

Learning 3D Design Sales

Grow your business and earn more!

An e-book on how to get started building your modern 3D Design and Printing business, created by the team behind Thangs.com after spending 300 hours analyzing trends from top designers on multiple marketplaces.

Contributors: Dan Pham, Dennis DeMeyere, John Markham, River Gleichsner, Raul Camacho

Welcome Creators & Designers!

Welcome Designer!

When we created the Thangs Membership program, our goal was to help 3D designers create sustainable income, protect their designs with IP protection tools, and help them reach millions of 3D fans through our Thangs 3D search engine. We are so happy to have you onboard!

Now that you have successfully signed up your first membership, you may be wondering, *Where do I go from here?*

That's why we wrote this guide, which is filled with easy to follow steps to grow your business and gain more membership sales. These tips and tricks are based on real data about how designers have grown their membership sales, so we know they work :)

We greatly appreciate you being part of this journey with us, and we hope that you will continue to grow with us.

Thank you, and let's get started!

P.S. You may also contact [Thangs Support](#) if you get stuck or have questions and we will be happy to assist!

Table of Contents

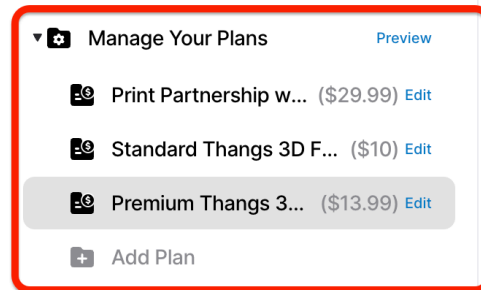
This 3D Designer Growth Guide is written as 12 training modules that you can work on over the course of 12 weeks, or one per week.

If you are trying to go fast, you can also complete multiple modules in a week:

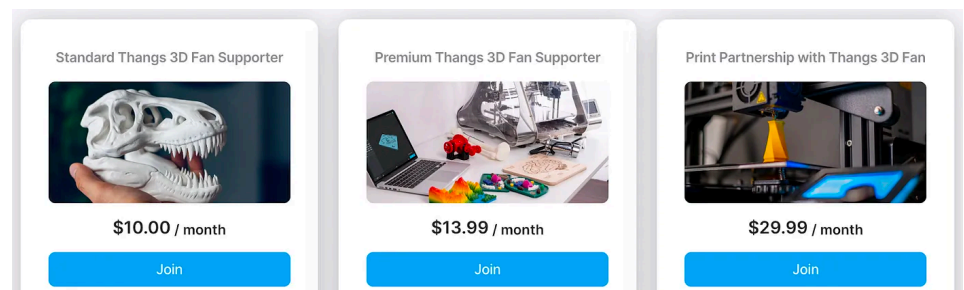
Welcome Creators & Designers!	1
Table of Contents	2
Increase Your Conversion Rate with Plan Overlay	3
Grow your revenue by 30% w/ these retention tools	6
Increase Your Model Sales with Creator Analytics	8
Increase Long-term Traffic with 3 Upload Tips	11
Boost sales using your Profile Page & Social Proof	13
Waterfall Marketing to increase new memberships	16
Upload like a Pro Part 2: Upload Frequency	19
Scripts and Templates for Community Engagement	21
Leverage your networks and content for marketing	22
Selling 3D on TikTok and YouTube (Using Video)	23
Retention Survey: Keeping your members	24
Annual Run Rate growth with Retention	25

Increase Your Conversion Rate with Plan Overlay

To edit your Membership Plan Overlay, visit Manage Your Plans > then click Preview to see it or Edit to make updates

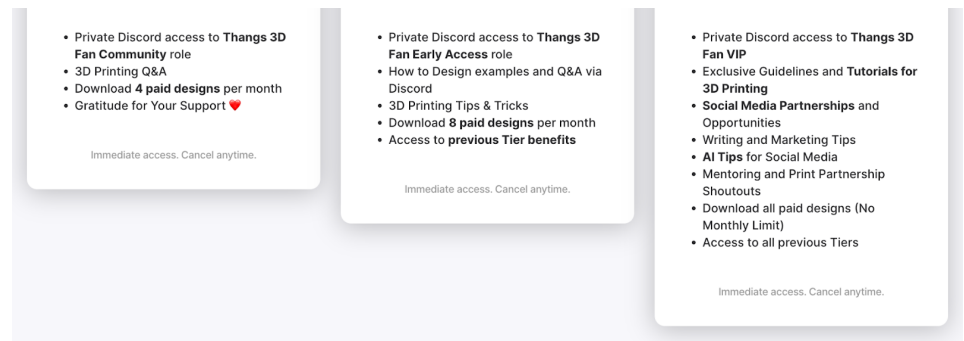


Use High Quality Images



High-quality images can boost your click-through rate by enhancing the appeal and credibility of your content. Consider increasing the resolution of your images and maintaining a coherent visual style. If you need help, websites like [Unsplash](#), [Pexels](#), and [Pixabay](#) offer a wealth of professional, royalty-free images for both commercial and non-commercial uses.

Invest more time in Plan Descriptions



- Plan tiers with increasing levels of benefits give visitors a transparent incentive to consider higher membership plans.
- Designers who interact with their community tend to perform better overall and see less membership turnover.

Here's some ideas on what to include:

- **Explicitly tell the user what types of models you have in your plans!**
- **Commercial Print Selling Rights** (Huge Value Add for Buyers)
- Access to Discord Roles or Private Facebook Groups
- Early Access to Test Prints
- Coaching and Weekly Q&As
- B2B Partnerships and Co-Marketing
- And more!

Specify the # of Paid Models

The screenshot shows the Thangs platform interface. On the left is a sidebar with 'My Models' and various file management options. The main area is titled 'Plan benefits' and includes a 'Description' field with a list of benefits: '- Private Discord access to **Thangs 3D Fan Community** role', '- 3D Printing Q&A', '- Download **4 paid designs** per month', and '- Gratitude for Your Support ❤️'. Below the description is a 'Plan image (optional)' section with an 'Add plan image' button and a recommended size of 600 by 300 pixels. The 'Plan benefits' section has two main categories: 'Plan license' and 'Monthly download limits'. Under 'Plan license', there are three radio buttons: 'Upload a license file', 'Link to a license', and 'Current licenses' (which is selected). Under 'Monthly download limits', there are two radio buttons: 'Unlimited downloads' and 'Limit monthly downloads' (which is selected). A blue arrow points to the 'Limit monthly downloads' option. Below this, there is a text input field for 'Number of monthly downloads you allow for content in this plan' with the value '4' entered.

- Thangs is the only membership platform for 3D models that lets you set a limit of X downloads per month.
- Include the # of monthly paid model downloads your buyers are getting in your Plan Overlays!
- If you have a large selection of models, position your # of paid models so that members will choose your offer instead of using a pay per model site.

For example, 4 paid models per month at \$10 means a potential customer pays roughly \$2.50 per model for the month.

- Consider what number works for you and your audience. Often, your members are choosing to join your membership plan, because they trust you and your model quality, most of all!

⚠️ Reduce Usage on Unlimited Downloads (Optional)

Bad actors have been known to subscribe to platforms like Patreon for one day, download all paid models, and then leave, sometimes re-selling them on other websites and private groups. The downstream effects of these bad actors end up costing you both time, future revenue, and energy!

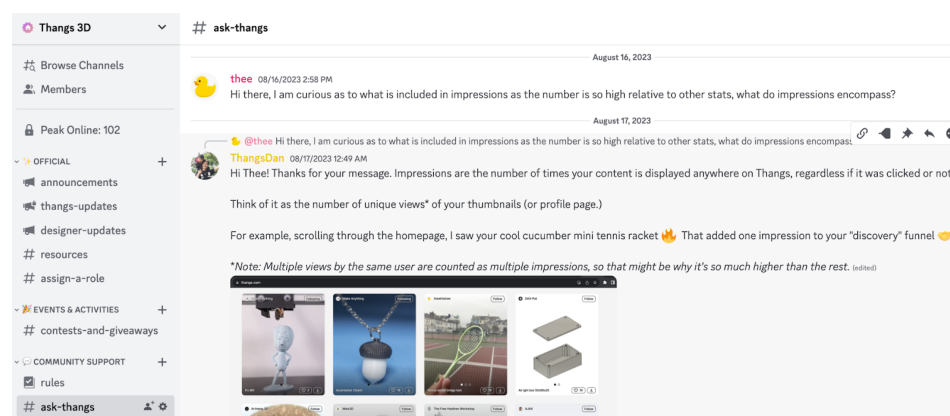
If you currently offer unlimited downloads on Patreon or similar platforms, we recommend doing a price match on Thangs. However, consider the risks above.

Adopting Thang's subscription model will give you more control over your designs, help create long-lasting relationships with your users, and see fewer bad actors take advantage of technology loopholes.

Grow your revenue by 30% w/ these retention tools

Did you know that cutting your membership churn rate by 15% increases your gross revenue by 30%, as early as within 12 weeks? Here's three tools to help you retain your members for the long haul. Use them to improve retention and increase your monthly revenue.

Start a Discord Community

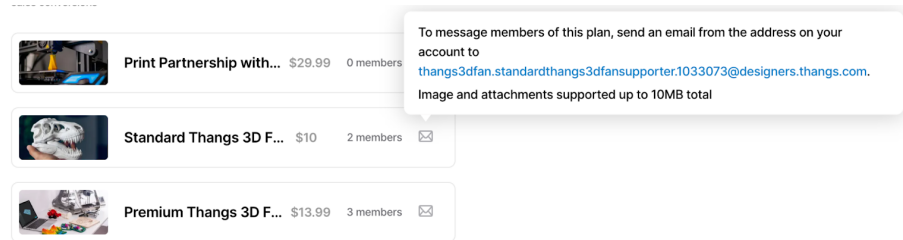


Make daily visits to your Discord community.

Discord serves as an exceptional platform for nurturing community involvement. If you haven't yet ventured into the world of Discord, think about setting up a server to stay connected with your members. It offers a relaxed and informal channel for interacting with your followers and community.

💡 **Don't know what to say?** Simply, be yourself! Your supporters have chosen to be part of your membership plan, because they believe in your creative endeavors. You possess the talent and already have a fan base 🤝 So, enjoy the experience!

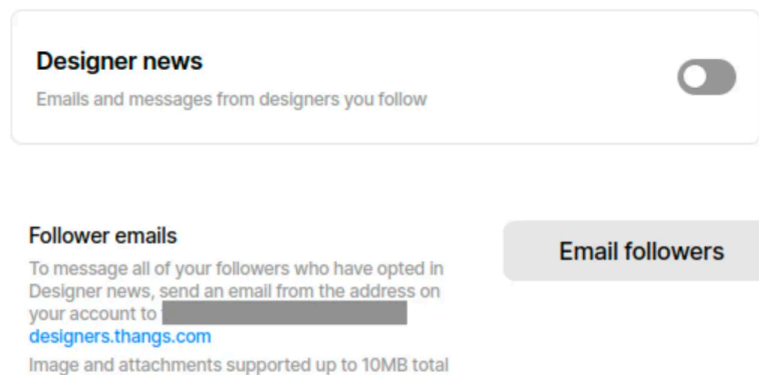
Contact Members Weekly



Communicate with your members at least once a week.

Use the Memberships Email Relay to give your paid members updates on your projects, remind them to join Discord, and other timely updates. It's totally okay to copy your Twitter and Discord messages, since your audiences are on many different platforms anyway 🙌🙌

Use Follower Broadcasting



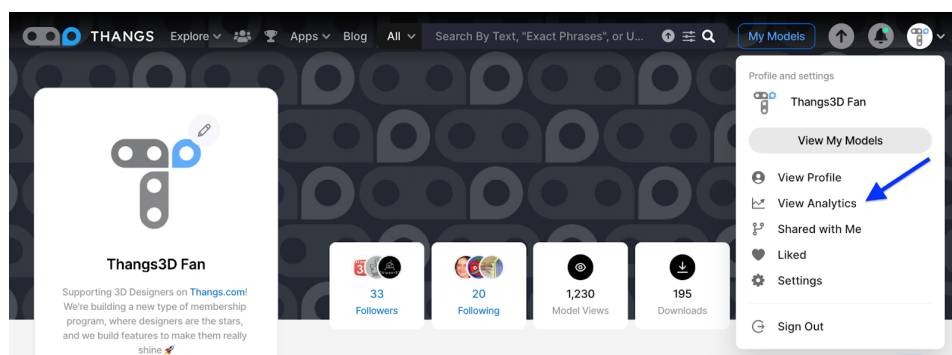
Contact your Followers at least *once a week*.

Thangs offers you the capability to reach out to all your followers who have chosen to receive Designer news updates. This empowers you to share timely insights, editorials on your latest uploads, and any other pertinent information. It's an excellent means of engaging with your unpaid members. Over time, nurturing this relationship will lead to more individuals subscribing to your Membership Plan or, at the very least, staying informed about your new downloadable creations!

Again, it's okay to simply copy your Twitter and Discord messages and make slight adjustments 🙌🙌

Increase Your Model Sales with Creator Analytics

Struggling to optimize your designs for better sales? Much like how Google Analytics transformed website analysis, Thangs has introduced a range of "sales funnel" tools within Creator Analytics. Our aim is to equip you with comprehensive data on general membership sales, enabling you to capture new business based on how users are using Thangs.



Let's explore all three of these analytics tools below:

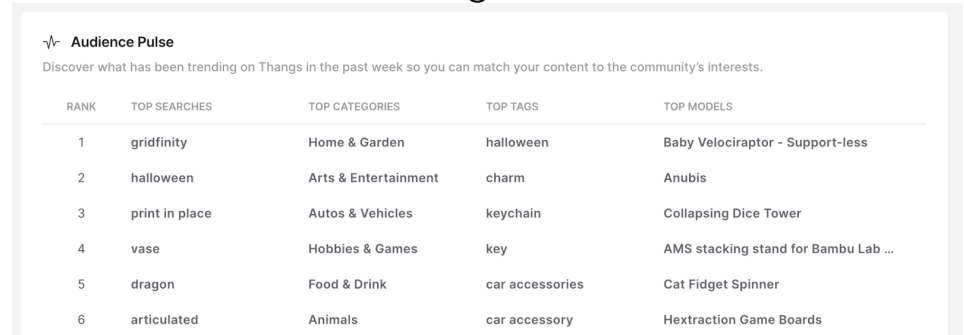
Your Personalized Model Performance

Model Performance						
<input type="text" value="Search for models"/>						<button>Export</button>
NAME	LAST MODIFIED	VIEWS	LIKES	DOWNLOADS	REMIXES	SIMILAR MODELS
Girl's El Camino Titan...	Sep 1, 2023	27	0	1	0	View Matches
Smiley Dragon Boi	Aug 29, 2023	55	2	0	0	View Matches
Realistic Blue Crab	Aug 28, 2023	103	16	29	0	View Matches
bell_x1_mesh	Aug 15, 2023	55	10	12	0	View Matches
Baluster vase, one of ...	Aug 10, 2023	27	7	4	0	View Matches

If you ever run into trouble deciding what to create next, the Model Performance analytics will help you understand which of your models perform best.

It might even lead you to discover new design opportunities you hadn't considered before!

Audience Pulse: All Thangs Search Traffic



Audience Pulse
Discover what has been trending on Thangs in the past week so you can match your content to the community's interests.

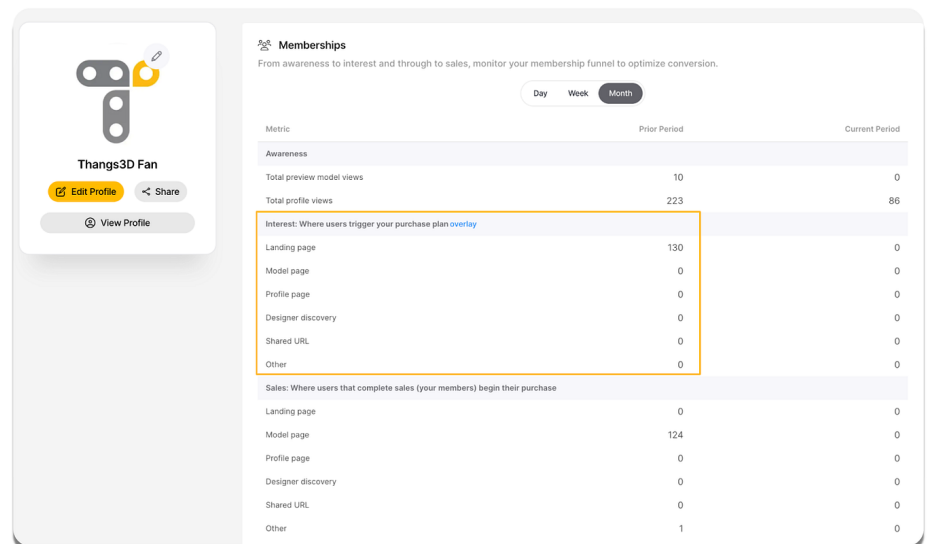
RANK	TOP SEARCHES	TOP CATEGORIES	TOP TAGS	TOP MODELS
1	gridfinity	Home & Garden	halloween	Baby Velociraptor - Support-less
2	halloween	Arts & Entertainment	charm	Anubis
3	print in place	Autos & Vehicles	keychain	Collapsing Dice Tower
4	vase	Hobbies & Games	key	AMS stacking stand for Bambu Lab ...
5	dragon	Food & Drink	car accessories	Cat Fidget Spinner
6	articulated	Animals	car accessory	Hextraction Game Boards

Discover or track trends in: search, popular hashtags, top categories, and the most popular models on the platform.

Consider looking for trends and design ideas which you feel confident will perform well for your niche.

💡 Pro-tip: Remember to **Tag** your models with relevant *Top Tags* so your models are more likely to be found by users!

Your Membership Sales Funnel



Thangs3D Fan
Edit Profile Share View Profile

Memberships
From awareness to interest and through to sales, monitor your membership funnel to optimize conversion.

Day Week Month

Metric	Prior Period	Current Period
Awareness		
Total preview model views	10	0
Total profile views	223	86
Interest: Where users trigger your purchase plan overlay		
Landing page	130	0
Model page	0	0
Profile page	0	0
Designer discovery	0	0
Shared URL	0	0
Other	0	0
Sales: Where users that complete sales (your members) begin their purchase		
Landing page	0	0
Model page	124	0
Profile page	0	0
Designer discovery	0	0
Shared URL	0	0
Other	1	0

Membership Analytics is your Thangs Memberships “sales funnel.” This is where you should spend time to build a marketing plan.

We've compiled the handy cheat sheet below on how to use it:

Member Analytics Cheat-Sheet

Awareness

If you see Decline or Stagnation

Look for ways to boost traffic to your Membership Plans and Models

Interest

Model Page visits decreasing

Enhance model images and descriptions

Share URLs are low

Increase the frequency of sharing your Plan link on 3D model communities

Landing Page visits are decreasing

Upload new, high quality content and notify your Followers

Sales

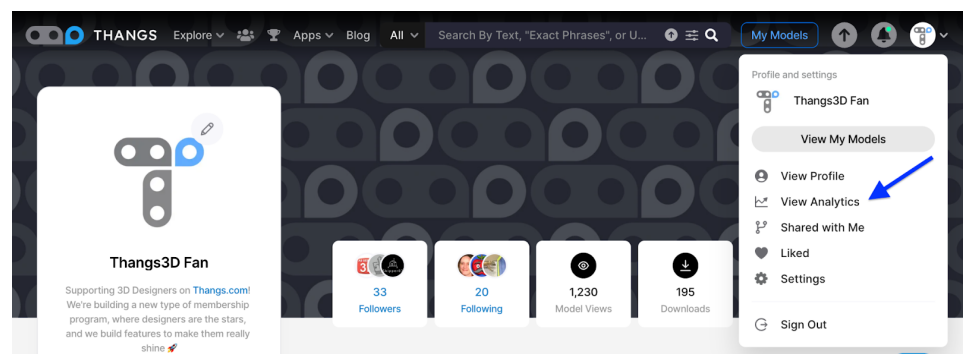
Identify which profile sections are not converting well

Improve website copy or implement Discount Codes strategically

Ready to boost your sales?

Start exploring these analytics tools today!

From anywhere in [Thangs](https://thangs.com), click your icon and then the View Analytics link.



Increase Long-term Traffic with 3 Upload Tips

Did you know that more than half of Thangs Search page visits are to older models? Your older models are a gold mine for membership purchasers, sending you a lot of organic traffic over time!

In this update, we share how you can increase your long term buyers by making sure every model you upload is discoverable on the Thangs Search by both new and existing users with just three tips:

Use Categories and Tags

Category

Animals



Tags ⓘ

Purple x

Cat x

Siamese x

Blender Model x

Blender x

Always use Categories and Tags. Thangs Search shows popular tags on the homepage and on each model page.

Your Models may not be indexed correctly if it is missing this data, so you may be missing out on traffic by not thinking about what tags people are searching for.

Customize the description field - include at least 160 characters

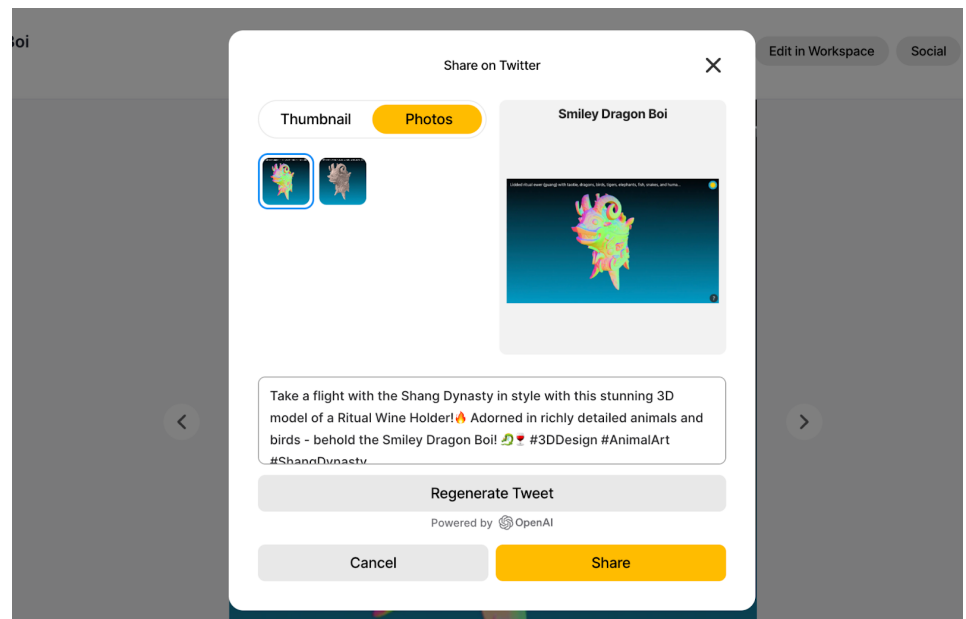
Discover or track trends in: search, popular hashtags, top categories, and the most popular models on the platform.

Consider looking for trends and design ideas which you feel confident will perform well for your niche.

💡 Pro-tips:

1. Remember to **Tag** your models with relevant *Top Tags* so your models are more likely to be found by users!
2. Use **ChatGPT** to write your Descriptions, either the Thangs integration or your personal account to customize the prompts.

Always Tweet and use Images



To get to the Trending and **Top XX** pages on Thangs, be sure to tweet your content out and also “waterfall” it to all your online profiles.

This includes all social media presence you can muster, including YouTube, TikTok, etc.

Most of the social media algorithms reward consistency, so this is important to do regularly to grow your followers and also your brand’s search engine rankings (“SEO back linking”)

That’s it for this tip! [Start uploading](#) like a pro today!

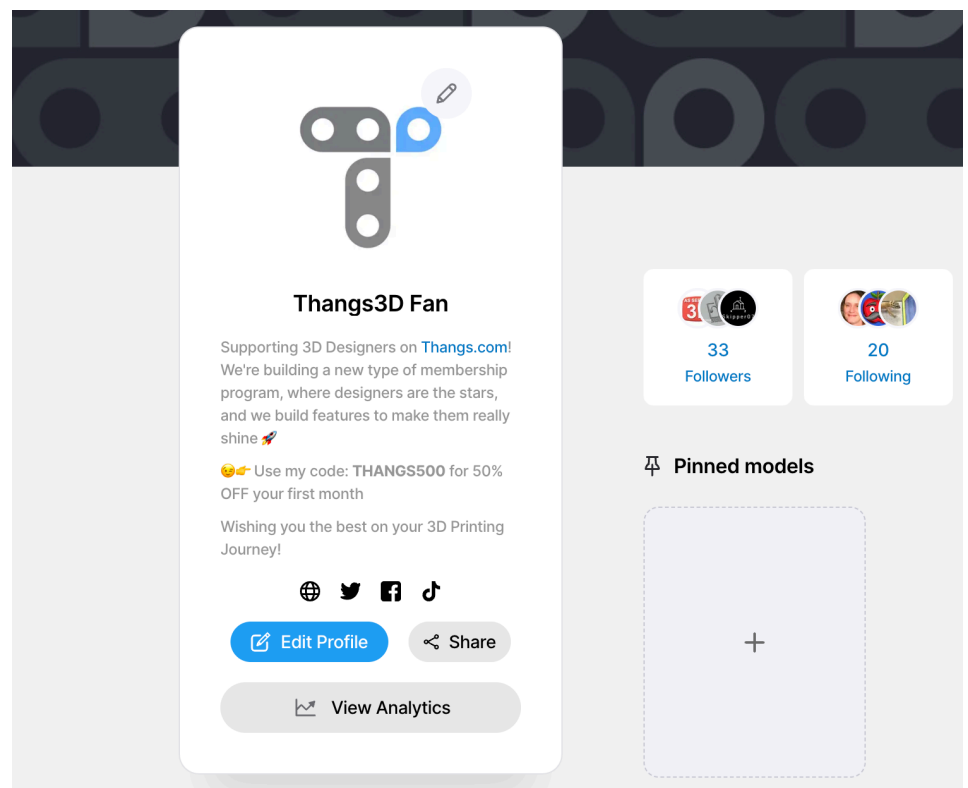
Boost sales using your Profile Page & Social Proof

One area of opportunity we wanted to highlight in this segment was your Profile Page. After studying the successful designers on our platform, the data shows that the Profile Page is one of the most important pieces of real estate on Thangs.com.

Great Profile Pages build “social proof” so people trust in your products and increase your membership growth potential.

To that end, here are the tips we suggest adding:

Care deeply about your Profile Description

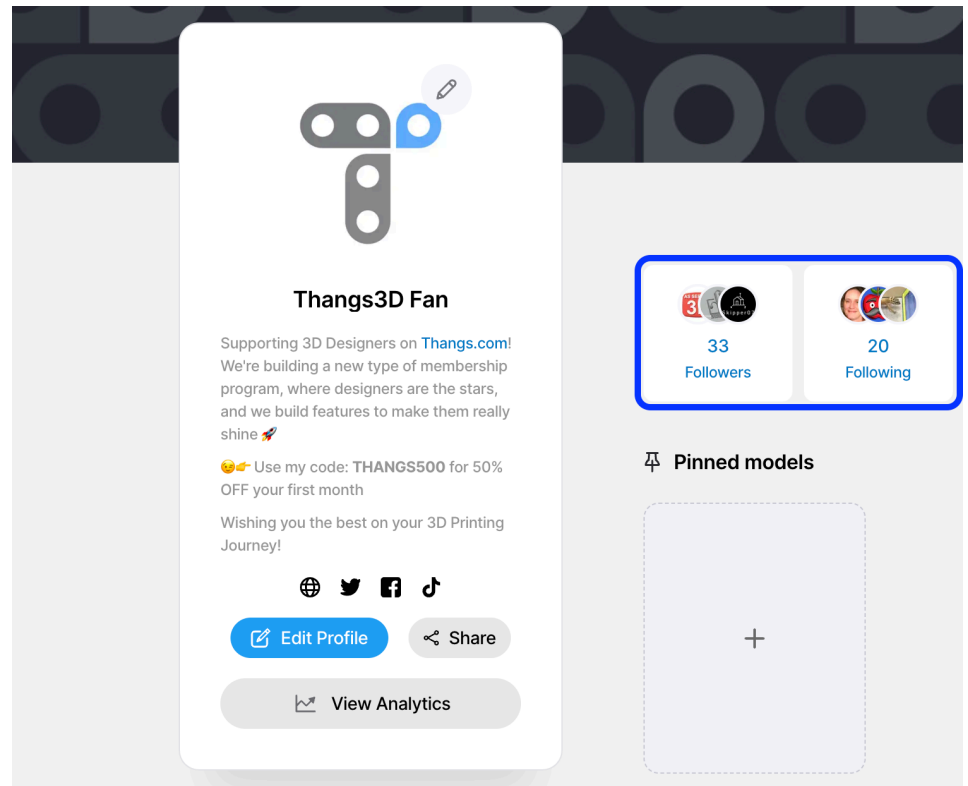


In the description field, think about what benefits you can highlight to your potential members based on your niche and membership perks.

Be sure to use all the tools at your disposal, such as **Markdown formatting**, **Call to Actions**, and selectively building urgency with your **Discount Codes**.

If you are looking for a guide on markdown text formatting, check out this [Markdown Cheat Sheet \(PDF\)](#) 🙌

Increase Followers



- Remember to ask in your social media posts to Like, Follow, and Download your stuff if they appreciate your work.
- Likewise, **Like** and **Follow** other designers! This shows you're also part of the greater 3D community.

Followers will appear in your **Followers** list, increasing social proof!

A horizontal collage of twelve different 3D printed objects. From left to right: a tall orange vase with vertical ridges; a red bow-shaped object and a pink piggy bank; a Captain America helmet on a red base; a yellow flower-like object and a white geometric shape; a green and orange starburst structure; a pink cube; a purple box with a lid; a set of Avengers character cards; a silver vase with heart patterns; a blue and white patterned cup set; a blue and white wave sculpture; a yellow silhouette of a person sitting at a desk with a laptop; a red and white circular object; a blue and orange airplane; and a colorful gradient vase filled with yellow flowers.

- ## Getting started and Beyond

Visit [Thangs.com](https://www.thangs.com) and click Edit Profile to take your membership program to the next

⚠️ Once you're done, please also remember to update your non

Waterfall Marketing to increase new memberships

The most important skill to master is how to efficiently perform “waterfall” marketing. Intuitively, we know that to reach new membership sales, we need to go to **new places**.

Here’s the concrete steps to make this easier:

Content Calendar



Did you know you don’t need to create new models to do marketing?

Instead, look at your model performance to see which models have resonated with users well and create follow up content around it. You have data on what is working already, so let’s use it in our marketing.

💡 **Ideas:** Stories about the creative process, ideas of how to remix the model, involving your community in the creative process, ask for suggestions, ask for filament recommendations, etc.

Once you have your calendar, it’s time to use the Where to Post Checklist:

Where To Post (🚩 Save this Checklist!)

- **YouTube**

- Include up to 3 **hashtags**
- **Link back to Thangs** in Description to drive membership views!
- Include great detail in the description field as YouTube results populate when people search across all major search engines.

- **TikTok**

- Previews are important on TikTok (same with reels) as it prompts the “For You” aspect of the algorithm.
- Best practice is to use 5-10 #s per post and after the written content.
- Be certain to include “link in bio” as well.
- Utilize the most trendy audio (provided it makes sense).
- Consistency matters most, daily is ideal.
- Simple, but quality content that is concise tends to outperform longform content.

- **Facebook**

- Consider creating a Facebook Group or Facebook Fan Page to establish your brand for SEO
- Hashtags can be intermingled within content
- Link back to Thangs to drive funnel engagement!

- **Instagram**

- Best practice is at least one post daily and up to three times for quicker growth.
- Include 7-11 hashtags and switch them up to ensure you reach more groups.
- Hashtags can look noisy in IG, so it’s acceptable to place them below the content. It’s solely a discoverability play to get into those #s
- It’s imperative to include a” link in bio” too, as well as utilizing stories due to the
- hyperlinking capabilities.

-
- When possible, add reels to your posting cadence for increased performance.

- Be certain to include “link in bio” as well.

- **Twitter**

- 3 - 5 times daily - includes retweets
- 1 - 3 hashtags per Tweet
- The use of emojis and/or photos is still an important part of Twitter to catch the eye of followers.
- Hashtags are expected to be leveraged in content
 - They can also be placed at the bottom of a tweet just so long as they are pertinent to the tweet and not secondary. Inside the tweet can get a little messy at times so mix it up a bit.
- Link to Thangs to drive engagement

- **Pinterest**

- Pinning on a daily cadence is important to the Pinterest algorithm.
- When possible, maintain 50% pins of your content vs that found across Pinterest.
- Leverage the use of Pinterest's ability to hyperlink and tag videos too.

- **LinkedIn**

- Best practice is 3-5 #s
- Hashtags intermingled with content, but can place at end of post

Upload like a Pro Part 2: Upload Frequency

Consistently sharing your creations not only increases your visibility but also keeps your audience engaged and interested. Just like YouTube in 2010, here's why upload frequency matters:

- **Visibility:** Potential buyers are more likely to stumble upon your work
- **Engagement:** You maintain an ongoing connection with your followers
- **Skill Showcase:** Of course, your followers want to get value from you. They follow you so they can learn your techniques. In the same way, they also associate the time you spend on creating to the value of your membership.

To make the most of your upload frequency, consider these **4 steps below**:

Step 1: Ask for Follows

Include a polite and inviting call-to-action in your model upload descriptions and on your social media profiles. Encourage viewers to follow you for updates on your latest creations. This simple step can significantly boost your follower count.

Step 2: Weekly Upload Schedule

Consistency is key. Establish a weekly upload schedule that your followers can rely on. Whether it's every Monday or every Friday, sticking to a routine helps build anticipation and keeps your audience engaged.

Step 3: Be Specific About Your Creations

When uploading your 3D models, be specific about the materials, software, and techniques you used. Mention whether it's resin, PLA, 3MF, STL, Blender, ZBrush, or any other relevant details. This specificity can attract an audience interested in your particular style or expertise and make you show up in Search Results!

For example:

When someone Thangs for "Bambu 3MF", this is what's shown:

<https://thangs.com/search/Bambu%20Users?scope=thangs&view=list>

This is what shows up in Thangs for “ZBrush Sculpt”

<https://thangs.com/search/ZBrush%20Sculpt?scope=thangs&view=list>

Step 4: Target Your Niche

Consider who your ideal audience is and tailor your uploads accordingly. People are often looking for artists whose work aligns with their interests and style. By targeting a specific niche, you can attract a more engaged and loyal following.

Post a mix of freemium and high quality models 1-3 times per week to consistently get to the Landing Page.

Note: This algorithm is subject to change, and we use multiple signals including user engagement, SEO backlinks, social media, and more to determine models that make it to Hot and Trending.

Ultimately, posting *consistently* high quality work is the key to success, so even remixes of your best work can be used to give your audience something **new** which you know they already **love**.

Scripts and Templates for Community Engagement

Community Engagement is what separates you from the random person uploading their models for free. It is also the key to retaining your memberships.

The advanced materials below are templates for community engagement across different platforms and scenarios.

If you are new with engaging with your fans, just start! It will become easier over time, just like building a muscle.

P.S. If the scripts below don't match your vibe, customize them!

Welcome New Members to your community

👋 Welcome to [Community Name]! We're thrilled to have you join us. Feel free to introduce yourself and share what brought you here. Our community is a place to connect, learn, and grow together. If you have any questions or need assistance, don't hesitate to ask. Happy to have you aboard! 🚀

Respond to Positive Feedback on Social Media

Thank you so much for your kind words, [User's Name]! 😊 We're delighted to hear that you're enjoying our [Product/Service]. Your support means the world to us! If you ever have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to reach out. We're here to make your experience even better.

Handling Customer Inquiries

Hi [Customer's Name],

Thank you for reaching out to us with your question about [Model/Membership]. We appreciate your interest and are here to assist you.

[Answer the customer's question or concern here or ask follow up questions to better understand what's happening]

If you have any more questions or need further assistance, please don't hesitate to ask. We're always happy to help.

Encouraging User-Generated Content

We love seeing your creativity! If you've recently used our [Product/Service] and want to share your experience, tag us in your post. We might feature your content on our page.

Can't wait to see what you come up with! 📸

Acknowledging Milestones and Anniversaries

Today marks [Number] years since we started this incredible journey together! 🎉 We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of you for your support, loyalty, and enthusiasm. Here's to many more years of growth, learning, and success. Cheers to our amazing community! 🥂 #Anniversary #Milestone"

Seeking Feedback and Suggestions

We value your input! We're constantly striving to improve our [Product/Service] to better serve you. If you have any feedback, suggestions, or ideas, please share them with us in the comments or via direct message. Your insights are invaluable in helping us grow. Thank you for being part of our journey!

Celebrating a Community Member's Achievement

A big shoutout to [User's Name] for achieving [mention the achievement]! 🌟 Your dedication and hard work are truly inspiring. We're proud to have you as part of our community. Keep reaching for the stars! 🚀

💡 Remember: These scripts and templates serve as a starting point for your community engagement efforts. Adapt them to your brand's tone and style, and always personalize your interactions since you are unique. People want to hear from *you*!

Leverage your networks and content for marketing

Creating a strong personal network is crucial for growing your 3D business. Building relationships with potential customers, collaborators, and industry peers can lead to valuable opportunities.

[Join the Thangs3D Discord for more information and network opportunities with other creators!](#)

Selling 3D on TikTok and YouTube (Using Video)

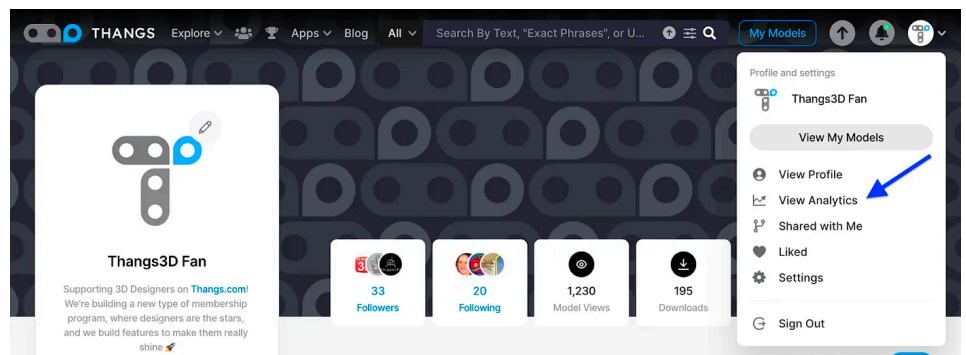
In a world where visual content reigns supreme, harnessing the power of video to showcase your 3D offerings can be a game-changer for your business or creative endeavors. In this comprehensive guide, we will delve deep into the main strategies, techniques, and insider tips that will empower you to not only create eye-catching 3D content but also effectively market and sell it to a global audience on TikTok and YouTube.

[TikTok and YouTube Shorts Tips migrated to the Thangs3D Discord](#)

A note on Community Rules: The Thangs3D Discord is meant to be a safe place for all creators. Please be respectful of other's work, viewpoints, and opinions.

Retention Survey: Keeping your members

Keeping your members is just as important as bringing new ones in. We recently introduced a survey that users must complete when cancelling a membership to give us information about why people cancel their memberships. These responses are now able to be downloaded directly by designers.



Note: Survey results will only appear if you have surveys to download. This is found in your Creator Analytics page (pictured above). Hope this helps!

You can use this information to find the patterns in why users have left your membership plans, and understand where member pain points are. Build a plan to ensure long-term success on Thangs.

Annual Run Rate growth with Retention

Every designer is unique, so we can not provide Annual Run Rate projections in this e-book. **However**, if you would like extra support, join us in #ask-thangs in the the Thangs3D Discord or message us at marketing@thangs.com.

[Ask Thangs about Annual Run Rate Growth with Retention Spreadsheet in our Discord](#)

We'd love to partner with you and help you grow your 3D design business.

Contacting Designer Support

If you run into issues getting set up along this process, contact our designer support team through the [Thangs Memberships Support Form](#). We monitor this email address Monday-Friday 9-5 EST and aim to get back to you within 24 hours every business day (or better).

Be sure to select the option “I am a 3D Model Designer on Thangs” in Question 2 and share URLs, Videos, or Screenshots to expedite a resolution to your issue.

Sharing Feedback with Us

We’d also love to hear from you if you have feedback about the Memberships Offering! Simply use the [Thangs Feedback Form](#). We read every one of these so your feedback really matters!

Thank you again! We look forward to helping you grow your memberships!