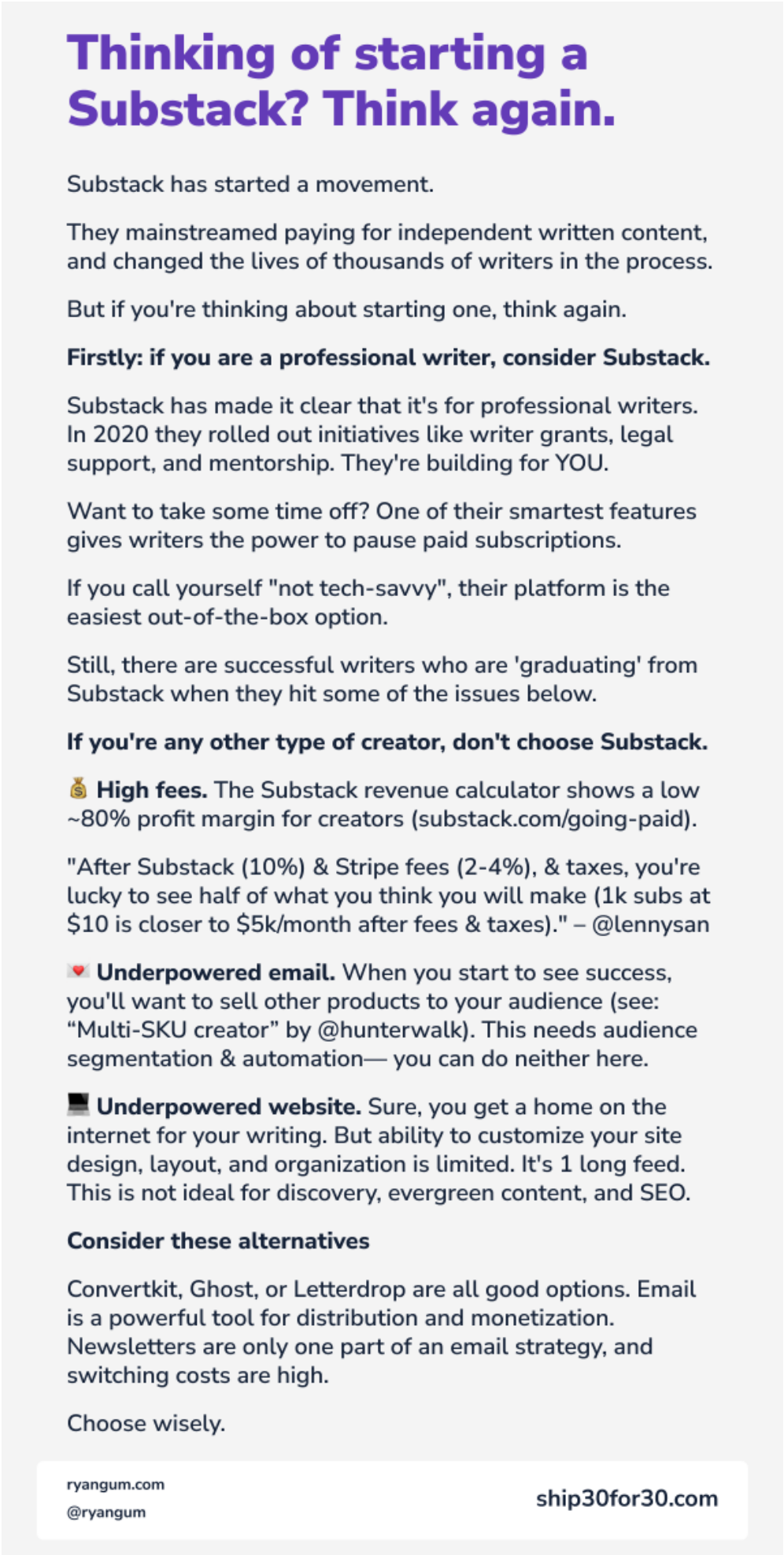
Twitter Thread by Ryan Gum ■



Ryan Gum ■
@ryangum

Thinking of starting a Substack?

Read this first ■



As someone working in the creator economy space, I love the movement that Substack started.

They mainstreamed paying for independent writing, and changed the lives of thousands of writers in the process.

But they're building for a specific type of creator.

Substack has made it clear that they're focusing on professional writers.

(Putting my product hat on, this is a smart strategy for them to differentiate and win a specific market)

In 2020 they rolled out initiatives like grants, legal support, and mentorship for writers.

If you call yourself "not tech-savvy", their platform is the easiest out-of-the-box option.

Want to take some time off? One of their smartest features gives writers the power to pause paid subscriptions.

If you're a professional writer, Substack might be a good option for you to start with.

But, there are successful writers who are 'graduating' from Substack when they discover a few problems. https://t.co/ryvYz4kXvD

> Interesting point from @JayCoDon on why he left Substack.
>
> "Substack" becoming synonymous with "newsletter" on Twitter certainly has its pros.
>
> But, there are also cons that may turn off future creators. pic.twitter.com/o5BhWxFv4x
>
> — Austin Rief \u2615\ufe0f (@austin_rief) December 16, 2020

If you're any other type of creator, don't choose Substack. 3 main reasons why:

■ High take rate

The Substack revenue calculator (https://t.co/QG6UhlCbyp) shows ~80% profit margin for creators. Competitors are closer to 95%.

https://t.co/f98WLD6rzo

■ Underpowered email

When you start to see success, you'll want to sell other products to your audience (see: “Multi-SKU creator” by @hunterwalk). This needs audience segmentation & automation—you can do neither here.

https://t.co/m0xR1ILXeM

> Since this NYer article about Substack quotes a paragraph from my blog post about MultiSKU Creators but doesn't link to ithttps://t.co/QS206eYRsT

> Refusal to link credit is one persistent example of how traditional media still doesn't truly embrace internet culture https://t.co/FUDvLgamBI
>
> — \U0001f468\U0001f3fb\u200d\U0001f4bb\u2615\ufe0f (@hunterwalk) December 28, 2020

■ Underpowered website

Sure, you get a home on the internet for your writing. But ability to customize your site design, layout, and organization is limited. It's 1 long feed. This is not ideal for discovery, evergreen content, and SEO.

Consider these alternatives

@ConvertKit , @Ghost, or @letterdropco are all good options.

Email is a powerful tool for distribution and monetization. Newsletters are only one part of an email strategy, and switching costs are high.

Choose wisely.

Related reading:
https://t.co/sYBtptRj7H

> You can now run paid newsletters through @ConvertKit!
>
> Here's why you'll love it:
>
> - Free for up to 1,000 subscribers
> - 3.5% payment fees (compared to 12.9% for Substack)
> - Very customizable custom designs
> - Subscriber referral programs
> - Automations to drive more sales pic.twitter.com/eH6JfFCyzP
>
> — Nathan Barry (@nathanbarry) November 11, 2020

https://t.co/79JNhyiD7j by @ungatedcreative

https://t.co/1MRqjsGVe5 by @Kevin_Indig

https://t.co/8IrurKzGpO by @JayCoDon

https://t.co/TIQe4rZbJq by @IanVanagas

https://t.co/rA03vOlBAT by @balajis