lifetime as 1 divided by monthly churn
- Calculated LTV as average monthly price times average lifetime
- Compared new members against churned members to check net growth
- Set up a monthly habit to record all four numbers from the first members

Onboarding and Member Activation

Define your activation milestone, build the welcome sequence, and seed the engagement that makes new members stick.

Exercise: Define Your Activation Milestone

Write the concrete, reachable-in-week-one definition of an activated member. Make it specific enough that you could measure the percentage of new members who hit it within 14 days.

- What two or three early actions correlate with members who stay?

- What is the single fastest first win a member could get in week one?

- How will you track which new members hit the milestone within 14 days?

- Which onboarding step will you build specifically to push members toward this milestone?

Worksheet: Welcome Sequence Builder

Map your automated welcome flow day by day, keeping every ask small. Note the exact message or action for each step and where the personal human touch comes in.

Day 0 welcome message and the one first action it names

Introductions prompt and the easy question it asks

Start-here guide location and what it covers

Day 3 to 5 nudge toward the first-win quick-start

Day 7 event or recurring ritual invitation

Day 10 to 14 personal check-in message

Where the personal human welcome happens (who sends it and when)

Checklist: Engagement Seeding Checklist

- Adopted a rule that no member post goes unanswered, especially in the first weeks
- Set up recurring threads (weekly wins, introductions, question of the week)
- Planned to spotlight members publicly when they share progress
- Recruited founding members or volunteers to help keep conversations warm
- Committed to replying quickly to every new member's first post
- Identified the member-to-member interaction ratio as my real health metric

Retention, Engagement Rituals, and Growth

Install the weekly cadence, build the churn-deflection and win-back playbook, and plan growth across all three levers.

Exercise: Design Your Weekly and Monthly Cadence

Build a rhythm you can sustain in a busy week, anchored to the transformation members joined for. Reliability matters more than volume, so do not over-promise.

- What single weekly live event can you commit to on a fixed day and time?

• Which one or two recurring threads will run every week?

• What monthly momentum event (challenge, guest, spotlight) will mark progress?

• Which parts of the cadence could members eventually help run?

Worksheet: Churn-Deflection Flow

Design the humane flow that intercepts cancellations and the outreach that recovers at-risk members. Frame everything as help, not a trap.

Engagement signal you will watch (last login, posts, event attendance)

Pre-renewal outreach message for quiet members

Pause option you will offer instead of cancel

Lower tier you will offer as a downgrade alternative

Cancellation reason question you will ask

Where you will log cancellation reasons for monthly review

Win-back trigger: what improvement will prompt you to invite lapsed members back

Exercise: Plan Growth Across Three Levers

Sketch how you will grow MRR through acquisition, retention, and expansion together rather than chasing a single spike. Be specific about the first concrete move on each lever.

- Acquisition: what content funnel or free entry point will bring the right people in?

• Referrals: how will you ask happy members to invite peers, and what reward (if any)?

• Expansion: what annual upgrade, premium tier, or add-on raises revenue per existing member?

• What monthly review will confirm new members are outpacing churned members?

Checklist: Retention and Growth Launch Checklist

- Published a visible weekly and monthly calendar members can see
- Committed to protecting the cadence even in busy weeks
- Built the churn-deflection flow into normal cancellation operations

- [] Started logging and reviewing cancellation reasons monthly
- [] Set up a referral ask and a reward for successful referrals
- [] Identified at least one expansion offer for existing members
- [] Scheduled a monthly review of MRR, churn, LTV, and net member growth

Your Action Plan

1. Write your membership in one paragraph and confirm it names transformation, access, and belonging.
2. Run a founding-member pre-sale to hit your go threshold, then trial both Circle and Mighty Networks hands-on and commit to one platform.
3. Default to a single well-designed tier; add tiers only when each serves a clearly distinct member need.
4. Set monthly, annual, and founding prices anchored to outcome value, then hold them for a full quarter.
5. Calculate and start tracking MRR, monthly churn, average lifetime, and LTV from your first members.
6. Define a concrete activation milestone reachable in week one and build onboarding to push toward it.
7. Build and automate the day-by-day welcome sequence and add a personal human welcome on top.
8. Install a sustainable weekly and monthly cadence tied to the transformation members joined for.
9. Stand up the churn-deflection and win-back flow, log cancellation reasons, and review them monthly.
10. Open all three growth levers, acquisition, referrals, and expansion, and review net growth every month.

