Who Pays Stays

How to Own Your Audience and Build Predictable Income From Depth

Workbook — Own Your Audience: The Economics of Depth

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How to use this workbook

Each lesson in this workbook follows the slides in the Genially course: the cover slide sets what you will learn, the teaching slide carries the idea, the activity slide is the work, and the quiz is a quick check. This workbook goes deeper than the slides and ends each lesson with questions that challenge you to apply the idea to your own business.

The workbook is structured in two sections. Section 1 covers building your owned audience: the economics of warm leads and the discipline of attracting the right people rather than the most people. Section 2 covers monetising the depth: the two-tier income model and the specific price that turns intention into a business.

SECTION 1

Building Your Owned Audience

This section establishes the two foundations of an owned audience: the first concrete step of converting borrowed attention into addresses you hold, and the discipline of attracting people for the reason you want to keep them.

LESSON 1.1

The Economics of Depth: Warm Leads and Why They Win

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- Explain why warm leads outperform cold leads.
- Set up one opt-in and one tracking link.

THE IDEA, IN DEPTH

The first instruction in building an owned audience is precise: gather email addresses. Not followers. Not likes. Addresses. An email address is a warmed-up prospect, someone who chose to hear from you. That choice changes the economics of everything that follows.

The number that justifies the move: warm leads convert at around 14.6 percent against 1.7 percent for cold leads, roughly eight and a half times better. If your current audience is mostly borrowed, rented from a platform that controls the algorithm, you are working with cold reach even when your numbers look good. The platform decides who sees your work. You cannot warm up an audience you do not have direct access to.

Tracking as a direction-finder

Alongside the opt-in, this lesson introduces tracking: Google Analytics, UTM parameters, and an email platform such as MailerLite or ConvertKit. The framing is important. Data is a direction-finder, not your reason for existing. It tells you where people came from and what they want, so you can serve them better, not so you can chase metrics that feel good on a dashboard but do not correspond to income or creative sustainability.

A UTM parameter attached to a post tells you whether your audience came from a newsletter, a social post, or a direct search. That information changes how you prioritise your time. If newsletter links bring in people who subscribe and pay, and social links bring in people who view and leave, that is a direction-finding signal with direct implications for where you put your effort.

> *The first concrete brick: set up one GDPR-compliant opt-in and one tracking link this week. Not a full strategy. One opt-in and one link. The transformation from borrowed reach to owned audience does not happen in strategy documents. It happens when the first address lands in a list you control.*

Your warmest fifty people

Your warmest fifty people, the ones most likely to buy, refer, and stay, are somewhere in your current orbit. The opt-in is how you find out who they are and start reaching them directly. That list, however small at the start, is the beginning of a business that does not depend on the platform's continued generosity.

WORK IT THROUGH

Set up your first capture.

1. Create one GDPR-compliant opt-in this week.
2. Add one tracking link (UTM) to a post or page.
3. Write where each one will live.

Outcome: You start turning attention into owned, warm leads.

QUESTIONS THAT CHALLENGE YOU

- Where will your first opt-in live, and what will you offer in exchange for the address?
- If warm converts at roughly eight times cold, what does that change about where you spend your effort?
- What are you currently measuring that is vanity, and what would a direction-finding metric look like instead?
- Who are your warmest fifty people right now, and do you have a way to reach them directly?

LESSON 1.2

Community Building: Attract the Right People, Not the Most People

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WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- Explain why how you attract people sets what they expect.
- State the specific problem you solve, and for whom.

THE IDEA, IN DEPTH

This lesson carries one rule that decides everything downstream: how you get them is how you keep them. The rule is not a suggestion. It is a structural description of how audiences form and what holds them together.

If you attract people with a gimmick, a viral moment, a trend-chase, a hook designed to spike engagement rather than signal genuine value, you are committed to performing that gimmick indefinitely. Because that is what they came for. The audience built on a gimmick has no reason to stay for the depth underneath, because they did not know there was depth.

If you attract people with genuine value, specific expertise, and honest depth, they stay for those reasons. And those reasons are sustainable, because they are what you actually do.

The case for the smaller, specific audience

The lesson makes a concrete comparison: 5,000 people who need your depth are worth more than 100,000 who came for entertainment. The first group buys, subscribes, and forms a community. They return because what you offer matches why they came. The second group churns, because the next piece of entertainment is one scroll away.

> *Community is not a size. It is a fit between why people came and what you actually do. When that fit is strong, the community is durable. When it is weak, the community requires constant performance to hold together.*

Choosing your entry point on purpose

For you, this lesson is about deciding who you are for and what specific problem you solve, then attracting on that basis. The discipline required is to refuse the gimmick that would spike your numbers and trap your future. The refusal is not passive. It requires an explicit decision: here is the gimmick I could use, and here is why I will not use it. That decision, made in advance, is what allows you to build an audience worth the effort of building.

WORK IT THROUGH

Define your specific promise.

4. Write the specific problem you solve, and for whom.
5. Name the gimmick you refuse to rely on.
6. Draft one line that attracts the right people.

Outcome: You attract people for the reason you want to keep them.

QUESTIONS THAT CHALLENGE YOU

- Write the specific problem you solve and exactly who you solve it for.
- Name the gimmick you could use to grow fast. Why will you refuse it?
- Would you rather have 5,000 who need your depth or 100,000 who came for entertainment? What does your current behaviour say?
- How you get them is how you keep them. What are you currently getting them with?

SECTION 2

Monetising the Depth

This section covers the income model that makes the owned audience worth building: the case for subscriptions over one-off payments, the two-tier structure of free breadcrumb and paid depth, and the discipline of setting a real price on the work.

LESSON 2.1

Paywall Strategy: Build a Predictable Income Model

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- Explain why subscriptions outperform one-off payments.
- Sketch a free tier and a paid tier with a real price.

THE IDEA, IN DEPTH

The case for subscriptions begins with predictability. A subscription tells you, before the month begins, what your income will be. A one-off payment tells you nothing about the month that follows. That difference is not a minor accounting preference. It is the difference between a business you can plan and a business you must constantly scramble to sustain.

One-off payments are fragile in a specific way: each month requires a new sale. Every plan, investment in a project, time set aside for deep work, a decision to hire someone, rests on the assumption that a new sale will happen. That assumption is uncertain by definition. Subscriptions remove the uncertainty. They do not remove the need to deliver value, but they convert that need from a monthly existential question into a steady operational requirement.

The market context

The market data provides the backdrop: 41 percent of creators now rely on recurring subscriptions, 54 percent offered paid memberships last year, and the creator economy is projected to grow from $252 billion in 2025 to $1.35 trillion by 2033. These numbers describe a structural shift. The model that works at scale is recurring, depth-based, and paid. The model that struggles is one-off, volume-dependent, and sponsor-reliant.

For creators who take commissions, pricing them high enough to cover a month of expenses or more means a single piece of work buys real runway. A commission priced to cover two weeks of overhead is a treadmill. A commission priced to cover two months is a foundation.

> *The two-tier model: the free tier is the breadcrumb, the content that earns trust, demonstrates expertise, and points toward the paid tier. The paid tier is the depth, the work that requires sustained attention to produce and rewards sustained attention to consume. The free tier earns trust. The paid tier earns a living.*

A real price on real depth

Setting a specific price on the paid tier is part of this lesson. A vague intention to charge for depth is not an income model. A specific price, one that covers real costs and reflects the real value of the work, is the beginning of one. Without it, the two-tier model is a concept. With it, it is a business.

WORK IT THROUGH

Sketch a two-tier offer.

7. Design a free tier: the breadcrumb.
8. Design a paid tier: the depth.

9. Set a price for the paid tier.

Outcome: You have the spine of a predictable income model.

QUESTIONS THAT CHALLENGE YOU

- Sketch your two tiers: the free breadcrumb and the paid depth. What exactly sits in each?
- What price will you put on the paid tier, and what justifies it?
- If subscriptions are predictable and one-offs are not, what in your current income is fragile?
- What would a single high-ticket commission need to cover for it to be worth your time?

Build your economy. Who pays stays.

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