How to name membership levels and pricing tiers (the complete guide)

Category: Naming
written by Steve Harvey | 12 August 2024

Figuring out how to name membership levels and pricing tiers can be complicated. Just as your product names, and your brand's name need to resonate with your target audience (and differentiate your brand), your membership names need to stand out too.

Creative membership level names don't just help to elevate your brand's reputation. They can give potential customers insights into what they can expect when they subscribe to a service, and significantly improve your chances of long-term sales.

At Fabrik, I've helped countless for-profit and nonprofit organizations enhance their brand identity with the right naming strategies. Here, I'll be using that experience to share tips and insights on how you can choose the perfect tier names for your membership levels.

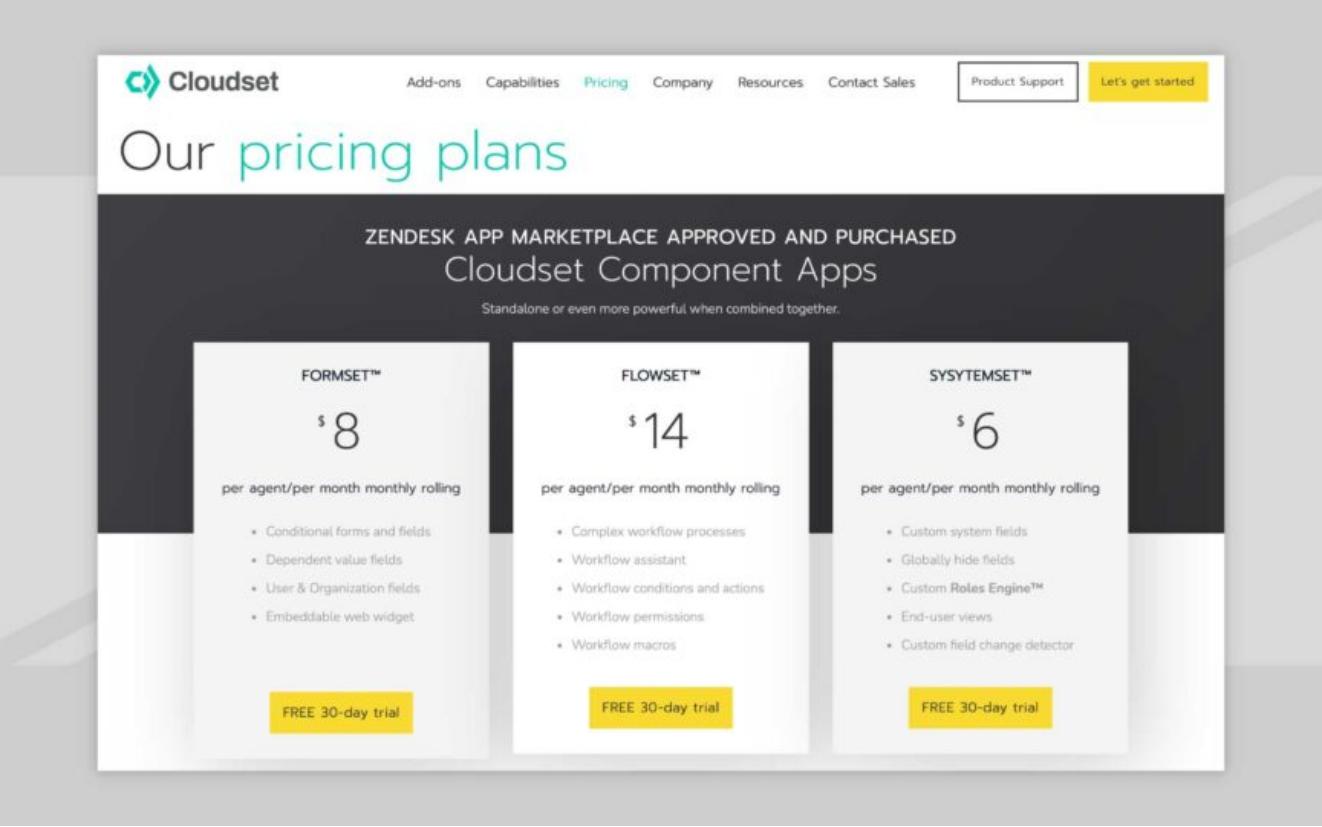
What are membership names?

Membership names are the unique titles you give to the various subscription levels you offer your customers. On a broad level, they help highlight the differences between the plans your customers can purchase, or your various pricing tiers.

If your company sells "memberships", or subscriptions, rather than just facilitating one-off purchases of products and services, membership names are crucial to your branding. They help to show your customers what they're going to get from

each pricing tier and contribute to your overall brand.

As an example, our client, Cloudset, offers three membership levels. The name of each membership level highlights what you get from the subscription, and connects with the company's wider brand identity, with the "Set" prefix:



The benefits of effective names for membership levels

You may be wondering, why bother learning how to name membership levels creatively in the first place? Couldn't you just differentiate each tier with a price and leave it at that?

Simply put, the right membership names have a direct impact on your company's chances of success. They don't just create clarity by showing customers what they get from each pricing tier. They also help cultivate loyalty, and differentiate your company from the competition.

Effective membership level names:

Attract and retain members

When customers of a professional association, software company, or non-profit organization see a meaningful name attached to a membership level, they're more likely to purchase or renew a subscription.

Effective names resonate emotionally with customers and help them identify the exact "tier" they need to purchase.

Accelerate growth

An appealing naming structure can promote higher sales. From a psychological perspective, customers are more likely to be drawn to a "Gold tier" subscription, or "VIP tiers", than a bronze-level subscription.

Differentiate your brand

A strong naming convention helps to set you apart from the competition, and boosts brand recognition. Effective names are memorable, and can even promote word of mouth marketing, increasing your sales.

What to consider when choosing membership level names

There are various approaches you can take when choosing membership names (I'll cover the top options in a moment). However, before you make your choice, there are some core points worth considering.

We recommend looking at:

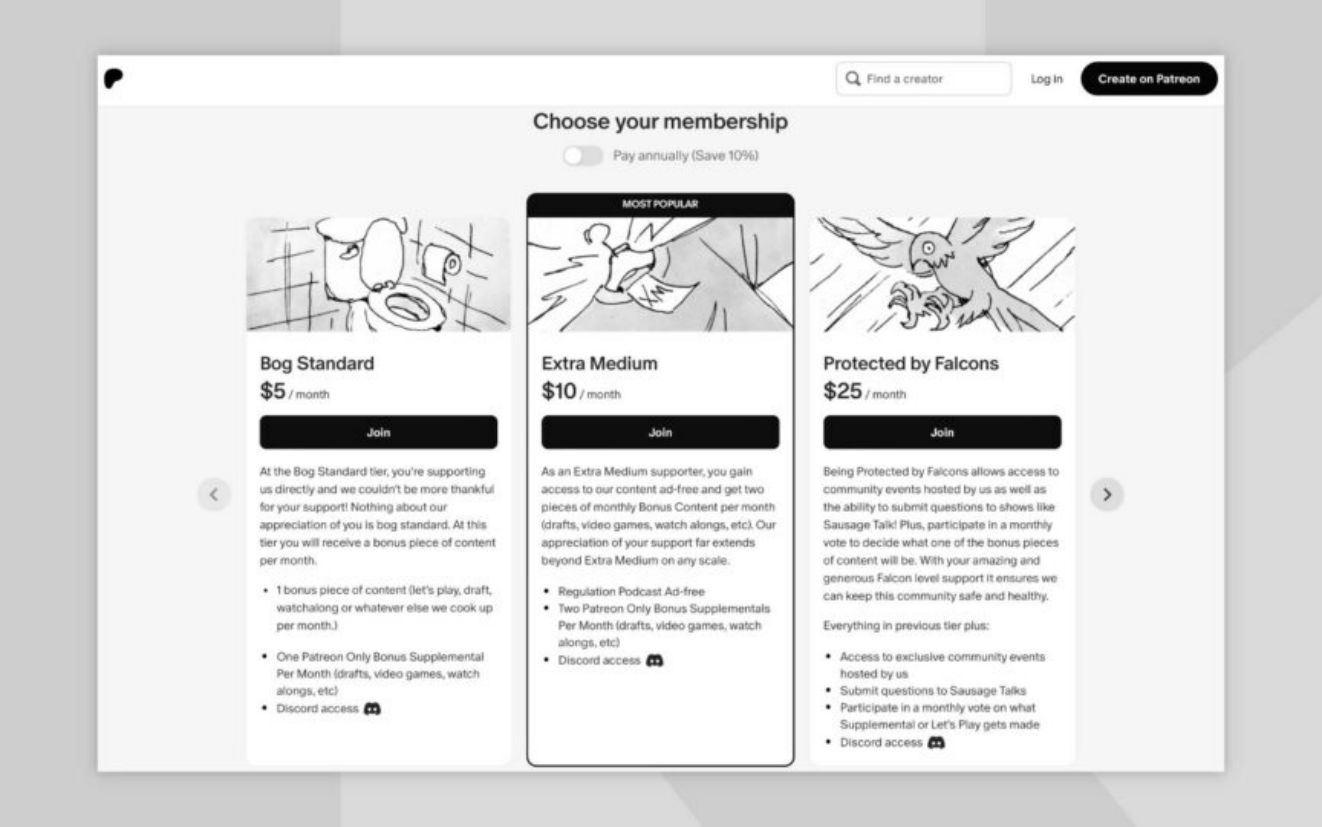
1. Your existing brand identity

The best membership level names should align with your brand's

mission and vision. If you're running a non-profit organization dedicated to sustainability, naming strategy might include terms like "Eco-Warrior" or "Sustainability Superstar".

These evocative and descriptive names can help to cultivate loyal customers, by giving them a sense of pride over their membership. A strong membership naming strategy also provides an insight into your brand's personality.

Just look at how creators name their membership levels on Patreon:

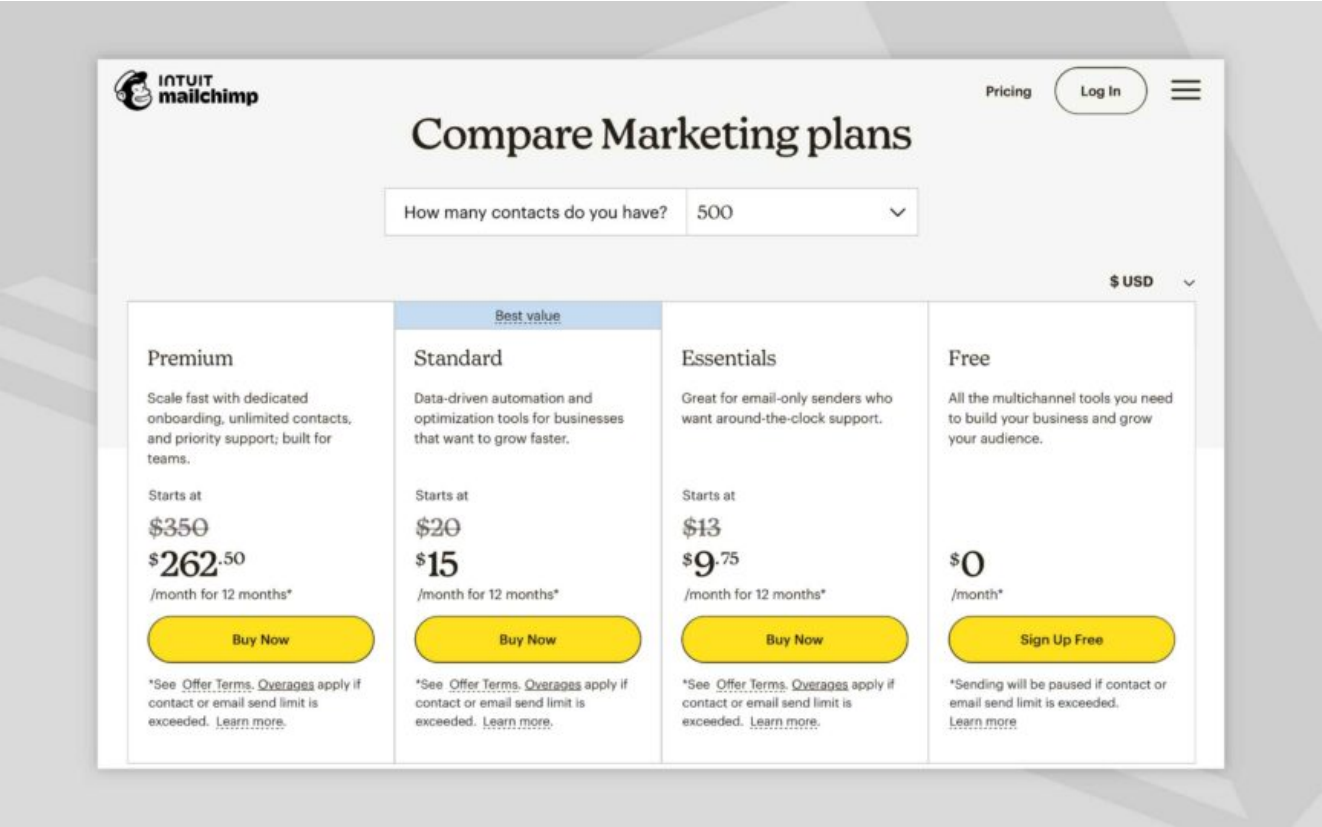


2. Your business goals

Names for different membership tiers can also help you to achieve goals, like convincing your customers to spend more. The more compelling your names are, the more likely your customers will be to move up to higher tiers in your collection.

For instance, the "Premium" plan for MailChimp certainly

sounds more exciting and valuable than the “Essentials” plan, or even the free membership level.

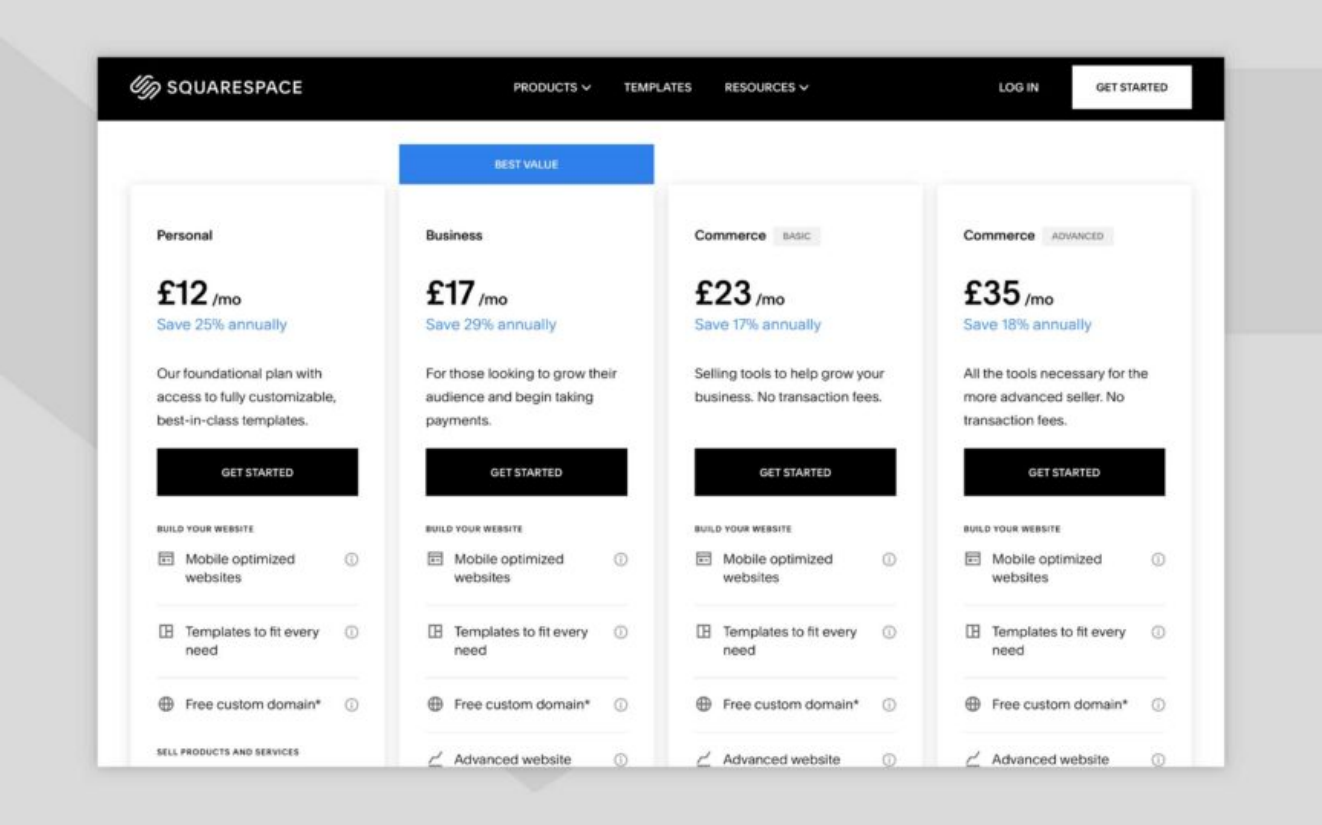


3. The differences between pricing tiers

Before you can choose effective names, you need a clear view of the different membership levels you offer, and how they’ll appeal to prospective members. If the only difference between your tiers is the billing period (monthly or annual subscriptions), there’s no need for a confusing, creative name.

Alternatively, if each of your subscription plans offers something unique, such as access to additional features or exclusive benefits, your names might be more descriptive. As an example, Squarespace has its “Personal” pricing plan for individual users, and a “Business” plan.

The Business plan includes access to more features tailored to business needs, such as the ability to sell products and services.



4. Your target audience and market

Understanding who you're trying to reach and engage with your membership names is crucial. Additionally, it's worth thinking about what people typically expect from companies in your industry.

If you're in the SaaS landscape selling website building software to professionals, it makes more sense to use simple, descriptive names. If you're in the non-profit landscape, a more creative naming process can help to build an emotional connection with subscribers.

Research your target audience, and your competitors, for an insight into which different approaches seem to have the biggest impact on membership communities.

How to name membership tiers: 7

options

Now it’s time to look at some of the most common strategies companies use to name membership levels, with some real-life examples.

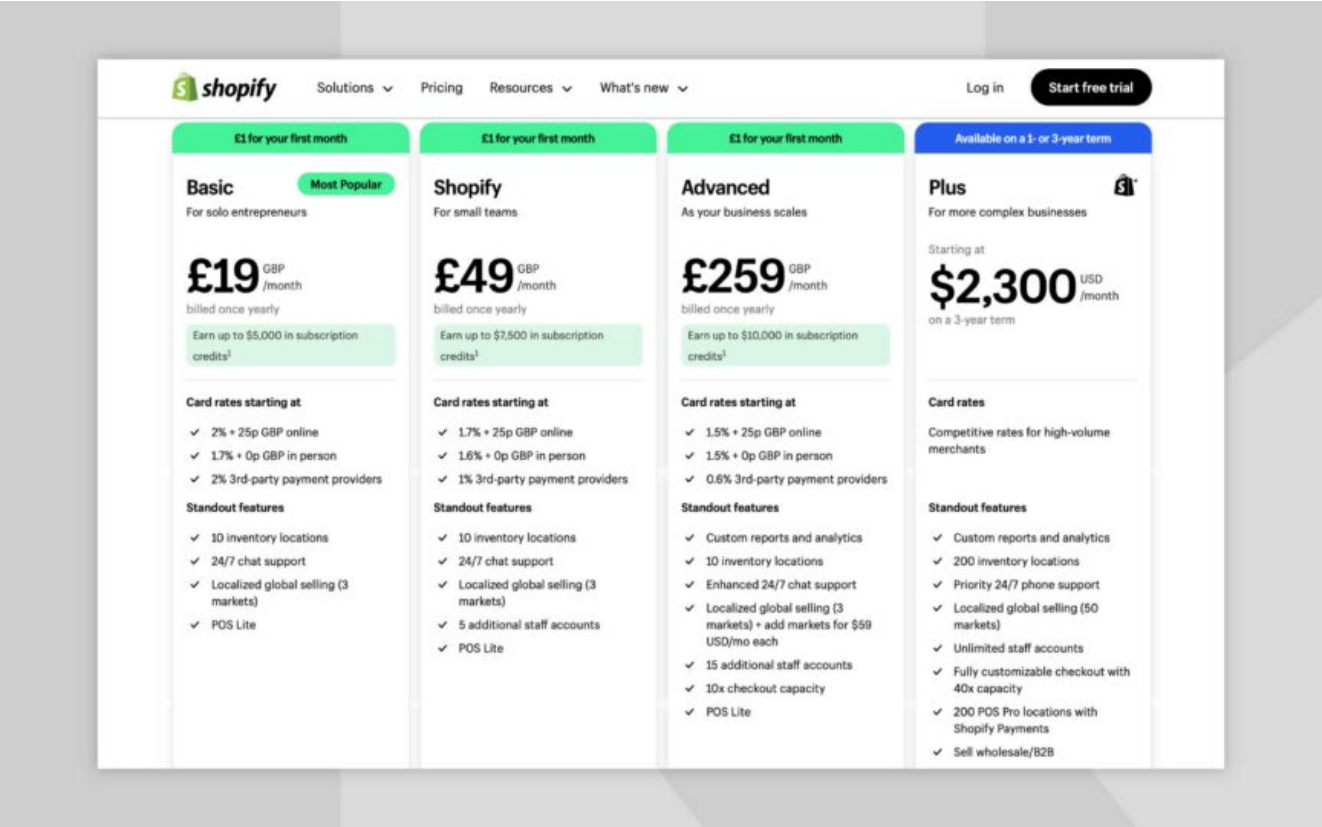
1. Pricing tier names: The common approach

Naming your levels of membership based on pricing tiers is one of the most common options, used by companies worldwide. Often, tiered pricing package names leverage common themes, such as bronze, silver and gold. This strategy works because of the connection these words have with value.

We automatically assume a “Gold” membership is going to be better, and potentially more expensive than a “Bronze” membership.

Tiered pricing names can also include words like “Basic” “Starter” or “Advanced”, offering an insight into the level of service or features a customer will receive.

Here’s an example from Shopify:

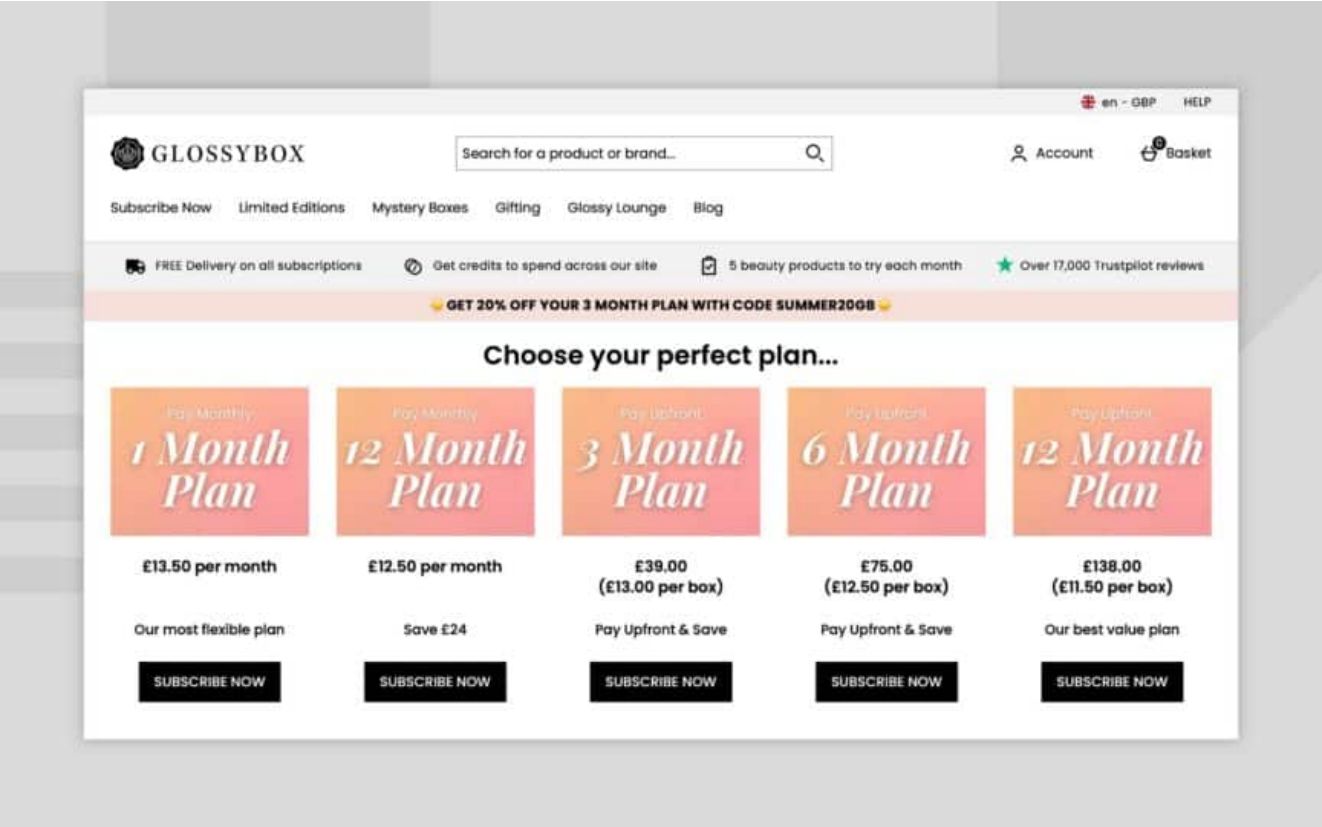


2. Time-based membership tier names

Similar to pricing tier names, time-based membership names are another common option in many industries.

These are the names companies use when levels of membership don’t influence what customers get from your membership program (benefits and features), but instead reference how long you’re going to be subscribed to a service.

You might offer new members the option to choose between monthly or annual subscriptions. Or you might provide a range of different subscription plans for 3 months, 6 months, 9 months and more.

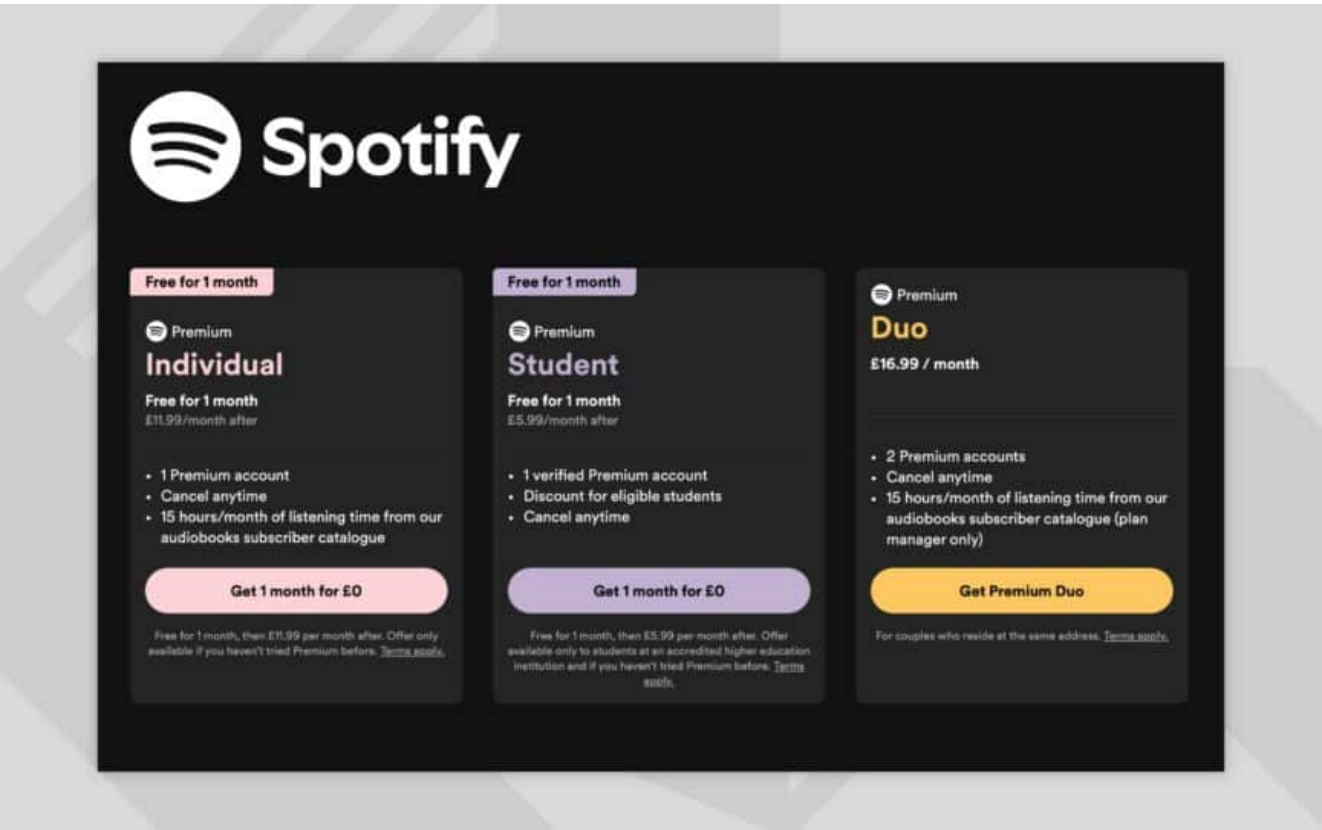


Usually, it’s a good idea to ensure that the price for your higher-tier time-based plans comes with a discount, to encourage customers to purchase bigger packages.

3. User-based membership tiers

Online communities, platforms with subscription models, and loyalty schemes often choose membership names based on the “type” of user that will benefit from the subscription. These naming strategies help customers choose the right subscription, based on the identity they resonate with.

As an example, Spotify has four different membership tiers, targeted at individuals, couples, families, and students:



This is one of the easiest ways to choose the names of your membership levels, if you offer services to specific customer segments.

4. Content delivery membership level names

Content delivery membership level names are becoming more popular in the digital era, where countless companies are beginning to offer streaming services and subscription packages for content.

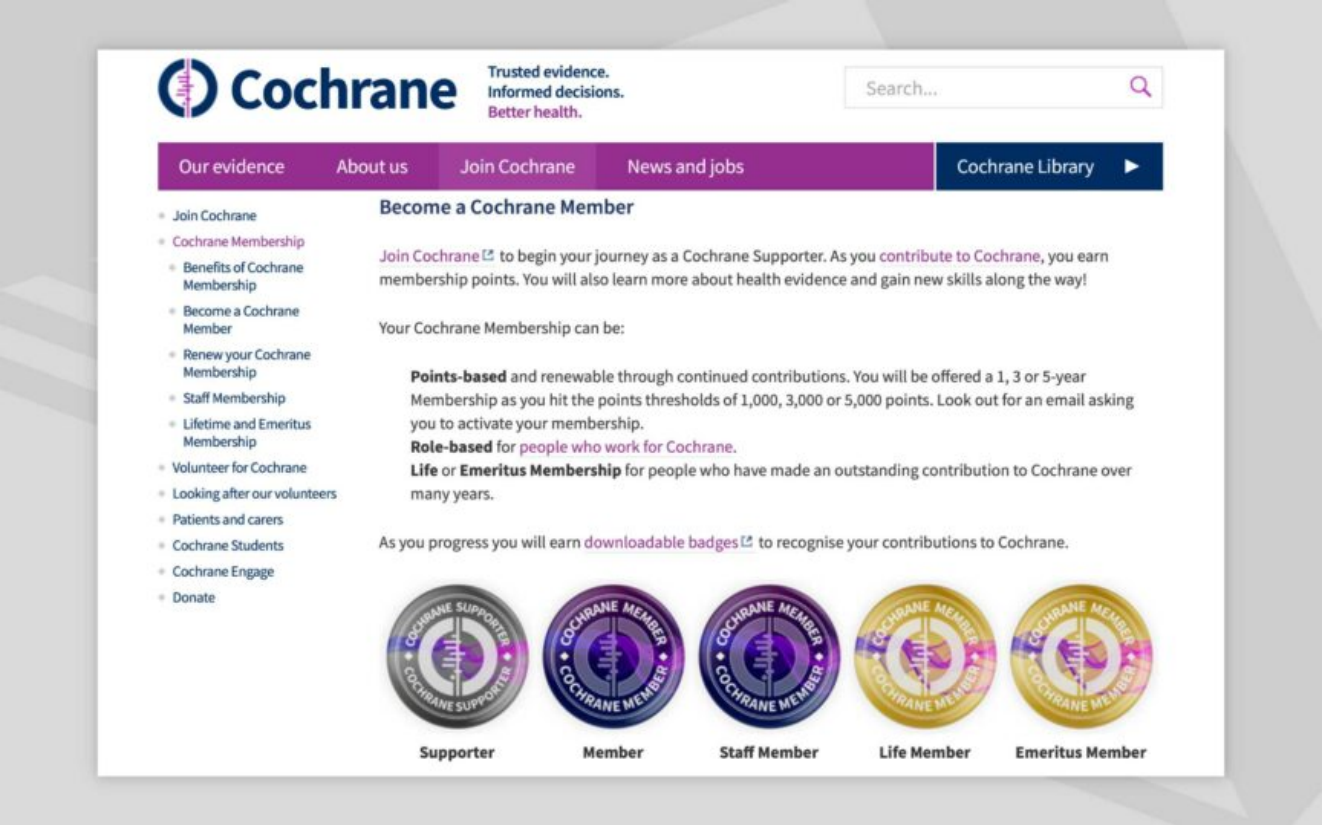
With this strategy, you'll pick your level name ideas based on how you deliver content to your target audience. As an example, the Wall Street Journal allows customers to subscribe to digital-only access to their content, as well as purchasing print editions.

5. Supporter-based membership level names

Supporter-based membership level names are common among non-profit organizations, and community groups. You'll see them

frequently on channels like Patreon and Kickstarter, and they're often designed to give customers a sense of pride over their membership levels.

Our client Cochrane rewards supporters with different membership level names and badges, based on their contributions to the organization.



Supporter-based names can be descriptive, differentiating between "Members" and "VIP members", or they might be more creative. A non-profit organization with a membership model might use names like "Benefactor" or "Philanthropist" to engage their membership community.

6. Interest-based membership levels

There are various ways to run a membership website or business. In some cases, the different tiers in your membership program might not be related to features or benefits. Instead, they might focus on the different interests of the people you target.

As an example, if you're designing a membership community for a news website, you might have different tiers that allow customers to choose the exclusive content they want to receive.

TradersFly offers different membership plans for people interested in Swing Charts, Technical Analysis, and Options trading.



7. Progression or achievement-based names

Achievement or progression-based names for membership levels are often used by companies that want to reward their audience for their continued loyalty and contributions or celebrate their achievements.

If you're looking for a gamified strategy when determining how to name membership levels, to potentially boost engagement among community members, this could be a good option.

Progression-based tier names encourage customers to keep working to reach new heights, inspiring a sense of

accomplishment, and creating a systematic path for advancement in your community.

Sephora's "Beauty Insider" loyalty program, comes with unique tier names for each community member, based on how much they spend each year. Not only do customers benefit from a unique name for their account, but they also get extra rewards as they progress through the tiers.



Quick tips for naming product tiers effectively

There's no single best way to name the different levels of membership you offer your target audience. The strategy you choose will depend on a number of factors, from your target audience to the differences between your packages.

Here are some quick best practices to help you choose names that not only attract new customers, but strengthen your connection with your existing audience.

Prioritize clarity

Creative names are great at showcasing your brand’s personality, but they can cause confusion among consumers. The last thing you want is for your customers to be unsure about which tier they need.

Ensure your name conveys the benefits of each membership level and provides customers with the right information.

Remember your branding

Your membership levels don’t need to include your brand name, but they should resonate with your brand’s personality and mission. Think about how you can differentiate yourself from other plans by choosing impactful names for different plans.

Create a clear hierarchy

Ensure it’s easy for your customers to see the difference between the subscription plans you offer. Common hierarchy strategies include using words like “Basic” or “Advanced” or themes like “Bronze, Silver, and Gold” in a tiered structure.

Make higher tier plans more compelling

Your higher tier plans should feature engaging and exciting names that help to drive conversions. When naming higher levels, think about what kind of names your customers would want to be associated with.

Validate your ideas

If you’re launching a new professional organization or membership website, it’s a great idea to validate tier names with your audience. Run polls on social media or conduct focus groups to gain insights from your customers.

Access expertise when naming your membership levels

Figuring out how to name membership levels in a way that’s creative, engaging, and descriptive can be complex. Even the biggest companies often struggle to come up with creative membership-level names. However, the right titles are crucial for success.

A great name will help to attract customers to the different options you offer, increase your chances of conversions, and strengthen emotional connections with your audience.

If you’re struggling to choose between common membership level naming strategies, the best strategy could be to seek some extra help. Reach out to Fabrik today to see how we can help you choose names that convert site visitors, engage your current members, and pave the way for growth.

Fabrik: A branding agency for our times.