

SEASON THREE - EPISODE TEN

BEHIND *the* MEMBERSHIP

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Callie: Welcome to Behind The Membership season three episode 10. Our final episode for this season sadly. And today I'm closing out the show with Chris Ducker, who is talking all about his membership Youpreneur Academy. Now, Youpreneur Academy has been running for four years and in this episode, Chris discusses how niching down from focusing on general online businesses to personal brand businesses, really made a difference to his results with the membership.

Chris also discusses how the positioning of the membership and its place in his ecosystem has evolved over the years as he's added additional features like a live event, new book and round table mastermind, as well as new projects he has on the horizon. And we also talked about how Chris spent 12 months testing the closed door model, and why he wouldn't do it again. How organic marketing and content is the key to their new member sales, and what he's doing to achieve a five to 6% retention rate, including the importance of growth records in his community, and why he's stopping his monthly member q&a call.

Plus, Chris reveals that he spends just three hours a week on the membership in average. Listen in to find out how.

Speaker 2: Welcome to Behind The Membership with Callie Willows, real people, real stories, real memberships.

Callie: On today's show, I'm joined by the one and only Chris Ducker from Youpreneur Academy. Thank you so much for joining me on the show, Chris.

Chris: It's a pleasure to be here. Thanks for having me.

Callie: I'm really looking forward to actually talking with you about the Youpreneur membership and your role as a membership owner. I know you've done a couple of podcast episodes with Mike before. But here we're going to talk specifically just about the membership. So to get us started, can you actually let our listeners know what the Youpreneur Academy is and who it's for?

Chris: Well, it's for anybody that wants to build a business based around them, their personality and their expertise, right? So, the perfect avatar, if you want to use that word, are people like coaches, consultants, podcasters, content creators, authors, public speakers, that sort of thing. So if you're selling ultimately you and your experience as either a service or if you productize in some way, then that's who the Youpreneur Academy for. And it is a combination of both learning material, which is everything from monthly workshops through to recordings of our live sessions from Youpreneur summit, which is our annual conference that you're well aware of. And then obviously, there's the community forums and all that sort of stuff as well.

Callie: Awesome. So a one stop shop for personal brand businesses?

Chris: That's exactly what it is. I mean, the funny thing is, when we launched back in September 2015, it was just build an online business. And it was great. Right out of the gate, we had over 300 members within a week, it was fantastic. And then things started just dropping off, and we couldn't quite figure out why. And then we realised that it was actually just too broad, the forums were too broad. So you have one guy talking about Amazon reselling,

and other guy talking about online courses, and other person speaking about public speaking. And it was the conversations were just way too varied.

So I think it was ... And you probably remember this. I think we're in ... We're in a pub? I think we might have been in a pub somewhere.

Callie: In Edinburgh, I think. Yeah.

Chris: Yeah, up in Edinburgh, right? The three of us were sitting there, we let Mike come along, because we're nice like that, you and I. So we let Mike come along, and we sat there the three of us and we figured out the whole niching down thing, becoming the leader in your space. And that really ended up niching down even further into that personal brand business niche. And slowly but surely, now we're starting to own it, through the marketing messages that we put out, obviously, the language that we use, and all that sort of stuff as well.

Callie: Awesome. So you're coming up on four years, then September 2015, you said you launched, didn't you?

Chris: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Callie: So yeah, I think just literally just after we launched, and I think Youpreneur came along.

Chris: Yeah.

Callie: So have you been open the entire time of those four years? Or do you run on a closed launch model?

Chris: Yes. So now we're open. While we were open, all the time, when we first kicked off. And now we're open all the time. And I think it was ... Let me think, let me just jog my memory here. January 2017, we closed the doors. We did one big promo at the beginning the year, we closed the doors. And we said it's going to be an open and closed scenario, which we tried. And we launched

again in May that year. And it was very, very successful, extremely successful. And then we closed the doors again. And then we tried it again with another launch, I think in September of that year. And it was not as successful as the one earlier on that year.

And when I look retrospectively back on it, I didn't like it. I didn't like the launch model at all, particularly for a membership. Because there were definitely people that were discovering the Academy in between launches, when we were, quote, unquote, closed. And we were having to turn them away because the doors weren't open, plain simple.

And so you couple that together with fact that it was a very, very stressful business model to launch for a membership. Because obviously, it's not like a course, where you'll create the material, and then do a big launch, and then maybe you might update that material at some point in the future, or not, perhaps. But with a membership, as Mike always says, and I always remember this, Mike, on the other show, when you charge monthly, you got to show up monthly.

Now you'll show up all the time, over and over and over again. And I just didn't ... It wasn't a decent model for us, even though it was okay. When we looked at the numbers, ultimately, we wouldn't have or we didn't get any more members, and we would have done in that six to eight month period, post during and before those launches. So in the end, we decided to swing the doors wide open and leaving it like that.

Callie: Awesome. I think that's great that you tested that though, because now you know A, what works for you as a business, and also what works for getting new members in as well.

Chris: Totally. Yeah. I mean, for us, it was important to test it. I mean, we're big testers anyway. But I mean, it was important for us to test because, again, it goes back to not being able to give people what they wanted when they need it. The analogy I always use is

that, when you go to a restaurant and you're hungry, if the restaurants closed, what do you do? You're going to go home hungry? Or you're going to go and spend your money in another restaurant? And that, we were very acutely aware of that fact. We were saying to ourselves all the time, how many people did we lose this week, I wonder? How many people went to join another one, perhaps? Or buy another course or completely disappear from our ecosystem never be seen again.

So now, the fact that doors are open all the time, much, much better. And it makes it a lot easier to market that type of membership as well.

Callie: Yeah. And so what part does the membership actually play in your business? So you already mentioned the Youpreneur summit conference, which is the best live event in the UK, if anybody is looking for a business conference to go to. But do you have other products and services as well?

Chris: We do. But I will say that the academy certainly has, it's not dropped in priority, I want to make that really clear. But when we launched it was what we were all about for Youpreneur, for the brand of Youpreneur. It was the only thing that was on offer. And it was the only thing that we focused on.

But as time has gone by over the last four years, obviously, things have changed now. Things just naturally evolve and pivot. And as we get deeper and deeper into our legacy planning for the company, it really does come down to the fact that we want to be known ultimately as an education company. That's what we want to be. And again, we've gone over this privately before in the past. And so because of that, the Academy has become less of, shall we say, a focal point within the overall Youpreneur ecosystem, it's still a priority.

But right now, it really is the first port of call for anybody when they discover youpreneur.com, which is our main website, right? So much like you guys do with membershipguys.com, and then

membersiteacademy.com. The focus is to get them over from youpreneur.com or maybe chrisducker.com, if they're discovering us via my personal site, over to the youpreneuracademy.com website. And that's the for the first port of call. But it's not the only port of call now.

So obviously, you do have the Youpreneur summit, which is just annual, it's a two day annual conference in November. And then, we have an online course, which we are about halfway through planning, getting ready to shoot right now, which will be our flagship course, which will fundamentally be Rise of the Youpreneur, which is my book in a course format. So we'll handle all the build, the market, the monetization sections of that.

And it's funny how things have grown, because the book came from feedback from the Academy. And now the book is being turned into the flagship online course. And so it's quite interesting how that all morphs, because the fact of the matter is, there are some people that will be happy to read the book and get to work. There'll be some people that will join the academy and just love the fact that there's that virtual water cooler that they can get to, to learn and gossip and network with each other. But they'll never come to one of our live events, for example. But then there are other people who do want to do nothing but live events, will never touch your digital stuff.

So we're trying to build out the ecosystem as a whole, to ultimately get to the point of being able to serve anyone, no matter where they are in their personal brand business journey, but more importantly, in a way that best suits them. And so there's other things that we're planning a mastermind groups, and things like that, which will be launched going into 2020, as well. We have a very, very big announcement that will be making at this year's Youpreneur summit. Which I think will pretty much change the landscape for mastermind groups, particularly in Europe.

Callie: Oh, I'm excited to hear that now.

Chris: Yeah, I'll say a little bit about it, when we're done recording, because you've-

Callie: Okay. Inside scoop please definitely.

Chris: It's a big secret to everybody else right now.

Callie: And so I looked at the kind of the membership is that part of that ecosystem that you have. And as you say, you're aware that your audience all may want different things and work in different ways. So as you say, the membership plays into a specific part of that. But I'd actually love to know something, if you wouldn't mind sharing, because I know you have incredibly successful offline businesses already that you've had for years. And that's what brought you into this sphere in the first place.

So let's be honest, you don't need to be running Youpreneur, you've got your other successful businesses, and things like that. So what actually drove you to want to start Youpreneur and the membership in the first place?

Chris: Well, we and this is all my wife, I'm and I'm not just saying that because she's 10 foot in this direction over here. But we have gotten very good at creating, launching and building businesses over the last 15 years, that ultimately end up not requiring us day to day. So we have two very, very successful firms over in the Philippines, with the group and Virtual Staff Finder. Which are a multi seven figure annual revenue businesses, and then Youpreneur was kicked off really, scratching my own itch, if I'm to be honest with you, because I wanted to double down. As of already 2012, I started doubling down on my own personal brand, about the speaking, book deal, high paying consulting, that type of stuff.

And there was nothing really else out there that could really take me on the journey of that dual market monetize model, which we ended up giving it the nickname of the business of you model. And so I started scratching my own itch. And it went from, let's

put together something really cool. And at the time, we were doing other live events, like tropical think tank and stuff like that, as well. But let's put something really cool together, that we can help a whole bunch of other people in the same predicament, where they want to take it up to the next level, but there's nothing really solid out there. Much like you guys did, quite frankly, with Membership Academy.

So we collated all this experience. And I'm very blessed to have a lot of great friends around the world within the industry, and ended up getting involved. We kicked off and it was very, very successful. You're right, I don't need Youpreneur, but I love Youpreneur. I believe that this is ultimately going to be my life's work. That's the way I look at it. So when we launched it four years ago, I remember saying, "This is going to be the next decade of my career. I can't wait." But now we're four years and I'm like, "I'm not doing nothing else. This is it. This is all I want to do now going for the rest of the time that I'm quote unquote, at work."

So that might change and morph and pivot as the years go by. But ultimately, I'm having way too much fun working with this very particular subset of people within the world. I love working with speakers, I love working with coaches, and consultants and authors. And the way all those people, they want to somehow leave an effect on the planet when they're done. So whether you're writing a book, or whether you're on stage in front of thousands of people [inaudible 00:14:04] and in Vegas, or whatever the case may be, even if you're just coaching one on one. You want to affect change in the lives of the people that you touch and work with. And they're the kind of people I want to work with myself. So I'm having just too much fun right now. It's great.

Callie: I love that. I think that's, yeah, perfect reason for doing it. And as you say, seeing it is like almost the legacy that you're leaving, I think.

Chris: Totally. And I mean, at this point, I couldn't see myself doing anything different, or with a different subset of people. Like I said, it's too much fun. And I know that what we're doing is making a difference, and that's the underlining factor for everything that we're focusing in on now. It sure isn't money, otherwise I'd be charging a lot more for everything, clearly. Simple as that.

Callie: So you manage for nearly four years now, what would you say has actually been your biggest challenge over that time?

Chris: Good question. I think probably the ongoing marketing of the membership, and I think probably a lot of people with open memberships would tend to agree with this as being the biggest pain point like, How do you stay relevant? How do you stay front of mind, based on the fact that you're always at one price point? How do you move the needle? Right? How do you get people to take the leap, when there's no price increase looming, or no bonus disappearing, and that sort of type of stuff.

So I think probably the ongoing marketing has probably been the biggest challenge. But I do feel particularly in the last eight to nine months or so, that we've pretty much got that under control. Now we've got a good influx of new members every month coming in. Obviously, there's a bit of churn as well, we churn around about 5%, five to 6% or so a month, which is not horrific. But it's not amazing like I'd like it to be a little bit better. But I think it's just the nature of the beast, you cannot please all the people all the time. And we are very, very niched down now in regards to what we do and who we do it for.

So you might get somebody that joins for a month or two and realises it's just not for them. And that's cool, I hope that we've been able to help them or inspire them in some way, within that couple of months. But there are other people that have been with us for years, literally. So they those are the people ultimately that we do everything for, you know what I mean?

Callie: Yeah, definitely. And so, I'd like to deep dive a little bit into that, actually. So you mentioned about the marketing side of things, what are you finding is working well for you at the minute for attracting new members?

Chris: Oh without a doubt, as our organic content. We create a lot of content and going into 2020, we'll be putting our foot down on the gas even more on that. The plan is to ultimately have youpreneur.com to become the personal brand business resource online, period. So if you think of big sites, like entrepreneur.com or forbes.com, or inc.com. We want to do that for personal brand entrepreneurs. And so we drop three pieces of content on a weekly basis. Right now, we want to get that up to five pieces going into next year, we're about to put our foot down quite heavily on video content, which we haven't done a lot of up to this point.

And really yeah, I just think the organic content creation, we have a weekly digest email that goes out to everybody as well, where we have that's been really chopped down from our larger mailing list, which is 10s and 10s and 10s of thousands of people. The digest comes in probably, I think there's about 18,000 or so people on that email right there, with an open rate of early 40% plus.

So we're very happy with the way that has gone. But again, it's been about a language that we're using, it's been about the fact that we're really consistent with subject lines surrounding keywords, like personal branding, or online branding and things like that. So we've niched down a lot in the last eight to nine months, and it's certainly starting to make things a lot easier for sure.

Callie: And so you actually originally talking about niching down. You originally were doing all of your content on chrisducker.com, weren't you? And then switch to youpreneur.com for that more public content. So would you say even just that simple switch of doubling down on the Youpreneur brand for promoting the

membership as opposed to the Chris Ducker brand made a big difference then?

Chris: Totally, absolutely. And it enabled us, because I was always very, very, should we say, I don't know, hyper aware of not allowing anybody but me to publish content on my personal domain name website, right. So we couldn't do guest posts, we couldn't do guest contributors, we couldn't do any of that sort of stuff with youpreneur.com. There's a blog post from me once a week, which is purely republished from other content that I've created. There is a guest contributor article once a week. And then we have Youpreneur FM, which is our weekly podcast, which obviously is published once a week as well.

And I think the big thing was that, the moment we launched youpreneur.com as a public platform, so to speak, for the content that we knew people wanted and needed from me personally, initially. We knew that because of the fact that there was that brand name affiliation to it, and not my personal name anymore. That was a turning point, the catalyst, so to speak. And we've really done down on it a lot. That's not to say that chrisducker.com is still not an incredible driver of traffic for the Youpreneur Academy. But certainly, I'll put it this way, we don't promote content on chrisducker.com anymore. We don't even create content on chrisducker.com anymore. The website itself is being redesigned right now to be more of a positioning strategy for me, as a keynote speaker, as an author and investor and advisor, that sort of type of thing. Whereas everything we do personal brand business now, is at youpreneur.com.

And so that's been a pretty major change force, and a crap tonne of work, obviously. But I think it's definitely early days, say it's paying off very well for us.

Callie: Awesome. So if that's how you're getting new members now and what's working for you, or what you're doing too, you mentioned your churn is five to 6%, which is great. What are you doing to actually encourage engagement and to keep that retention high?

Chris: This is the one area where I would put my hand up and say we've been weak on, not necessarily in regards to retaining people, because I think my churn is not that bad compared to some others-

Callie: That's great.

Chris: -that I've heard. But certainly, we have not been as proactive as we could have been in regards to retention strategies. And it's funny because, and this is not a coincidence. And I know you only go with audio on the podcast, but we are chatting via video. This was literally printed out this morning. And I'm now showing the worksheet for creating a news update video action plan from within the member site Academy, which is fantastic. This was something we initially discussed actually beginning of this year, and we tabled it. And then we had another full team meeting about three weeks ago. And it was right at the top of the agenda. And what we're going to be doing actually is, we're going to be losing our monthly mastermind call, which is a live call. Because we've had increasing complaints from worldwide based members that the timezone just sucks, plain and simple.

You can't please all the people all the time, I'm a family man, as you well know. I know when you do your monthly calls, it's in the evening UK time, which means you get to help out, or you get to hang out with anybody in Europe as well as obviously, those in the United States. It might affect Australia a little bit, but it is what it is kind of thing. Here, no, no, no. It's predominantly UK and Europe timezone. So we've upset a lot of our US members, although obviously, we're available for them, and we're always there to answer questions and things like that in the forums. The fact is that I've seen a dramatic drop, since we've been back here in the UK, we moved back in September last year, with our US members coming on live for those calls. Some of them still do, but it's few and far between because of the time difference.

And so we're going to be removing the monthly mastermind call, which was live, very, very shortly is another two or three months.

And then we're actually going to be doing a monthly show, we're going to call it Youpreneur TV. And it's going to be on the inside of the academy only, and it will be that news/community/submitted questions and answers. So that way, no matter where our members are in the world, they can go ahead and submit questions throughout the course of the month. And my team will also be pulling questions and hot topics from the forums as well, prior to the shooting of that episode every month. And it's going to be very relevant, we're going to be shooting about 10 days before its due to go live. It should be very relevant, very up to date, and all the rest of it. And I'm pumped for it, because we get the opportunity to use a decent camera and decent lighting, and Mics and all the rest of it. And it's just going to be a much, much better production for everybody, much, much higher value.

Callie: Awesome. I'm looking forward to seeing that. So you're going to still be answering people's questions, but pre-recorded on that, rather than the live call?

Chris: Yeah, that's going to end up making 75% of that one hour, we're slating a one hour show, basically. So might be a little less, might go a little more from time to time. But basically, it's going to be a one hour show, once a month. And yeah, I can't wait to put it together. Actually I'm quite excited about it. Because it has always been a bit of my dream, and this is a bit of a dream of mine to try, and put Jimmy Fallon out of a job. So I don't know if I'm going to have guests live in the studio audience or anything like that. But I'm going to be enjoying it, testing that idea out. Let's see.

Callie: Yeah. So speaking of the ... You said you were going to remove that mastermind call, what else do you provide in the membership each month?

Chris: Well, there is a member created workshop every single month that goes out. There's no point in producing a community full of experts, quite frankly, building a business based around their

expertise, if you're not utilising them and highlighting some of those members, by giving them a workshop spot every month, quite frankly. So we have a guest, we have a Youpreneur member that fundamentally create a workshop on a monthly basis. And then we have other bits and pieces of content that might come up in certain periods throughout the course of the year, which we were classed as bonus material.

For example, I recently interviewed Michael Hyatt, in regards to his new book Free To Focus. And then we went ahead and put an extra 15 minute video recording split screen of me and him on the background, or rather, in the bonus section off there as well. There's a huge archive of content inside of Youpreneur and we're very, very aware of the fact that people can sometimes get very overwhelmed when they join memberships. And so what we do, I mean, we've got video interviews in there with Gary V, Amy Porterfield and a host of other experts. And so what we do is, we actually focus in the first 12 weeks of their membership on onboarding them through what we call our Youpreneur roadmap. And that, again, is based and built upon that build market monetize strategy.

So every week, they get a different email, which they can opt in for, or not opt in for when they join. So they actually, their initial email basically says, "Hey, we've got this 12 week roadmap that we know you're going to love. It'll walk you through. We'll take your hand, and we'll walk you through the entire roadmap. If not, if you don't want to click that link and activate that, fear not, the roadmaps still there for you. Choose your own adventure, go to work and do what you need to do yourself kind of thing." It's all there. So it's not like it's additional content for anyone, it's there. It's just that we're giving people the ability to opt in, to getting that weekly email in the first 12 weeks. Which does ultimately take them by the hand and has links and puts them in the right direction for the right reasons.

Callie: I love that. Yeah. Being able to provide the extra-

Chris: And it's funny, 80% of the people that join, clicking opt in for that 12 week programme, obviously, you know what I mean?

Callie: Yeah. And imagine that's great for retention as well, if they know it's 12 weeks too and start working through that process.

Chris: Our average, I haven't looked at the numbers for a while, truth be told. But I think our average membership tenureship is around about eight to nine months, if they're on a monthly plan. So clearly, it works, and then some obviously.

Callie: Yeah. And so you have a forum community as part of the membership as well, don't you? So do you find that that works as well for helping members form those connections with each other? And as you say, get questions answered and things like that?

Chris: Oh totally, absolutely. I mean, every day, there's people posting, and replying in there. I'm in there a couple times each week, replying to people, linking people up together, filling in the gaps for some of our content, somebody might say, "Hey, I'm really interested in running Facebook ads for the first time. Where do I start?" Well, dude, go to library, there's a great workshop in there by our resident Facebook ads expert, right. So me and my team are very good at connecting the dots in that regards in there. And we have, there's a mini mastermind session where if they want to get together with people that are in the same industry, so you might have a few health coaches, or if your life coaches, maybe there's some authors, fiction authors. There's a little group of fiction authors in there, the right fiction books on Amazon Kindle and stuff. And they get together, they've met, and they kind of report things inside of the forums. And then they go ahead and they meet, maybe on Zoom or Skype once a month, or whatever, as well.

The big section for me is the growth records section. This for me is the area that I enjoy visiting the most, because not everybody does it. But those that do, those that do create what we call our

growth record, see obviously, the most amount of improvement and advancement in the building of the business of you. So this is a part of the form that they create out of a thread or post themselves, and then almost take ownership of it. And every month, they can come back, and they update with what they did that month, whether they hit their goals, what was the struggles? What was the winds, all that kind of stuff. And it just works very, very well.

And again, those update that month in, month out, they're the ones that see the most advancement, the most success. Those that don't, yeah, yeah, it is what it is. You get out of it exactly what you put into it, you know what I mean? It's as simple as that.

Callie: Yeah, and I love those kind of things. Because not only are they helpful for the member themselves, because they get that record that just reminds them how much they're doing. But it's great inspiration for the members as well seeing what other people are working on and what's possible. So-

Chris: Totally, and honestly, I want to reiterate for third time, those that do it consistently, month in, they show up month in, month out, they update the group on their goals, they go ahead and set themselves new goals. They are the ones that do the best out of their membership. And it's by absolutely no coincidence at all that two Youpreneur of the year awardees, which by the way we give out at the Youpreneur summit, there's a little award that we give out and everything is you know. The two people that have had it two years in a row, now we've only been doing it two years, are both people that update their growth record on a regular basis. So there's something to be said about that strategy.

Callie: Yeah, definitely. So shifting gears a little bit then, could you actually tell us a little bit about the team that you have helping you with the membership and the different roles that they have?

Chris: Okay, so obviously, myself, I create the majority of the content on the marketing arm off that, I think that's pretty obvious for most

people. There is Sian, who's our community leader, she's actually based over in the Philippines. She's been a member of my staff for about six years now. Initially, she came on with a Virtual Staff Finder, and then when we open the doors to Youpreneur, she got promoted into that role. So she's coming in the forums every day, connecting those dots for people, welcoming people. She even shoots a little welcome videos for out new members and things like that as well, which everybody loves getting. And then there is Mersha, who is on the back end, she's my executive assistant/Youpreneur admin girl. She's also based over in the Philippines and she fundamentally handles anything like cancellations, or payment failures, if people want to pause the membership, all that sort of type of stuff. She'll be on the back end of all of that as well. She also handles all of the logistics for our live events as well. She's incredible with all that stuff. So that's what she does. And then there is Morgan, who joined us in May last year. She's the head of our digital development as a company, as a brand. But she's also in there quite regularly, again, welcoming people, getting people into the right discussions and things like that as well.

And then there's us, my better half, my much, much more beautiful better half. And yes, now I am saying that because she's in the same room as me. She's again in there, she is not only my biggest fan and cheerleader and supporter, but she's also an extremely important part of our business. She's honestly the heart, I think of Youpreneur. And if you've ever met her at any of our live events, you will know exactly what I'm talking about. That I mean, she's pretty incredible. I mean, she remembers people's names and business names and all of it. Actually I'm terrible at that sort of stuff. So she compliments me perfectly. And that is the core team, we obviously have freelancers that we work with in terms of ... We've got a graphic designer in Australia, we've got a Facebook ads manager here in the UK. We've got a content creator in Canada, we got a content creator in the UK as well.

So the team is very much remote, it's very much spread out. And it is definitely growing very rapidly. In fact, actually, we are three days away from our next full time employee, which is my daughter, Chloe. Who's just graduated in University, and she's coming on board to manage all of our social media and rich media, such as the Podcast and YouTube and stuff like that.

Callie: Awesome, turning totally into a family business then.

Chris: Pretty much so. I mean, I don't know, can I get Charles to work on these? Is that tantamount to child labour? I'm not sure, we'll get him folding T-shirts at the next event or something like that.

Callie: For pocket money or sweets or something, I don't think that counts.

Chris: Yeah, but I like having my family around. I think it's important for them to know what goes on behind the business as well. And it's quite normal for us to talk about business stuff at the dinner table. And not so long ago, Charles asked the question, "What's the p&l statement, Daddy?" When we were at dinner, and I'm like, "I have no idea. Ask your mother." So yeah, it's good stuff. We enjoy it.

Callie: So you've got the team, but as you said, you're still creating the content and doing the marketing. Where does the membership fit in the day to day of your life? How much time are you actually spending on it? Roughly, would you say?

Chris: I mean, realistically, if you take away the forum side of things, right. So I mean, the forum is a little sporadic for me, because I travel a lot and things like that. But I'd say on average, although it might not sound like it, I probably do about an hour a week, inside of the forums. And I know you guys are much more active in the forums, particularly you, I know that for sure. But I mean, when I'm in there, the headphones go on, focus on will is playing, and I will reply to a tonne of messages, I'll start a couple of new

threads. That 30 minutes twice a week is very productive, in terms of my own personal input in there.

But no, other than that, in terms of a weekly turn over, there's not much that I personally have to do on a regular, quote, unquote, consistent basis. The fact is that the machine has been very nicely oiled over the time that we've been running it. Sian reaches out to our members and invites them to do the monthly workshop. Now obviously, this is about the change a little bit due to the fact obviously that we're going to be doing this monthly TV show internally. So my workload will increase a little bit.

But I think overall, I don't know, I would say probably all in, in terms of discussions and checking on things and meetings and things like that. I probably do around about ... I'm going to say probably about three hours a week, all in. But again, four years ago, that was 30 hours a week. So things have pivoted, things have changed slightly. It's not that it's not a priority, it's part of a bigger game plan right now.

Callie: Yeah. And I think it's great for listeners to actually hear that it is possible to run a membership in that much time, if you've got a good team behind you, and you've got processes in place and things like that. It's perfectly possible for a membership not to be a full time job for you. So-

Chris: Yeah. I mean, let's not beat around the bush. I mean, the reason why we start these types of lifestyle, quote, unquote, businesses is because we don't want to have to be sat at a desk for 10 hours a day. I mean, that doesn't interest me at all. I can't affect any change that way. That's not what I want to be doing at all. So I love the recurring nature of the revenue, I love the predictive nature of the business as a model overall. And I love the fact that I can dip in and out as when I want, drop those value bombs, converse with people and move on to the bigger picture stuff.

And that's, honestly, as the founder of Youpreneur, that's what I should be doing anyway. Like you say, if you've got your stuff

together, and your team is working the way they should be working cohesively with each other, then there's no reason why you should be sitting on those forums five hours every day. Unless you really want to do it. That's so good obviously.

Callie: Yeah, I love that. And so that leads me nicely to, what's actually your favourite thing about having the membership or what's been the highlight for you?

Chris: For me, it's the summit, which it's not really part of the membership day to day. Obviously, all of the keynote videos and everything are in there as part of the content that we provide our academy members. Yeah, but for me, the most important part of the calendar year for me is that Youpreneur summit in November in London. The ability to be able to bring everybody together in person once a year is fantastic. Year, on year, the number of members of the Academy at that conference has grown and we expected to grow again this year as well.

We've been very blessed to have very much a worldwide attendee list. 42 countries now have been represented at that conference, which is pretty incredible, considering we've only been around a couple of years. And we don't take that lightly, we don't rest on our laurels in regards to that. And I just love bringing people together. That's my number one superpower, I feel that I have this ability to really bring amazingly smart people together. And we thrive on it. We absolutely love it. But again, I feel like we're almost just getting started Callie, with Youpreneur as an overall entity. And the Academy is a very important, very central part. But it's not the be all and end all of the entire business model.

Callie: And I can testify to the fact that Youpreneur-

Chris: Testify girl.

Callie: So what [inaudible 00:38:59]. But Youpreneur summit is and I'm not just saying this because I'm talking to you, but I often say to

people that it's my favourite event, it's the best event I've been to. Having been to a lot of events, just production value, the kind of people that you get in that room, there's a very special environment and atmosphere I think at the event. So it's definitely a great event, and Youpreneur has put on an awesome event. Yeah, definitely.

Chris: Thank you, I appreciate that.

Callie: What we're aspiring to.

Chris: Well, I mean, the team works very, very, very, very hard on that. I often say that there's a soft cost and a hard costs to running an annual event like that. The soft cost is, ultimately what's on that p&l statement, when it's all said and done. So you paid all your bills, you've looked at what you brought in ticket sales wise, you looked at all your costs. There's the final number, that's your soft costs and your soft profit right there. But then the hard costs and the hard profit is, well, actually, we spend a month putting this thing together. People don't see that, they only see the two or three days. But it takes months and months of work to put on an event like that. It's not something you can just show up and hope that it goes well. So again, I'm very aware and very blessed to have an incredible team to help me do it.

Callie: Yeah, it shows. Yeah, we've definitely been taking a lot of inspiration from you as we plan retain. And so wrapping up, then is there anything you actually wish you'd known earlier? Or would do differently if you were starting again?

Chris: Yes, I would have completely forgone the launch testing. That's the big thing for me. I think we almost wasted a year, if I'm to be frank with you in regards to fine tuning our marketing efforts, fine tuning our messaging, and all the rest of it. Because when the doors are closed, they're closed, you're not even talking about it, are you really? You're just busy showing up and just providing what you promised the lows that are on the inside already. And I think that that that year cost us, I think that year cost us. It cost

us in a number of different ways. And I think that if I could go back and have a do over, that would be what it would be, I wouldn't have close those doors twice in 2017, I'd left them wide open.

Callie: Yeah. Interesting. And so if you could get someone thinking about starting a membership one piece of advice, what would it be?

Chris: A show up, plain and simple. People are going to join because of you and your messaging and your vibe. I often say your vibe attracts your tribe. And it's very, very, very true. You're going to show up, you can't expect to do this and not put in the time, energy and effort particularly on the outset. Like I said, that predictable, that recurring revenue is a big, attractive point for a lot of people wanting to start something like this. But if you don't show up particularly in the early year or two, the chances of it surviving and doing well are very, very, very small indeed. And when you can afford it, the moment you can afford it, start building a team around you because everything becomes so much easier when you do that.

Callie: Brilliant. And so finally then, what's next for you? What are your goals for Youpreneur Academy?

Chris: Well, I think we definitely want to continue fine tuning the messaging a little bit. And I don't know exactly what that will look like. At the moment, we survey our members once a year, I think that's probably going to end up going to twice a year, to really try and stay on pulse. We definitely ... The big defining goal here is to be seen as the leader, plain and simple, in personal brand, business, education. And again, the Academy is right there at the centre of the entire ecosystem for us.

So certainly continuing to provide great public content to utilise that to market and obviously to grow the membership overall. But I want to try and get as many poster boys and girls out there as possible in the form of our members, who are revolutionising

the way that they make money off of their experience and their personality. So the big thing for me is to see our members doing well. I think if you can make your members the heroes ultimately of your own journey, then you've you've done something worthwhile.

Callie: Yeah, definitely happy members are the ... Well, the what it's all about at the end of the day, really?

Chris: Totally. Yeah.

Callie: And so if somebody wants to find out more about you, and the membership, where's the best place to send them to?

Chris: They can hit me up on the social if they want at Chris Ducker everywhere, or youpreneur.com is where it all begins nowadays, that's it.

Callie: Awesome. I'll be sure to put those links in the show notes. And I just want to thank you so much for joining me today, Chris. It's been wonderful to get to chat with you and explore Youpreneur a little bit more.

Chris: It was my pleasure. I was wondering whether you were ever going to ask me, and I've been a big fan of the show. I love the fact that you're ... I'm pretty sure this must do better than the main website with Mike, surely, in terms of overall popularity.

Callie: I'm not saying anything, no.

Chris: I don't want to start a domestic. Now it was all my pleasure. I have actually listened to many episodes of this show in the past, and I've taken a lot out of it. They say that, "If you want to learn how to build a certain business, you need to hang out with people that are running and building similar businesses." And you fill that void very well with the show.

Callie: Yeah. Well, thank you. And as I said, it's been a pleasure to talk with you.

That's it for this episode folks, and sadly for this season too. Thank you for listening, and thank you so much to Chris for joining me. I particularly love that Chris doesn't need to be running this business. He already has other successful businesses. But this is his passion and his legacy and what he puts his heart and soul into. And I especially love that it's turning into a real family business with not only his wife as involved, but also his daughter, Chloe too.

And Chris is actually our closing keynote at the retain conference in September. So if you'd like to hear more from him, particularly about his ecosystem, and how he's built other products around the membership, there's still time to grab a ticket at retainlive.com. And of course you can find out more about Chris and Youpreneur over at youpreneur.com or head to the membershipguys.com/BTM32 to pick up the links, show notes and transcript for the episode.

Thank you once again to Chris and to all my guests this season. I love talking ins and outs of people's memberships, and seeing all the different things that are working. Hopefully you've enjoyed coming along for the ride too. So thank you for listening, and I would love to hear your top takeaways and your favourite episodes from the season. So do you let me know either in our free Facebook group, which you'll find at talkmemberships.com, or give me a tweet @membershipguys. Thank you once again for being involved in a season and I'll be back soon with season four.

Speaker 2: If you've enjoyed today's episode of Behind the Membership, we invite you to check out the membersiteacademy.com. The Member Site Academy is the essential resource for anyone at any stage of starting, growing, and running a membership website. So whether you're still figuring out what your idea is going to be, or whether your website is already up and running, and you're just looking for ways to grow it and attract new members. Then the Member Site Academy can help you to get to the next level, with our extensive course library, monthly training, exclusive member only discounts perks, and tools, and a supportive active

community to help you along the way with feedback, encouragement, and advice. The Member Site Academy is the perfect place to be for anyone looking to start manage and grow a successful membership website. So check it out at membersiteacademy.com