

Nicheology's Membership Academy

Lesson #4

**FTM Quick Start 3 -
Production**

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Introduction

By now, you know the drill: having a successful FTM ("Fixed-term membership") site involves the "**Four Pillars Of An FTM Site**". We've covered pillars number one (Preparation) and number two (Presentation) so far. In today's lesson we'll examine the third of the "**Four Pillars Of An FTM Site**"...

Pillar #3: Production

It's time to write your very first lesson! What I want to do now before I explain how to actually write your lessons (first lesson and future lessons) let me give you a brief look at the structure I use for the lessons in this course. Maybe you've noticed this 3-part pattern...

- Foreword. Immediately after the title and legal pages, you'll usually find a FOREWORD. This is where I'll make any announcements that are needed, point you to upcoming items of importance, remind you of details, give you "pep talks" and generally say anything that I need to that isn't a part of the actual lesson.
- Lesson. After the foreword you'll find the lesson itself. This is the featured content of the file and will usually contain the bulk of the pages.
- Closing Thoughts. Finally, there is a wrap-up section where I'll hand out assignments, tell you about the next issue, make closing remarks, etc.

As a general rule, that's how my lessons will appear and it's a good format to use for your own lessons.

Note: At the download site for today's lesson you should have obtained a copy of a Microsoft Word® template file you can use to create lessons that are similar in appearance to the ones that I create. (Like this one 😊) Over and over I get emails asking where the template can be purchased because people love it so much. Well, it can't be purchased ... but I did give you a free copy to use for your own lessons! 😊

So, with that said, let's talk about writing your lessons...

Future Lessons On Writing Lessons!

There are NUMEROUS future lessons in this course on the subject of writing lessons for your own FTM site. Today's lesson is just the first of MANY that we'll cover over the next weeks and months of our training program.

In future lessons we'll cover...

- Different types of content to use for lessons.
- Specific lessons you'll want to develop.
- How to come up with an unlimited number of ideas for lessons.
- Techniques for writing faster, easier and better.
- Ways to get content for your lessons ... without writing it yourself.

Trust me when I say that you'll learn PLENTY about writing your lessons as we make our way through this program. Don't ever worry about not having enough to write about or how to actually write ... we'll cover it thoroughly!

I'm going to give you a simple, 5-step formula for writing all lessons for your FTM site and then we'll talk a bit about your first lesson...

How To W.R.I.T.E.™ A Lesson

I use the acronym "W.R.I.T.E." to describe each of the necessary steps for

- W - WEIGH your idea options.
- R - REACH a formatting decision.
- I - INTRODUCE supporting points.
- T - TELL the relevant details.
- E - END by polishing document.

Let's take a quick look at each of these five steps...

1) WEIGH your idea options.

Every lesson begins with determining what you're going to write about for that specific lesson. As a general rule, there should be ONE primary focus in terms of your lesson topic. What will you write about?

While you probably have many ideas to begin with – and we'll cover how to find COUNTLESS ideas in future lessons – I do want to give you four quick ways to find ideas to write about that you can use for any of your lessons...

- **Competitor's bullet points.** That is, you find an existing sales page for a product (ebook, membership site, special report, etc.) that is related to yours and you look at their bullet points. Usually this will spawn many ideas to use as topics for your own lessons.
- **Magazine cover stories.** Another method is to look at the covers of magazines related to the topic of your membership site. This will also yield ideas to write about ... and fresh ones come with every new issue! (Note: You can also check your library for past issues or hunt for them online)
- **Bookstore lists.** Drop by your favorite bookstore (or browse online for every greater convenience at Amazon.com or BarnesAndNoble.com) and search for books within your category/topic and look for (1) The subjects of the books themselves and, (2) additional ideas in the table of contents or on the back covers.
- **Ezine article subjects.** You can also visit your favorite online ezine article directory (EzineArticles.com, GoArticles.com, etc.) and look within categories related to your topic for existing ezine articles. Many of these will serve as suitable ideas to build lessons upon.

Of course, I tell you to do this to find IDEAS. Obviously, you don't want to copy their content or even use a similar format or structure in organizing your lessons. Just use these methods to brainstorm ideas to write about.

2) **REACH a formatting decision.**

Next, you'll want to decide how you'll organize the content of your lesson. While there are many different methods of doing this, I personally recommend one of the "big three" when it comes to sharing information ...

- **List.** A list is simple that: a set of ways, tips, keys, suggestions, ideas, methods, techniques, hints, etc. (I.E. 20 Membership Site Ideas. Ring any bells? 😊)
- **Tutorial.** A tutorial is a set of chronological steps to complete a process. If the topic of your lesson can be described in "how to" format, then it is a

tutorial and should be organized in sequential steps. (Most of my lessons are arranged in this format.)

- **Q&A.** A "questions and answers" format is used when you identify a series of key questions related to your topic and then provide answers to them. (I'll talk specifically about this kind of lesson later ... you will want to use these at specific times within your sequence, but don't worry about that now.)

After you have decided which of these three formats works best for the lesson you're about to write, it's time to move on...

3) INTRODUCE supporting points.

That is, come up with the appropriate list, steps or questions that you'll be using as the foundation for your lesson.

- If you are going to use "list", then share as many as you can possibly think of ... up to twenty. When you are sharing "ways" or "tips" or "ideas", the more you can share the better. Why? Because not all of the ideas will be relevant or interesting to the individual reader. But, if you include numerous ways to do xyz, it's likely one or more will strike a chord and keep them happy.
- If you are going to use "steps", then I recommend you keep it to single digits. The more steps there are to complete, the less likely your reader will actually do them. Less is more. Keep it to 9 steps or less, preferably 3-5 steps.
- If you are going to use "questions", then I recommend that you keep it to 10 questions or less. And it's important that you organize your questions in the best way so they are chunked together by topic.

As a general rule of thumb, I also recommend (and do myself!) that you try to share at least 2-3 tips or examples for each of your major points.

(Notice that I do this a lot and people respond with emails of gratitude on a daily basis – it really is beneficial to the reader to get as many different perspectives on information as possible.)

Look back over the first three steps that we've covered so far ... each of them have additional "sub-points" that further clarify or illustrate the major point.

After you have determined your format, it's time to...

4) TELL the relevant details. That is, fill-in-the-blanks for the points and sub-points that you've mentioned in your outline.

Write 1-3 paragraphs for each of your points/sub-points and you should have a nice lesson fleshed out.

One of the things that you'll find invaluable to you as an information writer is what I have labeled as a "starter swipe file". Just to further prove that I "practice what I preach" about using definitions as "enhancers", here is one ☺...

DEFINED: "Starter Swipe File"

A "starter swipe file" is a collection of ideas to write about written in a single sentence formatted template.

Example: One of the biggest reasons people fail in ___ is ___.

I could use this starter sentence to create paragraphs of content about virtually any topic in the world –

- One of the biggest reasons people fail in marketing is...
- One of the biggest reasons people fail in dieting is...
- One of the biggest reasons people fail in reaching goals is...
- One of the biggest reasons people fail in homeschooling is...
- One of the biggest reasons people fail in relationships is...

These starter sentences allow me to quickly find something to write about anytime I want to build content into a document –

- 1) At the beginning as I outline it,
- 2) During the writing process as I struggle for ideas, or
- 3) At the conclusion of the document when I find portions of the document need more information.

Now, I encourage you to build your own swipe file of sentences that you can use to get you started on writing. You'll find that you have favorites that you refer to in EVERY lesson you write, while there will be others that are just perfect for certain scenarios.

Like I said, I encourage you to **build your own** swipe file. But, because I've been doing this for a long time and have a very good index already created, I'm going to share fifty (yes, that's 50!) of my own starter sentences that you can use as a catalyst for your own writing.

At the conclusion of this list, I'll use several of them as examples just so I know you've got a good grasp of what I mean here.

Note: You'll probably want to print these out on a separate sheet of paper (maybe even laminate them) to refer to anytime you write.

1. One of the biggest reasons people fail in _____ is _____.
2. The greatest lesson I've learned about _____ is _____.
3. The biggest mistake in _____ is _____.
4. Here are the top seven reasons why you should _____.
5. If I had to narrow it down to five steps, they would be...
6. The real secret to _____ is _____.
7. One thing that almost no one knows about _____ is _____.
8. Three of the best web sites for _____ are _____.
9. The absolute worst way to _____ is _____.
10. A secret weapon I use for _____ is _____.
11. Here's why you should never be afraid to _____...
12. Five proven ways to _____ are _____.
13. The best model I've seen for _____ is _____.
14. Two questions to ask when making this decision are _____.
15. The best example of _____ is _____.
16. Here's what you do when _____ happens...
17. The one thing you've been told that's wrong is _____.
18. New evidence suggests this about _____...
19. The one lesson I wish I had learned years ago is...
20. Here's how to protect yourself from _____...
21. The one question you must ask before _____ is...
22. Three simple exercises to help with _____ are _____...
23. A simple way to organize your _____ is _____.
24. An easy to follow system for _____ is _____.
25. An effective way to speed up your results is _____.
26. Here's a simple 10-step checklist for _____...

27. An often overlooked way to _____ is _____.
28. When you face this problem _____, here's what to do...
29. Should you _____? Take this quiz...
30. If you're a beginner, then the first thing to do is _____.
31. If you're experienced, then here's an "advanced" tip...
32. Seven warning signs of _____ are...
33. Your three best options for _____ are...
34. A way to get faster results from _____ is _____...
35. It only takes a few minutes to _____.
36. Five things you can do today are...
37. For _____, this works like crazy...
38. Why your _____ won't work.
39. Something every _____ needs to know is _____.
40. The best way I know to _____ is _____.
41. A simple shortcut for _____ is _____.
42. Here's a "rule" about _____ you should BREAK...
43. The biggest waste of time for _____ is _____.
44. If I could only do one thing for _____ it would be _____.
45. You can actually cut _____ by _____.
46. The eleven key ingredients of _____ are...
47. My best advice for _____ is _____.
48. Five ways to improve your existing _____ is _____.
49. A good way to reduce costs is _____.
50. Here is a daily schedule you can refer to for _____...

What an incredible resource this is for you! (It's invaluable to me.) There are so many different "angles" represented in this list (*the fastest way to do something, ways to improve, shortcuts, schedules, questions, exercises, lessons, mistakes, etc.*) that you could mix-n-match and never stop coming up with ideas to write about in your next lesson.

Now, just to make certain you understand how to use these templates, let's work through 3 of them together...

Example: "The biggest mistake in _____ is _____."

If you were writing a lesson on homeschooling, you might use this template as "the biggest mistake in homeschooling is choosing the wrong curriculum." You would then go on to explain why that's the biggest mistake and how to avoid it.

Example: "The one question you must ask before _____ is _____."

If you were writing a lesson on hiring a ghostwriter, you might use this template as "the one question you must ask before hiring a ghostwriter is 'do you have references'?" You would then write as many paragraphs as needed to explain why references are important, address what the reader should look for in a ghostwriter's references, and so forth.

Example: "Here's how to protect yourself from _____."

If you were writing a lesson on "setting up a web site", you might use this template as "here's how you protect yourself from FTC compliance penalties". You would then explain ways to avoid potential problem with unsubstantiated claims, hype, etc.

You begin with one of the template sentences and, then, you simply take as many paragraphs as you need to thoroughly explain things.

It's a writer's secret weapon, a cure for writer's block, and a brilliant way to brainstorm ideas anytime you want all rolled into one.

5) END by polishing document.

Once you've written the content for your lesson, you'll want to fine-tune it. Generally speaking, there are three things that I recommend you do in putting on the finishing touches for your lesson...

- **PAD.** That is, look for areas of your lesson that need further explanation. Are there any areas that are not clearly explained? Are there areas that are noticeably weaker than others? Make sure your points are understandable. Try to add in as many examples as possible to better illustrate the points. Toss in a few more tips here and there where needed. You can add interview transcripts, quotes, research and other bits of information to get the points across better and add a bit more meat to the report.
- **POLISH.** Use different fonts to distinguish areas of your content. Change colors. Use alternative styles such as bold face, italics and underline. Indent text where appropriate. Use bullet points. (Especially on lists.) Insert headers, footers and graphics (just don't overdo it!)
- **PROOFREAD.** The final "smoothing out" you need to make certain you do is to proofread your entire document for typographic and grammatical errors. Better still would be to allow someone else who is qualified to do it for you.

While this isn't a deal breaker by any means (quality of content is MUCH more important than quality of grammar in information based lessons), it certainly is a good idea to put your best foot forward.

Now, let me speak briefly on the subject on putting together your lessons for delivery. While you could simply paste the content into your autoresponder, I don't recommend that you do this because it will likely trigger spam filters and because you'll miss out on some important ways to make money that we will talk about in future lessons.

Instead, I recommend that you create a PDF file for each of your lessons and set them up on individual download pages (as we talked about in an earlier lesson).

I recommend that you deliver your special report in PDF format for three simple reasons:

- It's Universal. Macintosh users can access PDFs just fine, while they cannot access .exe ebooks created with a lot of the "ebook compiler" programs on the market.
- It's User-Friendly. You don't need to create HTML pages. You don't need to create special links to go from page to page. You don't need to create navigational menus. You just convert your Word document directly into PDF. It's simple.
- It's Un-Problematic. I've very rarely heard of anyone having trouble viewing a PDF file. I've heard a gazillion stories from people having trouble viewing ebooks created with other tools. PDF has become the standard of digital information delivery in compiled form for good reason: it works.

Now, I personally used Adobe Acrobat Professional to create my PDFs in the click of one button. However, it can be a bit pricey. If budget is an issue, then I have two recommendations for you: Firstly, you can check eBay.com for earlier versions of the software. These previous releases will get the job done just fine and can often be found at a fraction of the cost of the latest release. Secondly, you can find quite a few alternatives to Adobe Acrobat online – some even for free – by doing a search for "PDF maker" or "convert to PDF" or "PDF software" at Google.com.

A Word About Your FIRST Lesson

The formula for creating a lesson that we went through today is perfect for ALL of your lessons, but I want to give you a quick note about the content of your FIRST lesson.

Your first lesson should be a "Quick Start" lesson.

Without question, people in general want quick results. They don't want to wait a year or six months or even one month. They want results quickly.

So, it's important that your very first lesson be a "quick start" lesson that gives them something that they can immediately do in order to see some kind of results.

I recommend the following schedule for most cases ...

- ➔ Lesson #1 is an "overview" lesson which explains the overall process that your FTM site is devoted to.
- ➔ Lessons #2-5 are "explanatory" lessons which explain the basic steps of completing the basics of the overall process.
- ➔ Lessons #6+ are "refining" lessons which explain various details on enhancing and expanding the overall process.

If your membership site isn't primarily about a process (I.E. You're sharing one new list-building strategy per week or one new romantic date idea per week) then FIRE YOUR BIGGEST GUNS in the early lessons.

Share your absolute most successful, most powerful lessons in the first five lessons to immediately engage your subscribers and get them happy from the beginning.

Now, before we close out let me wrap things up by sharing three important points about your lessons...

1) Plan out your first 10 lessons in advance.

I recommend that you determine in advance the topics of your first ten lessons just so you know what you're doing. The last thing you want to do is appear that you had no plan for your lesson sequence with topics that don't fit together.

Plus, you'll have the added benefit of not having to spend time "figuring out" where you go when you've written a lesson. My general guideline is to plan out ten lessons at a time and then when seven or eight of them are written, plan out ten more.

Now, when I say "plan out" I simply mean to determine what topics you'll be writing about in the next ten lessons. You may have dozens upon dozens of ideas ... it's just a good idea to know in advance when they will appear on your schedule for production.

2) Each new lesson requires three activation steps.

When you create a new lesson (have it written and created in PDF format) and it is ready to be distributed, there are three steps you need to take...

- Create a download page. (See notes from previous lesson)
- Write and load an autoresponder message. (See notes from previous lesson)
- Upload files - download page and PDF file. (See notes from part two of this lesson)

3) Keep theft to a minimum with security precautions.

One of the things that I get asked about a lot is "security". How can you prevent theft of your lessons?

Before I address some things that you can do in order to protect your lessons, let me make a statement: you can't eliminate theft.

If someone wants to share your lessons with someone else it can be done no matter what level of protection you choose. And that's not just with an FTM site, that goes with ANY type of information based product (ebook, traditional membership site, physical product, teleseminar, workshop, coaching, etc.)

If someone wants to illegally pass on your information to someone else they can...

- √ Distribute the files as an attachment to their email, upload it to a site, place it on a flash drive, etc.
- √ Save a webpage file to their computer and then share it in HTML format or convert it to PDF, Word or some other file format.
- √ Copy it from a password protected site and paste it into another document to distribute if it's an "article" that's embedded in a webpage.
- √ Take a screenshot of any page that might have "save" and "copy" disabled.
- √ Record themselves reading your document and distribute it as an audio file or have it transcribed after they have recorded it.
- √ Retype your protected content into their own word processor to distribute.
- √ Print it out and make physical copies or rescan it back into a digital format.

I don't care who you are or what level of protection you choose or how much money you spend on security, if someone wants to steal it they'll steal it. If they want to share it illegally, they'll share it illegally.

You cannot eliminate theft.

That's something important that you need to understand going in. Now, don't let that freak you out. It's just the cost of doing business (think "shoplifting" in the real world) and isn't as rampant and out of control as people might lead you to believe.

Now, having said that, while you can't eliminate theft, you can minimize theft.

Let me give you four simple precautions you can take to minimize theft, with each increasing in level of protection...

- ➔ ROBOT exclusion code. There is a snippet of code that you can place in the head of the HTML code for your download page that will prevent most "good" search engines from indexing your pages. Always include this in every download page...
`<META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOINDEX,NOFOLLOW">`
- ➔ RANDOM file names. Never use a pattern in your download page or PDF file names. (I.E. Don't use lesson1.html, lesson2.html, lesson3.html, etc.) If you do, any would be thief who picks up on your pattern will have all of your files. Notice that I always mix up my file names.
- ➔ ROTATING download pages. Every 4-6 weeks (or whatever time period you feel comfortable with) change the file names for your webpages and PDFs to prevent anyone who knows them from passing them around. (Be sure to update your autoresponder mailings when you do this.)
- ➔ REQUIRED password. You can also create a password protected folder (Such as "members") at your webpage. If you do this, you can change your password each month and broadcast a mailing to all active members with the new password on the first day of the month. (See your hosting company for details on setting up password protected directories ... it is very easy.)

I consider the first two mandatory, the third one a good idea at some interval and the fourth optional to be used by those who are afraid of theft and don't mind the extra step each month.

One of the built-in security measures of the FTM site model is that everything is shared in "bits". Someone can't simply locate one download page or share one file and get all of your content. They'd have to do a lot of work to put together every piece of the puzzle.

Well, that above covers it for Part 1 of this week's lesson. In the next 48 hours you'll receive an email with a download link for Part 2 of the lesson where we'll go through a "final rundown" to get your FTM site launched. It will include details on order processing, uploading materials and running a test order.

This Week's Assignment

- 1) Write your first lesson.** Follow the five steps of the W.R.I.T.E. formula to write the first lesson for your FTM site series. Don't forget to use the Microsoft Word® template I gave you. When you have completed the process, convert it to PDF format for distribution.
- 2) Determine security.** Look at the four levels of security and determine what steps you'll take to protect your materials.
- 3) Plan out your first ten lessons.** Decide what topics you'll write about each of the first ten lessons.

See you next time.

Coming Up Next ...

Lesson #5: "*FTM Quick Start 4 - Promotion*"

In this lesson we'll take a look at how to promote your new FTM site to begin getting new members. We'll go through a 10-step checklist for getting the word out quickly about your site.