



EPISODE 46

How to Host an Accountability Challenge

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- 00:03 Hey guys, it's Gary Vaynerchuk and you're listening to the Front Row Entrepreneur Podcast with our girl, Jen.
- 00:14 Every spring and every fall, for the last three years I've hosted an accountability challenge for the members of my private community front row VIP. When I first started this, I really wasn't sure what kind of response I would receive, but I knew I wanted to create some sort of activity that was unique and wouldn't just help my members reach their goals, but would also create a sense of community within the group. In other words, they were, they wouldn't just be there to listen to what I had to say all the time, but that there they'd be there because they love the community because I knew that if I created that that my community would be that much better and the people would stay that much longer that they would have something that would tether them to this community. I mean there are membership sites left and right and you may have heard the phrase that people come for the content but they stay for the community and I think both are true.



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I think having stellar content is very, very important, but having a community, a place where people feel like, Hey, these are my people, that's really, really important. So I decided to launch this almost right about the time that I launched my membership site itself and I really wasn't prepared for what actually ended up happening and that is, and this has happened every single time that I have run this challenge and that is that we have had an 80% plus completion rate. So if you've ever run any sort of online program or online course, you know that it's pretty unusual to have that sort of completion rate. Most people do not complete online programs. And I think the secret behind the high success rate is the fact that we kept this challenge very doable for both the participants and also for me and for my team.

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Now my membership site, front row VIP is very much focused on online business building marketing and productivity for sure. But the truth is anybody could benefit from running an online accountability challenge. Here's why, right? No matter what we're striving for, having accountability baked into the mix is always a good thing, right? I mean it may be that your business is all about health and wellness. While the benefits of an accountability challenge for your people is obvious. But whether you're teaching interior design, art, mathematics, whether your business sells lollipops or Lamborghinis, there is a way to incorporate an accountability challenge into your business. And the reason why you would want to do this is because like I said, a challenge builds community. It helps you strengthen your relationship with your audience and your audience, with you and your brand. It helps your audience achieve a desired result.

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And if they achieve this desired result, chances are they're going to become clients or customers or if they're already clients or customers, they're going to become more than that. They will become loyal clients and customers, ambassadors for your brand. Diehards so what I'd like to do today is just a quick walk through of how specifically we do this challenge. And then I'm going



to give you the tools that we use to run the challenge every spring and every summer. So the first most important thing to know about the challenge is that we aren't measuring how far someone gets with any particular goal. They are being held accountable for being accountable. So let me explain. When we kick off our four week challenge on a Friday, we meet in zoom and I walk them through a short slide deck that explains the program. We start with setting a four week goal and I encourage them to pick a goal that can be measured.

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In other words, the goal can't be in four weeks I will become better at creating content because you can't measure that. So a better goal would be in four weeks I will have created three months of strategic content and then we ask them to create a good, better, best scenario so that you know when you hit those benchmarks. So good might be, you know, four weeks from today I will have six podcast episodes recorded and edited with all the show notes and correlating social media posts. Then the better scenario might be eight episodes with all that stuff, you know, everything that we just mentioned, but eight episodes. And then the best scenario would be 12 episodes. Then we reward points for the participants. Each time they check in finishers who complete the challenge with all their points will be entered into a drawing to win a really special prize.

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We also take one extra step and that is we group our participants into teams. This encourages them to cheer each other on throughout the week and their arbitrary teams. I think this time we might even have people just grouped into teams alphabetically, so when a team wins, each member of the winning team is invited to present a webinar in my big Facebook group, the front row, they're also told that there'll be allowed to pitch something on this webinar. So this is really a great prize because it's worth a lot to them and it costs me nothing. And also as it turns out, the members of my Facebook group really love these presentations. The only thing members have to do to participate in this challenge is to check in twice a



week on their progress. We call this check-in, basking and tasking. So on Friday, they're given a deadline of midnight Eastern standard time to simply check in with what they accomplished towards their goal, and we keep it very loose in terms of how they check in.

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They're welcome to jot down their progress on a piece of paper and just take a picture of it and post that picture. Or they can just simply post it in Facebook a list of what they accomplished. We have a group Trello board where they're welcome to post their progress there. The point is they just have to check in and share their progress and then bask in the glow of those achievements. We're not measuring, we don't look at the list and say, Oh, they only got 40% towards their goal, or 10% we don't do that for number one. That would take us forever and that would be a nightmare. And number two, guess what happens when people take a moment to check in. Imagine if you did this. You checked in every Friday and made yourself pause, look over your shoulder and see everything that you accomplished that was in line with your goal.

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And then on Sundays, that's when everybody tasks. So that's when they're, when you write out all your tasks for the upcoming week that are going to get you, they have to be related to the goal that you set at the beginning. But imagine if you did this on every Friday and every Sunday and you had somebody sort of cheering for you and nudging you on that. I think you quickly come to understand that like, yeah, this, this really could be quite helpful and quite productive. So anyway, back on Sundays when everybody tasks that they have again until Eastern standard time on Sunday night to post what they want to accomplish by the end of the week. And on our end, we're simply cheering them on under each of their posts, whether they do it on Trello or Facebook with a fist bump emoji or we'll say way to go, good job. And we might answer any questions that come up.

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And then the other thing that we're doing behind the scenes is keeping score of where people are and we



want to make sure and tag people before the deadline every Friday and Sunday night, um, who have not checked in yet. This is the part of the challenge where we are truly holding each person accountable. So you know, if you haven't checked in and it's 10:00 PM on Friday night, you're going to get a notification on Facebook that's like, Hey Julie, don't forget to check in. And the things that people report being able to accomplish in four short weeks has really been nothing less than astounding. People have launched entire businesses created and launched entire courses, membership sites, podcasts, you name it. Some people use the four weeks to work on personal development like weight loss or kicking an addiction or organizing their homes. And then on our end, we leverage this challenge each and every time that we offer it by opening up the doors to our membership site, to front row VIP.

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This way. People who are not currently members of VIP can sign up and participate in the challenge for only \$47 and once they join for \$47 they have access. They joined the challenge for \$47 but they have access to the whole membership site and all the loads of content that is there and to our online community and then they end up staying indefinitely for years. Really as a subscriber, paying \$47 a month. It's really a wonderful way to welcome a new person into your community by really showing off some of your best stuff. I mean, it really hits all the bases. When you think of onboarding someone into your membership site, there are certain things you want to do right away. You want to show them what kind of leader you are. You want to show them how great your content is. You want to show them how warm and wonderful and helpful your community is.

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Well, an accountability challenge checks all those boxes. Now we've run this challenge for four weeks. And I think the first time we did it, we might've done it for six weeks, but we think the four weeks is pretty much the perfect length of time. And then throughout the challenge, I want to mention, we also offer opportunity for bonus points



here and there. So this is important because there will come a day at some point where someone might forget to check in or something happens and they aren't able to check in and they miss their point. And we didn't want this to be an excuse for them to be like, well, I'm cooked. You know, like that's it. I've can't be considered a finisher. So now I'm just going to quit. We didn't want them to be able to do that. So we offered these bonus points during the challenge.

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They don't ever know when they're coming, but we throw those in there and that gives them a little bit of a breathing room and keeps them in the game. So at the end of the challenge, they must have 10 points to qualify as a finisher. And then we take all those finishers, we put them into a hat and we draw a prize. That's really awesome. Last time we gave this big box of our entrepreneurial favorite things, books and gift cards and all sorts of things, so they have to have 10 points to qualify as a finisher, but they could have up to 15 or 18 points if they complete all the bonus points. At the end of the challenge, we have another zoom meeting where we celebrate all of the finishers. We have like a graduation and then we celebrate the winning team and we draw the prize that I just mentioned.

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But I wanted to tell you about this challenge because it's one of these things that is so easy for us to execute, but it brings so many wins to our members and it helps us bring in new members, like I said, to VIP. So we put together a little resource pack for you so you can host your own accountability challenge. Just text VIPACCOUNTABILITY to 44222 go to the show notes page at jenlehner.com/046 and there'll be a link there to download it. If you end up doing your own accountability challenge, please reach out to me and let me know how it goes. That's it for today's episode and I'll see you next time.

