



## **How to Set Up Your Substack Free Newsletter In 20 Minutes**

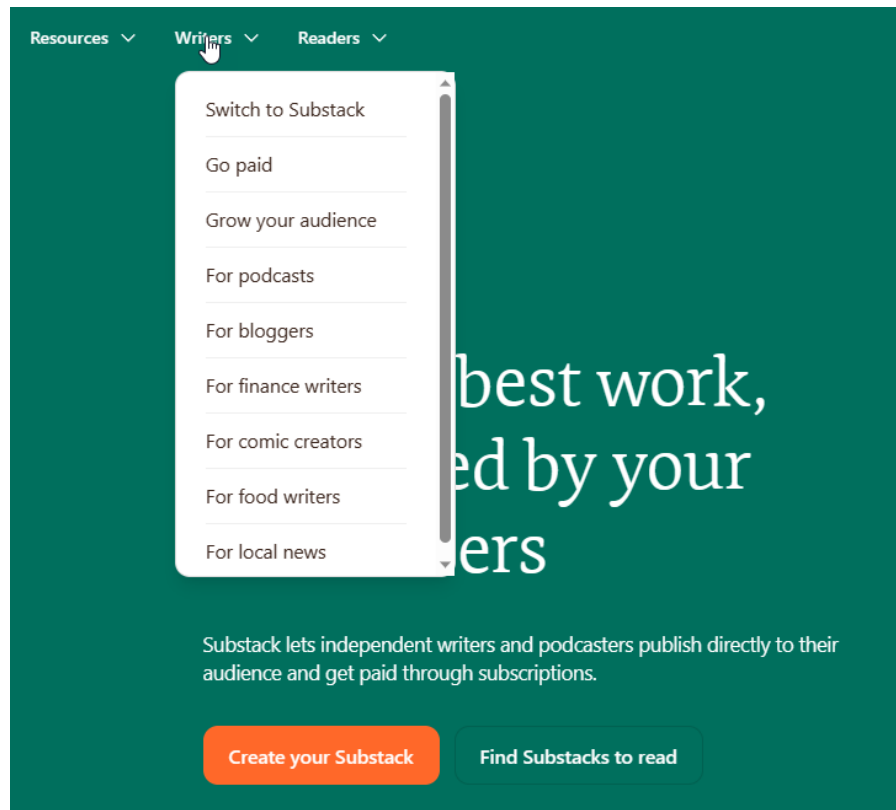
Hello,

Marlon here.

Today I want to walk you through setting up a FREE NEWSLETTER on substack.

And I'll point you in the right direction if you want to set up a paid one also so you're free subscribers can upgrade to your paid.

As you can see, Substack makes it easy for all types of people to create a free newsletter and build an audience. Then, if you want, you can upgrade the free members to paid.



It's FREE to set up a free newsletter on Substack. You only pay a percentage of the sale if people upgrade to your paid newsletter, assuming you have one.

Some people simply publish PART of the paid newsletter for free. Then people can PAY if they want to read the rest of it.

That makes it very simple and easy to have both a free and paid newsletter.

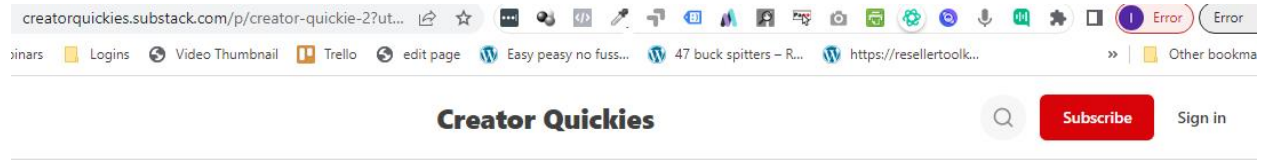
I never "got" Substack. For one thing, I didn't understand what the name means. Frankly, I still don't. I guess people subscribe to your stack of newsletters or something like that.

I didn't see the value or benefit they provided. But they recently came out with a really fabulous way to get your customers and readers to promote your newsletter and be rewarded for it.

Then they also have tools that help upgrade your free readers to paid.

So they have programming and tools that would be quite costly to develop on your own.

Here's the Substack of my friend Joe Lavery:



## Creator Quickie #2



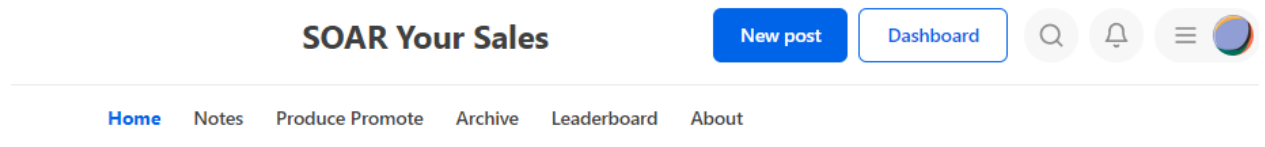
Share



## Welcome to Creator Quickies

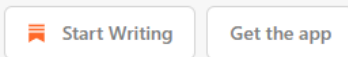
I'm just getting my Substack in action.

When you first set it up, it's going to look BARE like mine!



Coming Soon

© 2023 marlon sanders · [Privacy](#) · [Terms](#) · [Collection notice](#)



[Substack](#) is the home for great writing

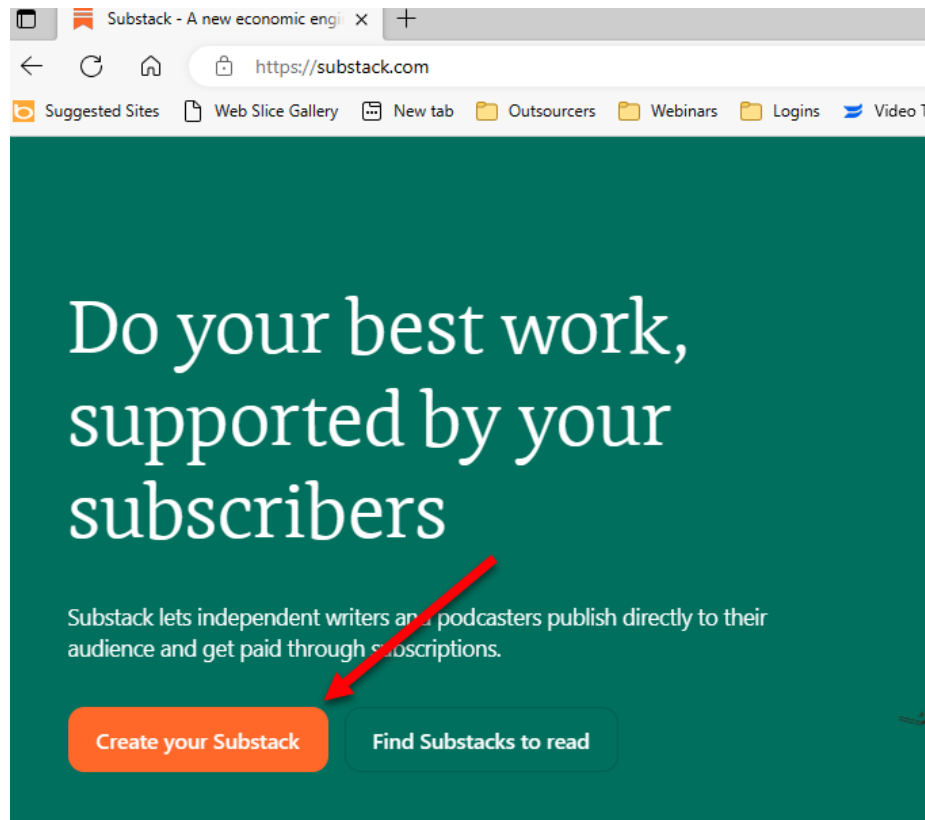
That looks pathetic!

So I have some work to do.

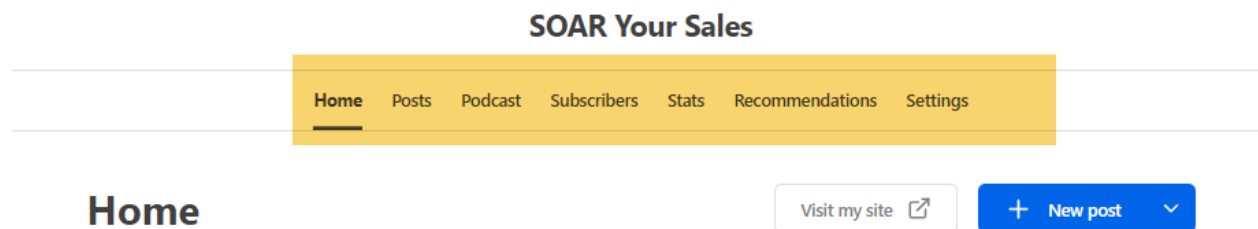
First, let me show you how I got THERE.

Then we'll figure out how to fix it up and put window dressing on it.

Go to [www.substack.com](https://www.substack.com) and click CREATE YOUR SUBSTACK.



After you sign up and log in, you'll see this:



This is the nav.

Home has the dashboard on it which is some of your easy initial set up steps. The main thing there is creating your first post.

Then the posts tab shows you your posts. And you write posts there. A post is a NEWSLETTER.

The podcast tab is for podcasting if you want to do that on your Substack.

The subscribers tab shows your subscribers.

Stats has your traffic and top sources, emails, unsubscribes, subscriber report, network, gift referrals and reader sharing.

Recommendations shows who has recommended your Substack.

And then the SETTINGS tab is where most all the setup is actually done. It looks quite intimidating at first. But when you go with the defaults to start with, there are a small number of things you actually have to change.

This is what you see on the home page:



## Welcome to your Substack dashboard!

Congratulations on setting up your Substack! Let's get you set up for success

The screenshot shows a dashboard with a checklist of seven items. The first six items are completed, indicated by a green checkmark and a grayed-out button. The seventh item is not completed, indicated by an empty circle and a blue button. At the bottom is a large blue button labeled 'Complete Setup'.

- ✓ Create a Substack →
- ✓ Set up the basics →
- ✓ Turn on paid →
- ✓ Get your first 10 subscribers →
- ✓ Create five drafts →
- Introduce yourself on Notes →
- ✓ Write your first post →

Complete Setup

Mine are grayed out because I've completed the steps.

All you do is start at the first step and work your way down. It's a little intimidating to start.

But when you really look at it, all you do is type in your title and description on the "basics" toggle, click a button to turn on page, skip the first 10 subscribers, write 5 topics for your first drafts, create a little intro post for notes and write your first part.

The basics and the first post are the two important ones. You do NEED a first post. The 10 first subscribers is for you psyche so you can say you have subscribers. You can do it if you want or just skip it.

I think you automatically start at step 2:

### **Step Two: Set up the basics**

The screenshot shows a 'Set up the basics' form with a progress indicator at the top consisting of seven blue circles, with the sixth one from the left being greyed out. The form has three main sections: 'Publication name' with a text input field containing 'SOAR Your Sales'; 'Description' with a text area containing 'Soar your sales with Marlon's guidance.'; and 'Logo' with a recommendation: 'We recommend a square image that is at least 300px wide.' To the right of the logo section is a preview of a logo featuring a blue background, a yellow sun, and the word 'SOAR' in white. A blue 'Save' button is located at the bottom right of the form.

Notice on the logo it needs to be 300 pixels wide. You can do it yourself in Canva, Pixlr or Photoshop. Or have someone on Fiverr do it for you. You just click and you can upload your logo.

And create a name and description also.

### **Step Three: Turn On Paid**

The next step is to turn on paid. I've already don't that, so I can't show it to you. But as I remember, I just clicked on the toggle to turn it on and that was all.

Maybe I had to link up my Stripe account. I don't remember. Just follow the instructions it gives. you.

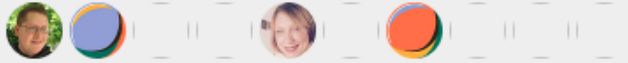
### **Step Four: Get your first 10 subscribers**

It's a nice thought. You can do it if you want. If you're trying to get set up fast, you can come back to it later.

## Get your first 10 subscribers



You've got 353 subscribers!



### Add subscribers by email



Add friends and family to your subscriber list. Don't worry, we won't notify them until you post.

Type emails here (separated by commas)



Next

## **Step Five: Create five TOPICS**



## Create five drafts



### Choose five topics you might want to write about

We'll create drafts that you can come back to anytime

Coming soon

The 5-minute newsletter

Sales copy secrets

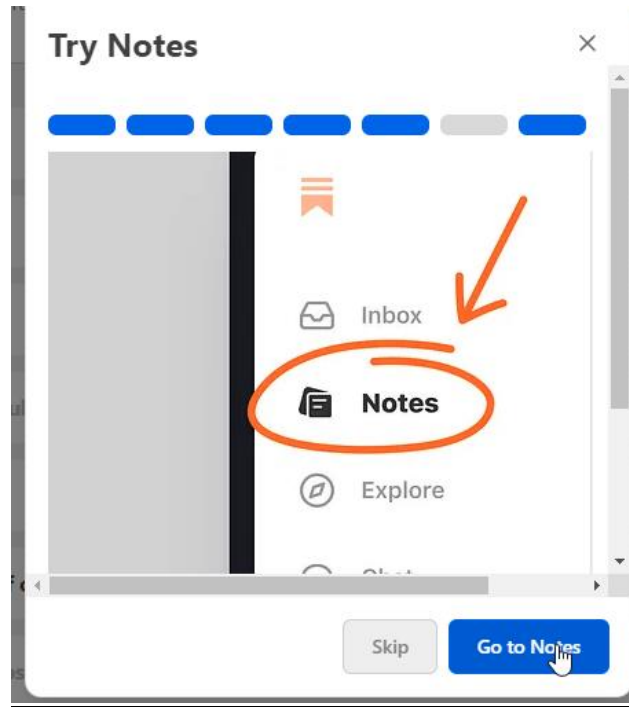
How to get subscribers to your newsletter for free

Skip

Done

Apparently, they want you to create 5 topics or titles. You don't have to create the whole newsletter thank goodness.

### **Step Six: Introduce Yourself On Notes**



**Step Seven: Write Your First Post**

A good first post is a key part of a successful launch. Here's what we recommend!

- 1. Share your personal story.**  
Who you are, why you're making this Substack, why now.
- 2. Tell readers what to expect.**  
What will you post about, how often, details about paid subscription, etc.
- 3. Use subscribe buttons and**

[Write your first post](#)

The interface is easy to use:

Edit email header and footer >

Enter title...

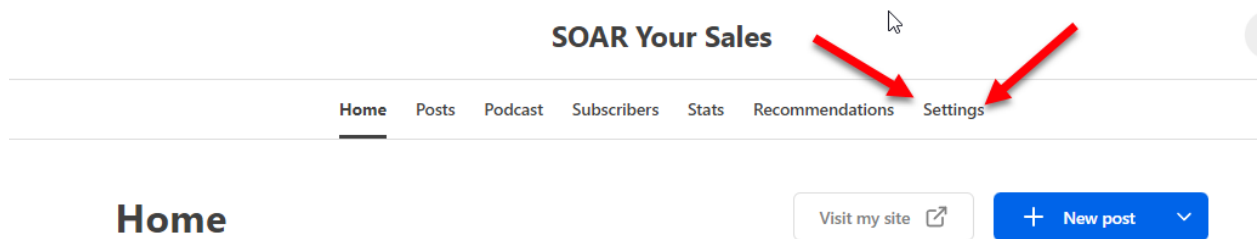
Enter subtitle...

marlon sanders X +

Subscribe now

[EDIT ME] Beginnings are hard. [EDIT ME]

**The next step is to click on SETTINGS:**



I don't know how come they didn't put it all on one deal. It looks intimidating because they have a ton of settings.

They need a button that says "accept all defaults." And all of a sudden the options shrink to a small list of things you really need to fill out:

**Your:**

- 1. Basics**
- 2. Payments**
- 3. Turn on boost**
- 4. Set up referrals**

**Everything else I accepted defaults to start.**

For basics, you add your logo, cover photo and Wordmark. Those are graphics you need to create or have created.

There's a couple welcome emails you can edit with minimal copy to start with. You choose your category and write a short About page.

I'll cover more on this in a second. But that's the basics. I think it takes the most time of all the settings. But it isn't bad.

Payments is easy. You just type in your prices.

There's a nav at the left you click to go through each part:

## Settings

Search...

Basics

Website

Import

Payments

Sections

Podcasts

Publication details

Community

Analytics

Notifications

Chat

Notes

Boost

Referrals

**Domain**

Exports

Danger Zone

Where possible, I went with the DEFAULTS to get started.

Where I had to write text, I did the minimal and will fix it up later.

So you can VISUALLY SEE THIS, here's what mine look like. My approach is to do the MINIMUM and then go back later and make it fancier when I see the NEED to do so.

Again, basics, payments, boost and referrals are the ones you need to make changes to. And out of those, 95% of the changes are on the basics tab. 4% on the referrals and 1% on boost and payments.

# SOAR Your Sales

Home Posts Podcast Subscribers Stats Recommendations **Settings**

## Welcome email to paid subscribers

Email sent to readers immediately after they become a paid subscriber.

Edit

## Welcome email to free subscribers

Email sent to readers immediately after they become a free subscriber.

Edit

## Welcome email to founding subscribers

Email sent to readers immediately after they become a founding member. By default, this is the same email that is sent to new paid subscribers.

Edit

## Recommendation blurbs on welcome page

Manage blurbs displayed on your welcome page

Edit

## Square logo

Should be at least 256×256 pixels

[Replace logo](#) [Generate logo \(Beta\)](#) [Delete](#)



## Wordmark

This is a stylized image version of your publication name that will show up in the navigation bar above. It should be at least 1344×256 pixels, with a maximum aspect ratio of 21:4.

[Upload wordmark](#)



## Cover photo

This optional image will show up on your [welcome page](#) and is used to introduce your publication. If you include one, it should be at least 600x600px.

[Replace cover photo](#) [Delete](#)



Drilling down into the above a little bit, I have the name and description, a category and basic ABOUT.

**Publication name**

SOAR Your Sales

**Short description**

Soar your sales with Marlon's guidance.

This appears at the top of the [welcome page](#), and should succinctly explain what you write about. New visitors are automatically shown this page if they haven't been to your publication before.

**Categories**

Business

Secondary category

Select categories to help people [discover](#) your publication.

**About page**

This page should explain in detail the benefits of reading your publication.

[Edit](#)

I figure on the ABOUT part, you can start with something basic and make it fancier later on. My approach is just to get SET UP fast. Then as I go along I can enhance the different parts.

This is what I wrote. It's very basic and subject to CHANGE.

## **Twice a month get the latest strategy, tools, how to's and news**

Let Marlon eat the learning curve for you and spoon feed you exciting new tools, ideas, marketing methods and sources of profit. Others pay \$37 for his paid newsletter. But you'll skim off the best ideas for free.

You need to write a basic welcome to free subscribers, founding subscribers and recommendation blurbs. This sure sounds like a good spot to use ChatGPT. lol.



I will write the minimum on these and come back at my leisure and make them fancier.

The LOGO is 256 x 256. And again, you can do yourself or use Fiverr. Or 99designs.com if you want to get fancy. Ditto for the Wordmark and cover photo.

I'll be honest.

You have to suck it up and have a little patience going through the 99 questions. I just went with the defaults here:

## Website

**Site Design**  
Set color, layout, and font styles for your site. [Customize](#)

**Homepage links**  
Add, edit, or remove links to your Substack homepage. Use them for a blogroll, community resources, or other related references. [Edit](#)





**Enable colored links**  
Toggle between colored or black/underlined links

**Enable previous & next post links**  
Show links to the previous and next publication post

I went with the defaults on the navigation settings also. You can change them later:

## Navigation

Control which links show up in the bar at the top of your website.

Title	Type	URL	
Home	Standard	/	
Notes	Standard	<a href="/notes">/notes</a>	
Produce Promote	Link	<a href="https://producepromote.com">https://producepromote.com</a>	...
Archive	Standard	<a href="/archive">/archive</a>	
Leaderboard	Standard	<a href="/leaderboard">/leaderboard</a>	
About	Standard	<a href="/about">/about</a>	

The next part IS important because this is where you put your PRICES in if you're doing a paid newsletter upgrade:

Enable payments



Let people pay to subscribe.

### Subscription plans

Connected account: [Marlon Sanders | GetYourSupport.com](#)

Monthly subscription

37.00 USD

Yearly subscription

297.00 USD

### Founding member plan

This yearly plan allows your most loyal readers to subscribe at any amount higher than the regular plans. You can set the suggested amount below.

[Remove founding plan](#)

Founding Member

697.00 USD

Allow readers to enter an amount lower than suggested (but more than your \$297/year plan)

### Group Subscriptions

Offer discounts on subscriptions purchased in groups of 2 or more.

Discount per seat [\(See details\)](#)

20 %

### Localized pricing

Automatically convert your subscription plan to your customer's local currency.



[View supported currencies](#)



I skipped sections and podcasts.

You DO need your publication details. I typed in my info and went with the defaults.

Community – defaults

Analytics – Skipped

Notifications – I think I went with the defaults but feel free to change.

Chat – Skipped

Notes – Defaults

Boost – I DID turn it on

Referrals – Turn ON – very important

I skipped Domains, Exports and Danger Zone.

AFTER you work your way down, your home page will look like this:



## SOAR Your Sales

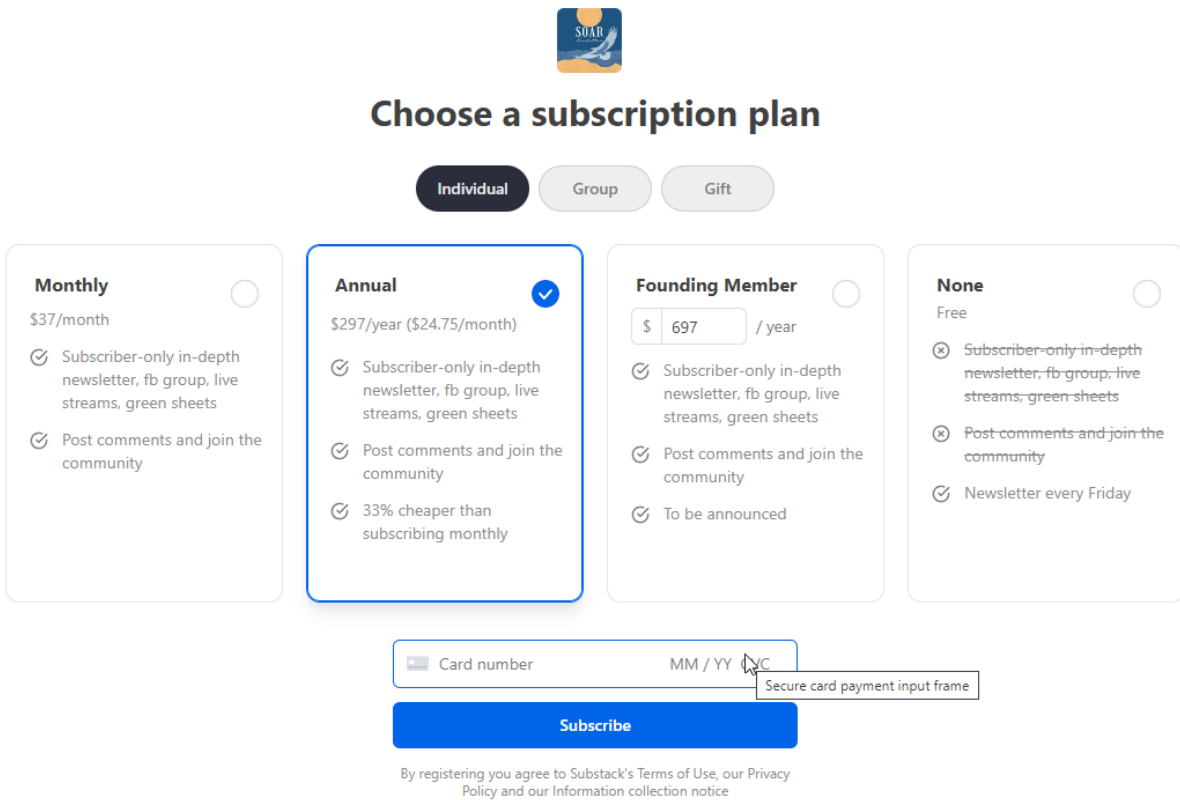
Soar your sales with Marlon's guidance.

By marlon sanders · Launched 7 days ago

Subscribe

No thanks >

When someone subscribes, they see THIS page:



The screenshot shows a subscription selection interface for 'SOAR'. At the top is the 'SOAR' logo. Below it is the heading 'Choose a subscription plan'. There are three tabs: 'Individual' (selected), 'Group', and 'Gift'. Below the tabs are four plan options:

- Monthly**: \$37/month. Includes: Subscriber-only in-depth newsletter, fb group, live streams, green sheets; Post comments and join the community.
- Annual**: \$297/year (\$24.75/month). Includes: Subscriber-only in-depth newsletter, fb group, live streams, green sheets; Post comments and join the community; 33% cheaper than subscribing monthly. This plan is selected with a blue checkmark.
- Founding Member**: \$ 697 / year. Includes: Subscriber-only in-depth newsletter, fb group, live streams, green sheets; Post comments and join the community; To be announced.
- None**: Free. Includes: Subscriber-only in-depth newsletter, fb group, live streams, green sheets; Post comments and join the community; Newsletter every Friday.

Below the plans is a payment input section with a 'Card number' field, a 'MM / YY' field, and a 'Secure card payment input frame' label. A blue 'Subscribe' button is below the payment fields. At the bottom, there is a small text notice: 'By registering you agree to Substack's Terms of Use, our Privacy Policy and our Information collection notice'.

That page is AUTOMATICALLY set up. You don't have to lift a finger.

And it has a group sales price automatically created:



## Subscribe your group to SOAR Your Sales

Individual

**Group**

Gift

~~\$297~~ \$237.60 per year per person

How many people would you like to subscribe? ⓘ

2

**Rate (per person):** ~~\$297~~ \$237.60 per year

**People:** 2

**Total:** ~~\$594~~ \$475.20 per year

Card number

MM / YY CVC

**Subscribe**

By registering you agree to Substack's Terms of Use, our Privacy Policy and our Information collection notice

Then it has a GIFT feature too:



## Gift a SOAR Your Sales subscription

Individual

Group

Gift

\$297 for 1 year

\$37 for 1 month

Recipient's email address

Message to recipient (optional)

Send gift anonymously

Schedule for later

Card number

MM / YY CVC

Buy Gift

By registering you agree to Substack's Terms of Use, our Privacy Policy and our Information collection notice

**Delete your “coming soon” post:**

Each new publication comes with a boilerplate “Coming soon” post, which is a placeholder post that we hope you’ll want to overwrite at your earliest opportunity!

Delete your “Coming soon” post by going to <https://your.substack.com/coming-soon> and clicking on the three dots underneath the post title. Choose “Edit post”, then go to “Settings” > “Delete post”.

Next, create a new post. Your first post is a good place to introduce yourself. Tell your readers why you started this publication, how you got here, and what you’ll be writing about. Think of it as a mini-manifesto or mission statement.

If you’re launching a paid newsletter, make sure your first post is public so prospective subscribers can read it.

### **Set Up Your Referral Features**

This is easy AND it’s the BEST PART by far.

This is the BIG PAYOFF for using Substack.

Now, I can already see it coming a mile away: “Marlon, I’m stuck. I ain’t got DIDDLY to offer as referral rewards.”

Calm down bucko. Uncle Marlon has your back. [Just go here and read this article that is advice from Substack itself.](#)

Here is a summary of the ideas:

- **Discount for your products:**
  - Free month / year for paid subscriptions.
  - Discount for paid subscriptions.
  - Discount on cohort-based or on-demand courses.
  - Access to exclusive merch or discount to your store.



- For job boards, free job post (for employers) or prioritized access (for candidates).
- **Extra content:**
  - [Embed](#) an eBook, PDF, image, video, or other special content; this can be a great way to keep it simple with a nice “thank you” note.
  - Access to an exclusive (or “secret”) newsletter.
  - Access to archive of paid-only content, maybe in a different format (e.g., Kindle version of your archive).
- **Access and community:**
  - Coffee chats over Zoom (book with [Calendly link](#) or something similar).
  - Access to exclusive Discord or Slack group.
  - Get certain posts before everyone else.
  - Suggest topics for future posts.
  - Callout top referrers in the newsletter or on a “wall of fame” page.
  - Early access to conference or event tickets.

That’s pretty good, eh?

Here’s the reward setup page:

# Subscriber Referrals

...

A simple new way to grow your audience. Reward subscribers for spreading the word about your Substack. Learn more about subscriber referrals [here](#).




0

Referrals

0

Referrers

## Customize tiers

Tier 1 Reward	Reward Name	# of Referrals	Reward Email
Custom ▾	\$11,590.88 mental shift report	3	Edit 
Tier 2 Reward	Reward Name	# of Referrals	Reward Email
Custom ▾	Bucket list siphon method	5	Edit 
Tier 3 Reward	Reward Name	# of Referrals	Reward Email
1 month comp ▾		25	Edit 

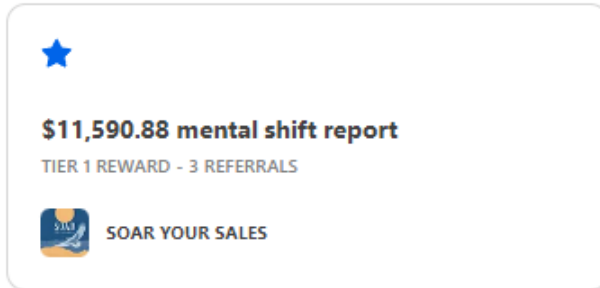
You have a SMALL amount of characters to use for your reward name. That's not ideal.

Then you click edit and set up the reward email:

---

## You've earned your first reward!

Thank you for sharing SOAR Your Sales and helping grow our community. You've earned your first reward!



I

[Download your report here.](#)

Don't stop now — keep inviting friends to earn your next reward.

[View leaderboard](#)

That's literally all there is to it.

Alright, now you know everything I know about setting up Substack.

Have fun.

If you want to dive deeper into Substack, check out [List Building godsend](#).

Best wishes,

Marlon

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RESOURCES

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### **The Fail Safe System (intermediate to advanced)**

This zeroes in only on the Info Product Business. On Zoo and W+ you can buy a lot of beginner courses and possibly a few “intermediate” info product

marketing courses or training. But you won't find advanced training. There really is almost no advanced training on the Info Product Business other than the Fail Safe System. It's advanced information, although not as sweeping and comprehensive as the Amazing Formula Full-Blown Course above. The price reflects that but is considerably more than you'd pay for an introductory or intermediate course on info products. [Click here to see it.](#)

### **How to Create High Profit Info Products**

This is my info product creation training for BEGINNERS.

There's not a lot of "new" methods in it like my intermediate and advanced courses above. But it's 100+ pages of solid, step-by-step information, albeit not with the numbered steps and screen caps in Product Dashboard. Recommended for newbies and beginners. [See it here.](#)

### **Take The Lid Off Your Income**

Just a fantastic, in-depth 4-module course I put a lot of time, care and attention into creating for you. If you're ready to create your own products and get traffic, THIS is what you need to get. [See it here.](#)

### **The Long Lost Viral Marketing Ebook Treasure of Jimmy D. Brown**

This is best and most definitive ebook ever written on the topic. It's a long lost treasure now made available with special permission from Jimmy D. [Click here to see this bad boy.](#) Highly recommended.

### **Feel Overwhelmed?**

Buyers love this product. It's fresh, new insights into how to overcome overwhelm and get focused and productive. There is no other course like this. [If you feel overwhelmed, click here for the solution](#)  
[If you feel overwhelmed, click here for the solution](#)



## The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I marked the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference