



## Is Bigger Better When It Comes to Communities?

Welcome to Eff That: breaking the rules of online business is a podcast where I'm here to call shit out, question things, and share my experiences. I also want to highlight different ways. You can run your business without spending a fortune, having to make things. Or doing what everyone else is doing and just here to start conversations, not to give you all the answers.

So if you're cool with that, let's hang.

All right. So today I want to talk about small versus large communities. So communities could be like anything, but mostly I'm going to be talking about memberships because I have memberships on the brain. Because mine is launching this week. But it could also apply to just your community in general.

Like the size of your email list, the size of your Instagram following just. You know your community. So it seems like. A lot of people, myself included sometimes forget, and they just want more and more and more, right? Like we just want to grow. We need to grow our audience, grow our communities, grow our whatever. So.

People always say things like I only have, you know, this many members or. I only have this many people on my email list or an only have this many followers on Instagram. So I thought it would be interesting to dive into why we worry about the size of our communities. And sort of just dissect sort of all the different shapes and sizes the community could be.



And sorta we'll get the dynamics of like, who. It's better for like, I want to look at it in terms of the business owners. Community like pros and cons. And then also like being a member of the community, like what's better. Because I feel like it should be a mutual, like mutually beneficial. Anyways, let me get into it.

Okay, so on the business owner side. So you are the leader of the community, you're in charge of whatever. You're the owner of the Instagram account. You're the person who's sending out the emails. Why does the business owner crave larger communities? Why do we as business owners, crave larger communities?

I think the most obvious answer is that. We're going to make more money. Right. You could argue that it depends on your pricing, but I mean, regardless of your price, whether you're charging \$1 or a thousand dollars, if you have one member. Or you have 10 members you're going to make more money. If you have more people.

Right. Regardless. I think also part of it is about ego. Or building authority. Or, you know, just feeling confident and looking cool. So instead of having to be like, I only have this many members, you can be like, heck yeah, this many members and you feel good. Like you have a larger following on Instagram and you feel like you look more.

Like a badass, right. And I do think there is a little bit of weight when people come to your Instagram account, I'm not going to discredit that, that if they see a lot of people, then they think, oh, a bunch of people that are following this person. So I probably



should to. So I'm not discrediting that at all in saying it's just ego, but it's at a certain point. I think it is a little bit.

Ego, , And then also the idea that like conversion rates require a larger following. So not a hundred percent of people on your email list or in your Instagram. Uh, following or on your wherever, are going to purchase from you. So you do have to get more people. On your list so that when you promote something.

You get the amount of signups that you need. I think there's probably more reasons, but those are like the three I came up with for like, why do we as business owners, crave larger communities. So then I started thinking. Okay. Well, why as a business owner, would we crave a smaller community? Like, is that even something.

We would ever crave cause I don't ever hear anybody. Talking about how you could not grow your following. And that would be a good thing. Um, but here's a few things I came up with. Number one, it would be less admin work, right? Like if we're getting bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger. Then it feels a little more overwhelming.

There's more people asking questions. There's more. Things not working. There's more people saying, how do I access this? Or I didn't get that email or whatever. Less admin work. I think it's important. Like you get to know everybody, everyone. So like when I was a teacher, I would get super pissed. If a counselor has started adding people to my class after the maximum capacity.



So I actually taught at one point, I've taught at many different schools, but at one point I taught at an alternative high school and the ideal class size was 12 students. These students needed a lot more one-on-one support and it was just a smaller school in general. So 12 was like the quote unquote maximum.

I had classes sometimes with like 19 or 20 kids. And I was mad about it because it was too much for one person for me, for one person to handle. So I think. I think about that. And that's obviously me bringing my experience as a teacher to the table. But like, if you talk to any kindergarten teacher who has new kids all the time, and they just seems like it's never ending and they're just putting more and more kids in there.

You're going to know that a larger community. Is not always better. Um, That being said, and I'm going to throw in a little bit of snark here. That is, if you care. About. The community.

Right. I feel like teachers genuine genuinely, usually, maybe not all teachers, but we care about the success of our students. And we, I mean, and part of it was our own sanity, but like, At my school where 12 was the ideal. Like, and you put 20 in there. It's just not gonna run. The way it's supposed to run kids who have 12 in their class, got a lot more attention and got a lot more out of the class, then.

If you were happy to be in seventh period with 20 kids. So. Enough about that anyways. Um, For me, it feels more real like. Think about if you were going to host a party at your house or a barbecue. Or, you know what actually, people talk about their weddings a lot and how they didn't even get to say hi to everyone. Cause it was



just such a crazy whirlwind day. And there were so many people there and it was just so busy.

And people come from out of town to your wedding. And then like, after the wedding, you're like, I didn't even see, you know, uncle Bob. I didn't even get to talk to him. That's crazy. He flew all the way from California and I didn't even get to say hi. That is what I'm talking about, as opposed to like a backyard barbecue with, you know,

20 people and you're sitting around a fire pit and you're all talking and everybody's engaged. That feels to me more real. Then a larger. Um, Things like that. So you get more one-on-one time, but also. Like as the business owner, you get more one-on-one time to meet people. And this is again, assuming that you care about the people in your community and you want to get to know them.

So I had a craft business one time where I made missing monsters, like people would fill out a Madlib form. About their monster that had gone missing. And submit it to me. And then I would make the plush monster and take a picture of it somewhere in Richmond and return it to them and be like, oh, I called, called them on the phone. I can't remember the little girl's name, but her Monster's name was Chloe and it was a sleepy bat monster. And I still remember calling that little girl on the phone to let her know. That I found Chloe, the bat monster and. There's something special about that. And if I had scaled that business,

To whatever. That wouldn't have been me. I mean, we would have had a call center and still could have been cool. I'm not saying it's bad to scale. I'm not saying whatever, but for me, that



was my favorite part of the whole process. Calling up the people and letting them know that I found their monster. And there's no way I could do that.

Every time. I guess I could have snuck a few in as the owner and CEO of missing monsters, which I. Ended up quitting because it was a teacher full time and it was too much. That's a different podcast. Okay. Let's talk about the customer side of things. Why would a customer want a larger community? Like why would they crave a larger community?

So at first it was like, they wouldn't. Impossible, but really that would give them the opportunity to meet more people, more opportunities to network and grow their own community. So again, it's still focused on growth. If you have a big community, they think, oh, well, I'm going to meet more people in my community is going to get bigger.

So I think for me and, you know, I'm always saying, send me. And Instagram message. It doesn't have to be a voice memo. I know I say that, but that's because I like a voicemail. I like to send a voice memo, but you can type. Type of paragraph to me, if you want, if you're like you weirdo, I don't want to send you a voice memo.

Tell me if you think of anything else, because that from the customer side, I couldn't really think of any other reason why they would be like, Oh, I want to join this membership because there's. 5,000 members like to me, that's not, not a pro. If you're the customer. If you're the business owner, you're like, so I got 5,000 members. I got five thousand members. You remember that from Wayne's World?



But if you were the customer, I couldn't really think of any. So tell me if you think of any, shoot me a message. Okay. Why wouldn't customer carry a smaller community. I feel like again, they would feel seen and heard more of the campfire vibe than the wedding. Vibe of, I traveled all the way from California and eight.

Ain't nobody said hi to me, how rude. I'm going back to California and I'm pissed because nobody even said hi to me. Um, you get to build relationships. So even though from a customer standpoint, in a larger community, you'd have more opportunity to meet people. I think in a smaller community, you have the opportunity to really meet people, like get to know them and build a relationship with them.

And if it is like a paid membership or something like that, like you get time. In the hot seat or you get time to talk to the community and say like, this is something I'm struggling with. And the host of the community can weigh in and share their expertise. But also like the other members can share their expertise.

Those are the reasons I think, as a customer, you would crave. Smaller community. Right. Tell me if I forgot anything, like hit me up for real. This is just me. Thinking out loud. So. I just finished. I'm writing a series of emails for this launch that I'm doing of my membership. Which is called F that.

A scrappy business community. It's changed names a few times. So just in case you want to know the latest and greatest, it's a scrappy business community. But I wrote a seven day series of emails. Filled with old photos and stories about communities from



my past and things I've done. And. You know, whatever the storytelling thing, it's hip it's hip these days.

So. I talk about an event in Richmond called best friends day. So best friends, day one, I'm not gonna give away too much because the emails are really good. I'm really proud of them, but best friends day. Was a few friends started off at a lake first best friends, day, handful of friends, what I'm talking about, you know, your barbecue.

And best friends, day 10 was like this crazy music festival. It looks like. I mean, I say it looks like because I didn't go to best friends day tent. I wasn't, I wasn't. Invited to best friends, day one. Because those people weren't my besties. But. I was also like had already had a kid was pregnant with my second kid when best friends say 10 happened. So.

I wasn't cool anymore. But the point is I was pretty good friends with the people who started it. I just wasn't friends with them during best friends. They won, but that's okay. I'm just kidding. By the time it got to 10, it was a lot. It was a lot of, like I was saying before, like admin work. You know,

I'm sure there was, I don't know. I can't even imagine if you get the emails and you see this picture. You'll see what I mean? It was a lot. They were overwhelmed. I mean, I still think that they enjoy doing it. I still think it was fun. They had huge bands towards the end. Whatever the people who liked it.

In the beginning. I don't think like recognized it by the end, like me included. Like it wasn't an event for me anymore in 2019. So. The





other idea is that. It wasn't like best friends day. Right. Like if I win in 2019. It was so many people that it certainly wasn't my best friend's day. I don't know all those people who are these people. And to be honest, it was attracting like younger people. My 2019, you know, a decade from the beginning to the end.

Like I said, I was, I had a kid and I was pregnant, so it just wasn't for me anymore. So it wasn't really. I mean, I'm sure those kids had fun at best friend's day. It was their friends. But it was way too many people. Nobody was best friends with everybody at best friend's day, but the very first best friends day.

Everybody there was friends. That makes sense. So. Whatever it just sort of sold out and it wasn't the same. So it just made me think too, like, What's the deal. I mean, I've been in big courses. And they encouraged us to make our own little small accountability groups. And I think that's where some people really made great connections and got a lot of feedback, but it wasn't from the person that they paid money to. It was from their peers, like other people in the group.

So. How can you have a membership that makes you money and is sustainable for you, but also a great experience for your members.

That's a big question, right? Like it needs to be beneficial for everybody. So. You know how I am. I'm not going to dive in right now and give you the three tips to tell you what to do to answer that question. But I've been thinking about it, obviously, because I'm. Launching my membership.



So. I mean. You can think about price. And I'm not, I wanna clear it, clear the air. I don't know why I said clear the air because I don't think I've ever talked about this before, but I'm not really a huge fan of pricing things. Based on what you need as the business owner, like based solely on that.

I don't know if this is a very prevalent, but one time I did a discovery call with a coach. And she was like, well, how much do you want to make? And I said, well, I don't know. 5k a month. I just pulled it out of the gear 5k a month. That seems fine. And she was like, okay. Will you just have to sell to people something that's \$2,500 a month.

And then you meet your revenue goals. And I was like, Uh, Should we care about what I'm selling them at all, or we're just worried about like, you want this much money, just sell to chumps this thing for this much. And you'll be good. Like that method just feels really self-serving and doesn't sit right with me at all.

I think you can definitely look at your money goals. And I think you could look at how much time you can give, especially in a membership, like how much time are they going to get with you? And also. Like what is included? With what you're offering. Is there a community aspect, like, are they on in a Facebook group or a slack group? Is there.

Weekly calls. Is there monthly calls? Is there. Like just. Thinking about what are you offering? How much time it takes you. How much time you have to be live. Cause I feel like that sort of time is different. Feels different to me than. Like creating something in the background versus like having to show up at a certain time.



So for my membership the way right now that it's structured is that you get access to all my workshops. So right now, while I'm recording this, there are six in the vault. So it's a price that I'm launching at that I feel good about for those products. Plus. Coworking and peer coaching. We meet two times a month live.

And there are six workshops in the vault. Which will grow over the next 12 months. So if people sign up during this launch, And pay the amount I'm asking, then they will also get 12 more. So six plus 12. 18 I'll have 18 at the end of the year. Which I feel like. Oh snap. I better raise my price. Just kidding.

Just kidding! Cause there's only six in there right now. So I'm asking them. To buy in right now at six. You know, And as the vault grows, I will, stair-step my prices. So if you listen to the money episode, you know, that I'm a big fan of. Raising your prices. I feel like when I first started my business, people were like, oh, you can't raise them. It's so hard to like, I don't know. I'm like, no, you can raise them.

So as more things are in the vault. I will raise the price and the people that are in there now. We'll be grandfathered in because they were the people who hopped in when it was just six. Like, I feel like that's community that's relationship building. Like you believed in me when it was just six and you hopped in.

And then if you're like sitting in the background and you're like, nah, I don't know. I'm going to wait and see what else she comes up with. Then you might have to pay a little more. Because there's more in there. That's how I'm approaching it. But obviously when I



talk about saying F that to the rules, I don't think it works the same way for everyone.

So. I also came up with an idea. Of busting out my calculator and being like, okay, well I want a six-figure membership because I think. A lot of times people are like, you should raise your price. You should raise your price because they just think again with the more, more, more like more people, higher price, more money.

Get it, get it, get it, get it, girl. Get it. Get it girl. I don't know. It's a lot, but then I'm like, okay, but I do need to make money. So let's say. I want a six-figure membership. And you knew I don't love saying things like that, but also I love, I would love, I would love to make six figures.

So. Let's say that the most. Members I could possibly handle would be like 125. And I'm saying 125, because when I taught high school at a traditional high school, That was about the number of students I saw in a day. I know that sounds, that sounds wild, right? Does he see 125 kids in a day? But if you think about it, I taught five classes.

25 kids. The class is 125 kids a day. All right, so I'm going to take 100. Thousand dollars and divide it by 125 students or members. And that will be \$800. So if I had 125. Members pay me \$800 a year. That would be. A hundred thousand dollars a year. That's crazy. \$800. Like people would see that and go, oh, you need to raise your price. You need to raise your price, which by the way, the membership is nowhere near \$800 right now.



Because when I first started, it was going to just be \$13 a month. And there's people grandfathered in at \$13 a month. And I'm not scared to say that because they have. Been with me while this thing has morphed and morphed and morphed. Uh, there, my OGs. They hopped in when I needed them to, and I love them. They're my faves. I mean, they're not my faves you'll be my fave too. If you join I was getting, I mean, not just kidding, you will be.

Let me stop.

I'm not going to edit that out. Anyways. Right now, you know what I mean? Like right now we meet twice a month and 125 people in one zoom, zoom meeting. Would be way too much. So if I was gonna get 125 members and charge \$800, I would definitely be adding more to zoom meetings. Okay. So that also means I told you before showing up live to me, feels like it's more.

Like, it's just, I don't want to say it's more valuable to the people, but it's harder for me with kids, with families with. I would love to travel a little more when my kids get older. So committing to being live on zoom more than I already am.

I don't know that might have to be more than \$800. And maybe I could hire some people like some teachers assistance, like maybe there's a few other people who host things. I would want to pay them fairly. So maybe it would be more than \$800. I don't know, but. Do you see how it's different to think about like, what am I offering?

What are they getting? What do I need to get? And where does that fall for the pricing? So. I just think you have to sit down and



play with the numbers. Like you guys know. I love. Liz Wilcox her membership is \$9 a month and she just hit 1500 members. Whoop. And I'm not saying that a big membership is bad.

I'm in that membership and I'm happy about it. But. I don't know, all 1500 members. It's very different than other communities. I'm in where I do know members. So. I mean, I do know some of our members cause there's 1500 in there and I'm like, oh cool. You're in there. Me too. But it's not because of the membership that I know them, but for \$9 a month, what Liz provides is a thousand percent worth it.

Right. So. Also, you should just know that at \$9 a month for 1500 members. She made it to 100 K right. Well, let me do the math. 162. Okay. So when people see her membership, I'm sure a lot of people are \$9. You need to raise your praise. She doesn't, she's got it. She knows what she's doing. So. It's interesting to me how different things can look and what works for you. Like Liz does one Q and a a month.

And I joined as a yearly member. So I do get her workshops. So. You have to think about what you want your community to look like?

So I want to build for me, I want to build a closer knit community as a former teacher. I just think I CA I'm craving. The community aspect of all this, um, So I have to charge more than \$9 because I want the people to get to know each other and I want to have a smaller, more intimate.



Membership. So even though I like the idea of charging \$9. It would not be sustainable for me because I don't want to deal with 1500 members. You'll feel me. But I also don't want to just be like, I'm going to charge a thousand dollars a month because. I want a hundred K in that long line and nine members. If I charged a thousand dollars a month, I would only need like nine members.

Right. I mean 10 members would be 120. Thousand dollars a year. So I could do that, but if I'm charging people a thousand dollars a month, like, I'm going to have to give up way more access to myself and I would feel much more, um, Committed like that to me is like a coaching program and I don't want to build a coaching program.

So more like a thousand dollars a year for a person, not a thousand dollars a month. Seems way more, um, in line with what I want and to be honest, It's called a scrappy business community. Like I want this community to be for people who don't have a thousand dollars a month to invest. Right now. And that's not because it's a money mindset issue for them. It's because like bills are real and income is real.

And I want to be able to support them in a fun. Tight-knit community. And help them market their business more creatively. But yeah, there's a million ways to get to a hundred K a year, right. More students at a lower price, less students at a higher price.

For me, growing my membership slow and steady. Is what's going to work for me. And also it's not my, it's not my only source of income. Right. I do graphic design for people. I do VIP days. I have a monthly retainer clients. The community is just something I



want to build to help people who aren't quite ready to invest in VIP days. And aren't quite ready.

To have a monthly retainer. But that's still want to hang out with me and get some cool ideas for marketing. That can be a little more scrappy.

And again, Because they're coming and hanging out with me and they're part of my community. I'm actually during this launch, giving them. A certain amount of money off of VIP days. If they end up working with me and I'm giving them a special price on content reviews. If they want to do that with me.

'cause for me. If you're in my community, you're my people. And I'm going to look out for you. That's what I feel like community means to me, it doesn't mean. I just want to get this monthly. Recurring revenue. And I just want to make as much per month. I want people to raise their hand and say, oh my gosh, Deanna.

Love it. I'm here for it. I want to be in your community. So, and then I want to take care of those people. That's what it means to me.

So when you're looking to join a community, Or you're looking to build a community. I just want you to be thinking about, what are your goals and what kind of community is going to work for you? There's no right or wrong answer. As you know, that's my philosophy about most things on business. So I just think it's up to you to decide what's going to work for you when you're building a community. And when you're joining a community, Makes sense.





If you're still listening to this. I just want to let you know that my membership is opening today. The 25th of May. Oh, I was a poet and didn't even know it it's happening today. The 25th of May.

I'm not going to ramble on about it, but you can go to [effthatcommunity.com](http://effthatcommunity.com) to learn more and join. If it feels like a good fit for you. But, um, please reach out on Instagram and let me know what your thoughts on all this, or if you have a membership and what you're doing and how that looks, but. Hope you found this valuable.

I think it was, I feel like it was. Okay. See you next time.

Don't forget if you're listening and you have something to say about my salad, I'm pretty much begging you to send me a voice memo on Instagram and tell me what you're thinking. Agree. Disagree, want to share a personal story of yours? The whole point of this podcast is to start a conversation and I can't do that without you.

So hit me up on Instagram at the DMC ward, you there. And thanks for listening.