

Monetizing Your Directory

A comprehensive overview of monetization methods you can use to profit from your Brilliant Directories site.



Introduction

When it comes to monetization of a directory, there is always a lot of chatter on SEO and how to get traffic from Google as if that is the end all be all. It can be a nice source of traffic of course, but your directory or business making money is usually not because of just a lack of Google traffic. It is often due to a lack of understanding or execution of other real business activities the directory can control, that are not being focused on or paid attention to as well.

So in this ebook, we are going to focus on a few of those business items, to help you think a little more deeply about your business processes, what you are offering your clients, and how you can help monetize your directory more efficiently than you are right now. We will do so by looking at

- **3 Business Model Questions**
- **3Cs of Increased Revenue**
- **3 Customer Funnel Focuses**
- **3D Multi-Axis Monetization**

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Business Model

So the first 3 is the 3 business model questions. Usually everyone knows what niche or audience they are going to make a directory for or the WHO their target customer is. That is usually the easy part.

Then you must ask yourself three questions:

- WHAT do I offer the customer?
- HOW do I create the value proposition?
- WHY will it generate revenue?

All three items are important to have a successful business. Testing out what you are providing the customer, fine tuning what value you are providing or what problem you are solving for the client is critically important to see if there is a market for it.

But as we all know you can have the right audience, be providing great value, AND be solving their problems, but the execution and profit may never come. This ebook will focus on the third question, the Why it makes money. Continue on the next page and put to paper what you think your answer is to all three questions.

Business Model Worksheet

WHAT - Value Proposition - What do you offer the customer?

Answer here

HOW - Value Chain - How do you create that value proposition?

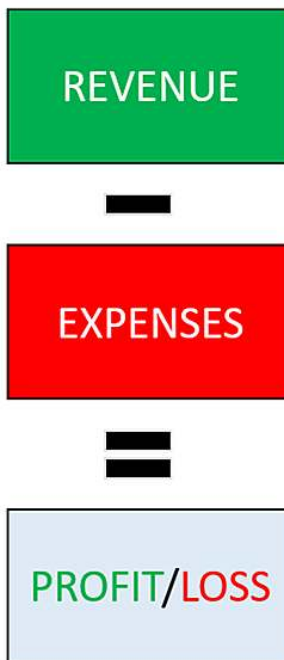
Answer here

WHY - Revenue Model - Why will it generate revenue?

Answer here

Profitability

- The goal of every successful directory it to be profitable.
- You want revenue high, expenses low to create as high of profit as you can.



Airbnb
Blue Apron
Casper
Dropbox
Peloton
Pinterest
Slack
Snap
Uber
Wayfair
WeWork
Zillow

Before we explain the three things every directory business must focus on to increase revenue, lets get super basic.

The goal of every successful directory it to be profitable right?

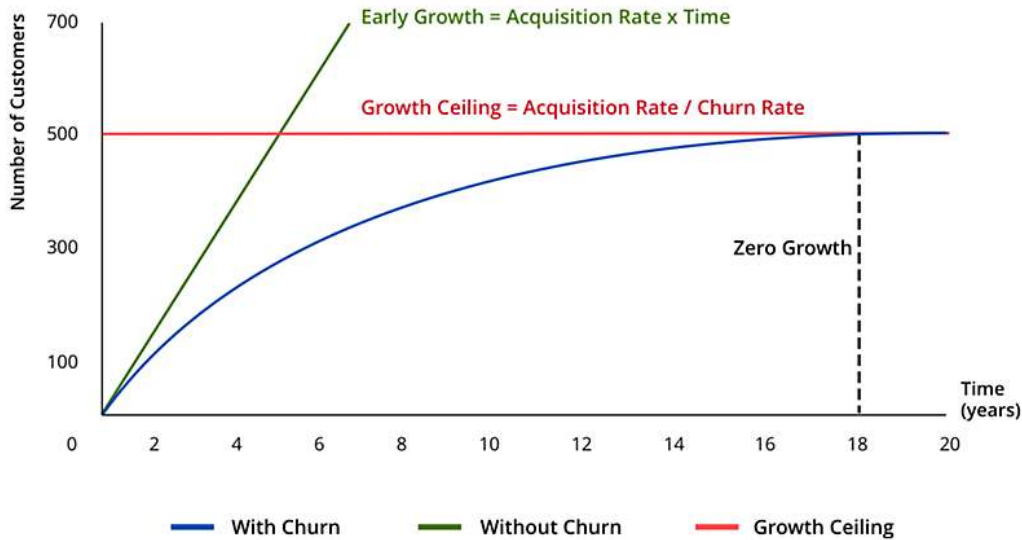
You want revenue high, expenses low, to create as high of profit as you can.

The important thing I want you to think about as we go through the topics in this workbook is to think about what type of profit you want from your directory.

You may be surprised to find out that the 12 huge companies listed above did not make any profit in 2019, they all generated losses, sometimes huge.

They could have turned a larger profit and indeed did have revenue, but they were less focused on expenses because they focused on growth. Keep that in mind that reducing your expenses or being content in having expenses high can have just as much impact in your current or future profit or your short term survivability. Do not lose focus on the expenses because of unitary focus on revenue. But today we are going to focus on that revenue portion at the top and get a little more in depth.

Growth Ceiling – Maximum Revenue



What most businesses with online memberships don't realize is that there is a natural growth ceiling or maximum revenue you are going to be able to achieve.

Don't worry if this looks complicated, it really is quite simple. The understanding you will get from looking at this graph should drive your decisions and focus for your business activities and expenses. Let me explain.

You launched your directory. You're getting new customers or clients each month which is good. Early growth extrapolated in green in the image above seems like a straight line to becoming a millionaire.

But we all know it is not that easy. Everyone has clients that don't come back to pay next month. The churn of lost customers offsets the new customers you painstakingly gain each month. This creates the real client curve seen in blue.

The more clients you get, the more you actually lose the next month because the same percentage loss becomes more people when your numbers grow. Soon the number you are losing grows closer to the amount you gain. Over time the curve approaches what in red is called a growth ceiling, or the limit to the maximum customers you will ever be able to have. Based on the average amount you earn for each customer, this zero-growth limit of customers also limits the revenue you can earn.

The curve is never this smooth or consistent, but it is a reality most of you are living and its real math. But it is not a forgone destiny of stagnant income. You can change your income. But the only way to change the monetization of your business is to change the course for one of the variables in this graph.

You have to either **1. Reduce the existing customers you're losing**, **2. Increase the new customers you acquire** or **3. Increase the revenue you get from each existing customer**.

Increase Revenue Worksheet

Churn, Customers, and Conversions are the only three things you can try and control to increase revenue. Your actions, your focus, your expenses should all go toward doing one of these things.

How are you going to reduce churn and focus on retaining current clients?

Answer here

How are you going to increase customer acquisition above current levels?

Answer here

What are some ways you can try and increase revenue for current clients?

Answer here

3C - Increased Revenue

Churn - Reduce
Customers – Get more
Conversions – Increase Revenue

$$\text{Churn Rate} = \frac{\text{Members Lost (or Not Active) During Month}}{\text{Start of Month Members}}$$

$$.20 = \frac{6}{30}$$

$$\text{Max Members} = \frac{\text{Monthly New Members}}{\text{Churn Rate}}$$

$$50 = \frac{10}{.2}$$

$$\text{Growth Ceiling} = \text{Average Mo Revenue per User} * \text{Max Members}$$

$$\boxed{\$5000} = \$100 * 50$$

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The focus really is that simple. The 3C's of increased revenue are really the only things you need to focus on to make more money.

I'm not going to focus on the math for the growth ceiling, but you can see them here and some example data on the screen if you are interested. So for a 20% churn and gain of 10 customers a month if you get \$100 per client each month, the most you will ever make is \$5000/mo. That is important to know obviously. Often people are making business decisions on math that will never support it.

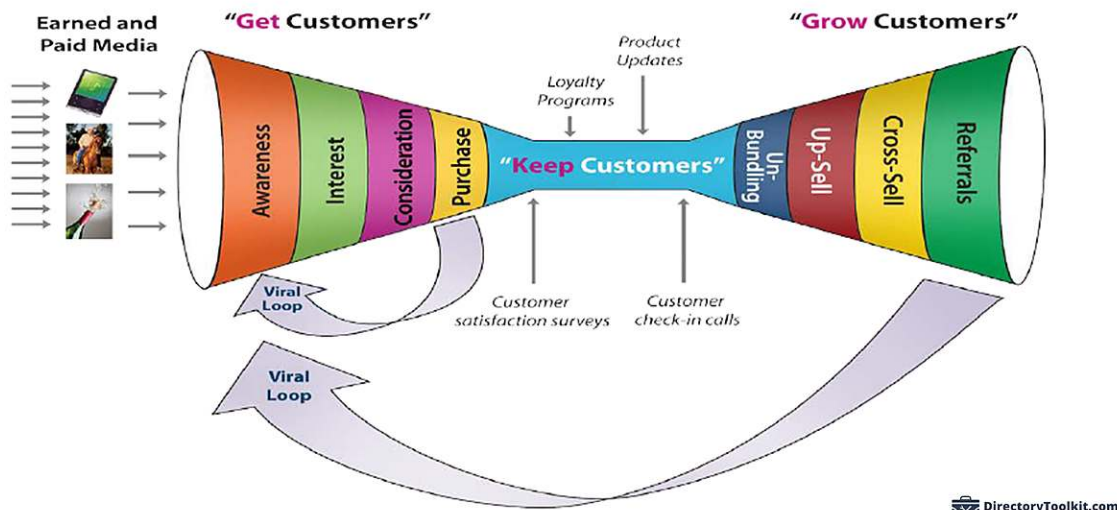
The important factors are circled in green to show you why this math matters. It shows that these are the only three things you can try and control. Your actions, your focus, your expenses should all go toward doing one of these things.

- 1. You need to Reduce Churn and focus on the existing customers you're losing and your processes for keeping them.**
- 2. Get more customers each month than you are right now.**
- 3. Increase the revenue you get from each existing customer that does return month after month.**

If your money curve is limited, it is due to one of these items. You may not be bringing in enough people, you may not be providing services to keep them, or you are not charging them enough for what you are providing. Sometimes, it is a combination of both.

Don't think the problem is your Google ranking and SEO, when you have no plan to convert them when they get there, no idea how you are onboarding them to your system, and no idea what you are going to offer them over time to get them additional resources and YOU additional income. A lot of people are bailing water with a holey bucket on this one, by focusing on one and not all three.

Funnel Focus



The focus is simple, the execution is not.

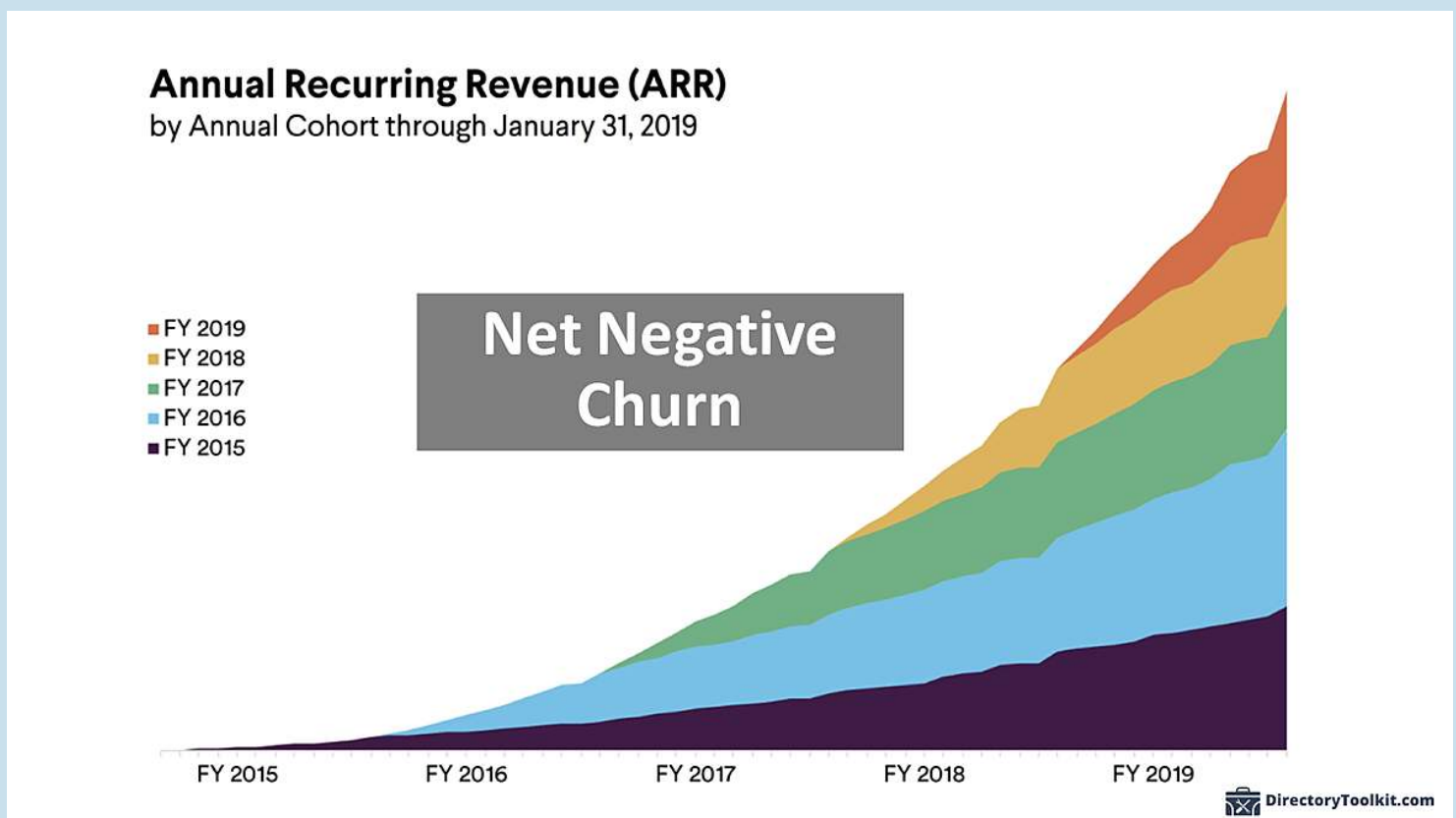
So the focus is simple, but as we know the execution is not. Zoomed out a bit you can see an example Funnel Focus on this image with a bit more granularity on some potential focus items to shift the curve for the 3Cs. There is a multitude of options to focus your time, money and efforts on to fix and solidify your positioning in your niche.

For the remainder of the ebook, we are going to focus on the right end of the customer funnel and talk about Growing customers. The ability to continually redefine and position your offerings to allow continued opportunities for your best and most loyal clients to continue to patronize your business, is truly the winning solution of the endless rat race that the other end of the funnel can lead to, where you are desperately trying to outpace your churn with new clients. The right side of the funnel is filled with happy, loyal clients, but all too often they are left sitting there with no room to grow in your company or solidify you into their business processes. Focusing on the continued revenue growth from existing customers can lead to the income growth that many businesses are looking for.

Expansion Revenue Outgaining Lost Revenue

The nirvana of this existence is called “net negative churn,” meaning that expansion from retained accounts exceeds revenue lost from churned accounts. This is the status that leads to continual and for some positioned to execute, exponential growth. Below is a famous graph from Slack. They experience plenty of churn just like we all do, but the annual cohorts increase in seat memberships and other revenue causes increased growth for each year, and when stacked together over time they go exponential.

Now I don't expect my company or yours to exhibit this type of growth of course as the norm, but it can provide some inspiration for the importance of increasing revenue growth from our long time customers. So how do we do that?



Setup Tiered Membership Levels

It starts with the membership levels. Most of us use the Pay more, get more type of membership site offers more (or fewer) features based on membership level. In this method, members choose what type of member they'd like to become based on the benefits offered. Over time as your clients grow you have a waiting plan with more benefits for them to grow into as well.

There is no rule on naming conventions but you want to create cool names for membership levels that increase the feeling of belonging to a community and if possible help them remember your brand. Starbucks has Green / Gold based on their brand coloring, but it doesn't need to be that simple. Be as creative as possible but ensure that the levels can be easily sorted mentally. Chicken Tier, Beef Tier, and Pig Tier may represent your brand but no one would have any idea which is better other than size of the animal. Your levels should give a feeling of satisfaction and superiority to those who pay for the desired level. See ideas below:

Example Tiers and Tier Names

No Tier	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Free	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Platinum
Guest	Basic	Regular	Advanced	Featured
Friend	Beginner	Intermediate	Ultimate	Multi-Member
	Starter	Enhanced	Extreme	Power
	Insider	Standard	Elite	Diamond
	Personal	Premium	VIP	
	Supporter	Business	Professional	
	Member	Partner	Sponsor	

The names you pick need to make sense for your market and what the main core benefit of that plan is. When the name of the plan reflects the core benefit of that plan, it's easier for prospects to understand the value immediately. It also is easier to talk about the value of the plan when you're explaining it on your site or directly to the prospective member on a sales call. With all that said... as long as the benefits of the levels are easy to digest on your site, then there's still nothing wrong with using names like Gold, Diamond, Platinum etc...But keep in mind... when you name your levels with names like "Basic", the natural inclination of a person is to think to themselves "Basic What?" Basic Listing? Basic Profile? Basic Access? Basic Features? If you can eliminate that extra time it takes for them to read the benefits, and the name itself provides better insight into the value of that plan, then you stand a better chance to increase conversion rates for member sign ups. If you can figure out names that make people feel "I Gotta Have This", then signing up more members becomes a bit easier.

Feature Options @ Name My Favorites (Save favorites) Specialties (Allow sub-level categories) Classifieds Post Classifieds View Classifieds Free Limit Classifieds Cost Classifieds Max Photos Articles Post Articles View Articles Free Limit Coupons Post Coupons View Max Coupons Events Post Events View Events Free Limit Events Cost Job Listings Post Job Listings View Job Listings Free Limit Job Listings Cost	Photo Album Post Photo Album View Photo Album Free Limit Photo Album Cost Photo Album Max Photos Products Post Products View Products Free Limit Products Cost Products Max Photos Properties Post Properties View Properties Free Limit Properties Cost Properties Max Photos Soundcloud Post Soundcloud View Soundcloud Free Limit Soundcloud Cost Videos Post Videos View Video Free Limit Video Cost	Badge Type <hr/> Aa Name <hr/> Veteran <hr/> Non-Profit <hr/> First Responder <hr/> Chamber Member	Profile Options @ Name Lead Management Lead Cost Contact Details Section Listing Details Section About Section Profile Photo Upload Logo Upload Profile Cover Photo Website Link on Listing Social Links on Listing Phone Number on Listing Address on Listing Banner Ads on Listing Send Message Capability Specialties Tab Visible Profile Statistics Click to Call Add Content Module QR Code Private Chat Facebook / Google Sign-In	Search Visibility Default View ▼ <hr/> Aa Feature <hr/> Featured on Homepage <hr/> Search Result Highlight <hr/> Search Results Priority <hr/> Max Category Limit <hr/> Max Location Limit (Service Areas) <hr/> Link Follow <hr/> Search Engine Visible? <hr/> Review Auto-Post <hr/> Reply to Reviews <hr/> Accept and Delete Reviews <hr/> Searchable
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Standard, Bonus, or Add-on?

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A lot of new directory owners don't know or realize that there are over 50 items that BD can be setup to customize and delineate the tiers. And that is even before you add any of the other 20 things a business owner can and does provide for their clients usually, so it really is so much more. But you can't just list out all the features in a three page list. You need to focus on the items for your niche that will make the decision for people to buy easier. Think about what feature everyone would want, then maybe that isn't something you add to the free plan, you add it to the first paid tier and then after. Something every large business would need, add that to your top tier and really jump the price by adding multi business. The following pages list these all out and will help you select them for different tiers.

The key is to optimizing the plans by picking one or two value metrics that everyone in your industry cares about (number of pictures, post amount etc) to differentiate to make easy "that's me and my business" determination for client like we talked about with the naming conventions. Think of items you can add as features later as you rollout more items. Don't add everything right away so you can use those new features for marketing.

You can always add some popups or feature page that explains the differences. But it is not just about the Bronze, Silver, or Gold plans. Here is why I see most business fail to make more and more money is because they have to think past the two dimensional membership plans and think 3D.

Pricing Page Guidelines

Exercise these quick tips and you will be one your way to more sales and happy informed customers.

Do



Provide a breakdown of only key features for your niche

Answer frequently asked questions

Add testimonials and social proof

Add a price for each level. Custom Pricing is also OK

Add a way to contact you

Don't



Add every feature so they are paralyzed by the options.

Answer questions not related to the purchase decision

Use a fake review template that isn't a real person.

Worry bout your competitors seeing your pricing.

Leave unanswered inquiries.

Tier Add-Ons

Add-ons are paid additions to your baseline BD license. These can be paid by month or per year depending on your option chosen. [CLICK HERE to see the latest add-ons.](#)

Item	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Member Profile Analytics				
Click to Call				
Private Member Chat				
Facebook / Google Sign-In				
Pay Per Post				
Digital Downloads - Sell Anything!				
Pin Featured Posts				
Multi-Member Manager				
Advance Post Moderation (Allow Immediate Post without admin review)				
Free Trial Period				
Hidden Member Profiles (charge to see certain members)				
Members-Only Content				
One-Click Social Login				

Tier Profile Options

Options available for a listing profile

Item (* Requires Add-on)	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Lead Management				
Lead Price Per Category*				
Contact Details Section				
Listing Details Section				
About Section				
Profile Cover Photo Upload*				
Logo Upload				
Profile Cover Photo*				
Website Link on Listing				
Social Links on Listing				
Phone Number on Listing				
Address on Listing				
Banner Ads on Listing				
Send Message Capability				
Specialties Tab Visible				
Profile Badge*				
Private Member Chat*				



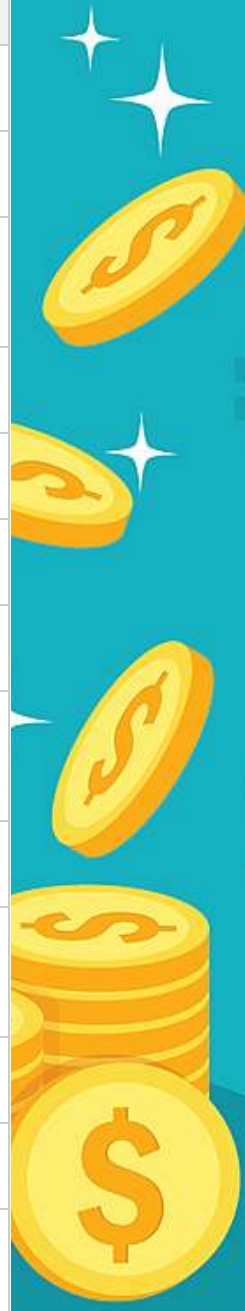
Tier Search Visibility

There are a lot of options that can provide visibility and reach for your businesses. Use these to set certain tiers apart.

Item (* Requires Add-on)	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Feature Members On Homepage*				
Highlight Member Results*				
Search Results Priority				
Max Category Limit*				
Max Location Limit (Multi-location Listings / Service Areas)*				
Link Follow (SEO credit)				
Search Engine Visible				
Review Auto Post (No admin approval)				
Reply to Reviews*				
Accept and Delete Reviews*				
Listing Searchable				
Viewable by Non-members				
Search Results Badge*				

Tier Feature Options

Item (* Requires Add-on)	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Bookmark My Favorites*				
Specialties (Allow Sub-Categories)				
Classifieds (Post, View, Limit*, Cost*, #Photos*)				
Articles (Post, View, Limit*, Cost*, #Photos*)				
Coupons (Post, View, Limit*, Cost*, #Photos*)				
Events (Post, View, Limit*, Cost*, #Photos*)				
Jobs (Post, View, Limit*, Cost*, #Photos*)				
Photo Album (Post, View, Limit*, Cost*, #Photos*)				
Products (Post, View, Limit*, Cost*, #Photos*)				
Properties (Post, View, Limit*, Cost*, #Photos*)				
Audio (Post, View, Limit*, Cost*, #Photos*)				
Videos (Post, View, Limit*, Cost*, #Photos*)				
Clone Custom Post - ANYTHING YOU CAN IMAGINE! (Post, View, Limit*, Cost*, #Photos*)				
Leave Review Capability				
Website Badge				



Additional Sellable Content

Options available for a listing profile

Item (* Requires Add-on)	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Website Announcement Bar* (Sell the use of the bar for their message/announcement)				
Banner Ads				
Sell Category background image placement				
Sell use of main header search background image				
Sell About/Join homepage segment for their paragraph/link				
Sell the streaming widget blog post feature				
Other -				

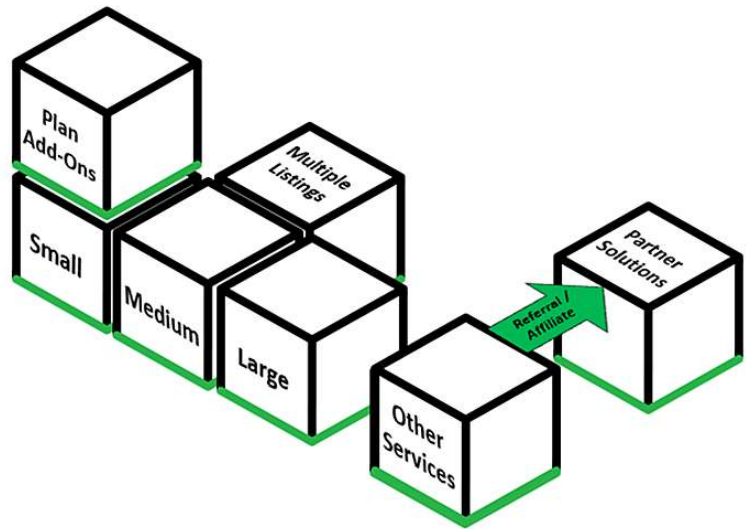




3D - Multi-Axis Monetization

- **Axis 1:** What are my main plans?
- **Axis 2:** Multiple Listings/Categories
- **Axis 3:** Add-ons
- **Axis 4:** Own solutions / partner solutions

Why does it generate revenue?



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Axis 1 Width - Main Plans

These are your main value metrics. Most of the time everyone just thinks about Axis 1 or width, the plan tiers which we have discussed. This is the baseline requirement that can get you set up for continued success but there can be more.

Axis 2 Depth - More listings/categories

More Seats/or locations maybe through multiple listings or multiple categories add-on. So same plan but more categories. This does not have to be on a main plan axis, make it a depth! Make it an additional item available for everyone.

Axis 3 Height - Stack Add-Ons

Use paid BD add-ons or other non-main value metrics to stack plans or upgrade every tier. Why do you need only the top tier to respond to reviews? Make every tier pay! Maybe classifieds are an option for all but not part of plan they are all extra per post. Use the digital downloads to sell featured on homepage.

Axis 4 Dimensional - Other Solutions

Add whatever you want now that you have them in your directory system. - Sell your solutions or other services, or - Sell your other products, your ebooks, do their SEO or webhosting. - Sell partner solutions - Link to, partner with, or gain referral/affiliate earnings from partners in the industry.

Monetization Channels

If you can add it or change it on your directory site, you can probably figure a way to charge for it. See below for a few sales ideas other Brilliant Directory owners are using for their directory.

Sell Memberships, Course, Consulting...

This is the obvious one, but is not just memberships, sell any product or service you have to add profit.

Sell Sponsorships

Go beyond the ad, sell a site sponsor that includes ads or top tier or footer logo, give sponsors control and charge them for it.

Ask for Donations

Maybe your niche is small or a labor of love, that doesn't mean people won't help support you if you just ask. Add a donate button.

Social Shoutouts

Control access to your online social audience or monetize one you have. Charge for shout-outs or early access lead notifications.

Sell Ads

BD has built in ad areas but are unlimited with custom widgets. Sell ads spots in site or newsletter.

Cross-Sell

Sell affiliate products (deep dive on next page), sell agency services that compliment your niche.

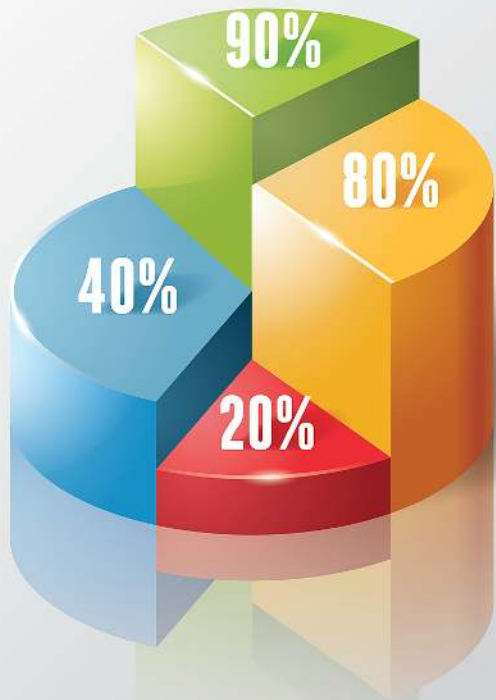
Sell Anything

Sell a front page blog post position, sell a homepage category background or main scrolling image, sell your announcement bar

Up-Sell

Deconstruct your tier benefits and charge more for a allowing a certain post type, for more categories, or more locations.

Affiliate Marketing Deep Dive



AFFILIATE MARKETING

Affiliate Marketing for Others

Find and endorse products you like and would recommend on your directory and to your email subscribers. The product or service should be in line with your particular niche to ensure it resonates with your core audience. When they click and purchase the item you get a split of the sale price (commissions vary from 20% up to 100% for buy in reseller rights for some software)

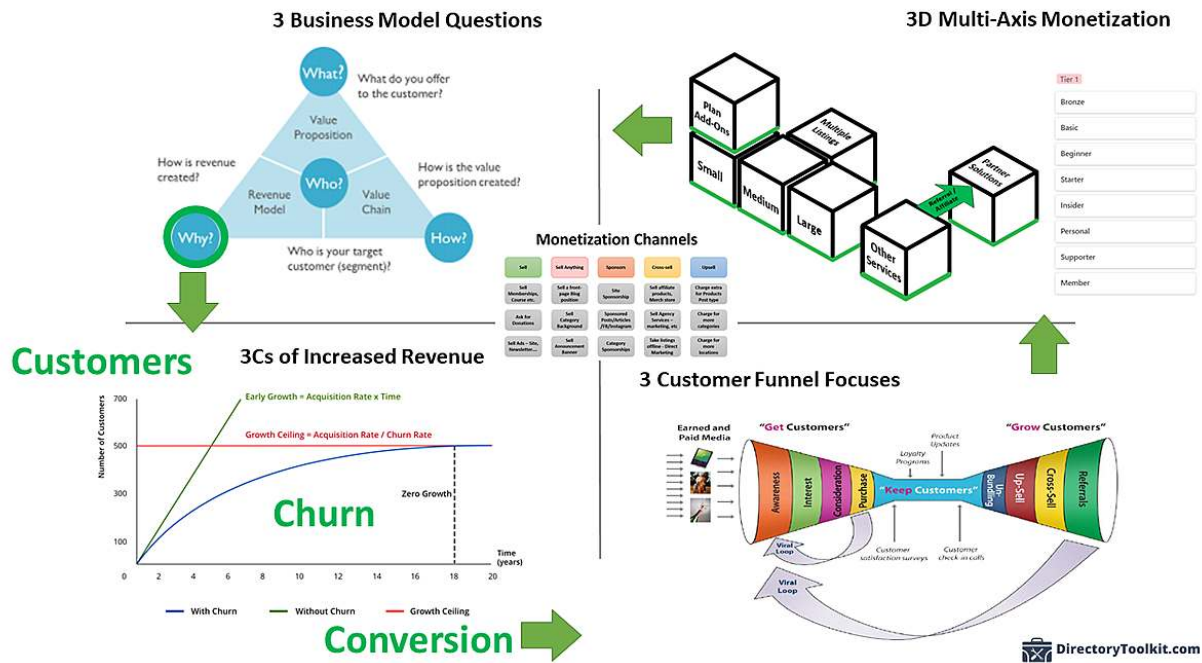
Affiliate Marketing for You

By default Brilliant Directories can be integrated with [ShareaSale](#) and [PostAffiliatePro](#) to provide money to sellers who market your memberships.

You can also use a Stripe integrated affiliate programs that uses the charge side of the transaction after purchasing through your BD site, here are a couple:

<https://www.getrewardful.com>, <https://linkmink.com>, <https://tapfiliate.com>,

<https://firstpromoter.com/>, <https://www.leaddyno.com>



Final Review

So in review, we discussed the 3 Business Model Questions, focusing on the why your business is going to make money,

We discovered the 3Cs of Increased Revenue that every business should optimize, and focused even further into the conversion aspect,

We took a look at the customer lifecycle funnel those three elements encompass, and deep dived into growing the customer by introducing the concept of the 3D Multi-Axis Monetization, and introduced several ideas for tier naming and offerings to help you sell more.

Then it really comes full circle back to the three initial questions that may need to be modified or refocused.

Finally, in the middle of this all, is your monetization channels that will be reshaped over time by your decisions at each stage.



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DirectoryVideos.com

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DirectoryRegistry.com

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