FREE DOWNLOAD

# THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO CREATING AND SELLING ONLINE COURSES

social triggers ...

The market for online courses is big - and it's getting bigger.

Online learning was valued at \$165 billion in 2015, according to market research firm GM Insights. By 2023 it could exceed \$240 billion.

So, one thing is clear:

Online courses are here. And they're here to stay.

The question is, who's pocketing all that money?

Well, a big chunk is going to the course creators. But how much can you really make with an online course? Well...

Take Graham Cochran, who teaches music production and pulls in up to \$75K a month.

Or Purna Duggirala, who even back in 2014 made a cool million in a year. How? Teaching Excel.

And yes, I run a seven-figure business selling courses, too.

But it's not just about the big success stories. It's about the small wins, too...

For example, you could easily create a course, and earn an extra \$500 or \$1000 a month.

Let's be real, though:

It's going to take some work. Because there's NO such thing as "passive" income. However, online courses come pretty close...

You see, you only have to create the course once. But you get paid over and over again. With each and every student. And often, you can sell the same course for years. One of my training programs I created in 2014 and I'm still selling it today.

So, if you're thinking about creating online courses, all I can say is:

It's a smart move!

## "But what if I've never created an online course before?"

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Well, that's why I'm going to walk you through the process step-by-step in this post. It's long. It's in-depth.

# In steps 1-3, I'll cover how to find a course idea and make sure it's profitable (even if you're not an "expert" at anything):

- Step 1: Commit to Creating a Course
- Step 2: Choose a Profitable Idea
- Step 3: Test Your Idea

# In steps 4-6, I'll help you create your course content (even if you're not a writer or have never been in front of a camera):

- Step 4: Create a Course Outline
- Step 5: Create Your Course Content
- Step 6: Get Your Course Online

# In steps 7-9, I'll show you how to promote and sell your course (even if you know nothing about marketing or sales)

- Step 7: Set a Price for Your Course
- Step 8: Get Students for Your Course
- Step 9: Launch Your Course

Ready?

Let's go!

The first step is simple...

# 1 Step 1: Commit to creating a course – TODAY

Do you want to create an online course?

You already know the answer.

Otherwise you wouldn't be reading this, right?

Right.

So, commit to it today!

And please - once and for all - stop worrying about "being an expert."

Look...

As a course creator, you have TWO options:

## **Option #1: Be the Expert**

Yes, if you already have a special skill or expertise, you can "be the expert" and share that knowledge.

Let's say you're a certified massage therapist. Or you have an MBA in real estate. Or you're the Rock, Paper, Scissors world champion.

In this case, sure - teach what you already know.

But there's another option...

### **Option #2: Be the Curious Novice**

But you can also be a "curious novice" and teach as you LEARN yourself. Here's what I mean...

Choose a topic you're interested in. Spend a weekend or two and read the 3 top-selling books on that topic.

And BOOM. You are now enough of an expert. Meaning, you'll know more than 99% of people who are going to buy your course.

Don't believe this is possible?

Take Joseph Michael Nicoletti, who did just that:



Joseph <u>helps novelists write their novel with Scrivener</u>. And he makes about \$20,000 to \$30,000 a month doing it.

Let me rephrase that. He makes almost \$1,000 a day by showing novelists how to use an app for writing.

I know. Ridiculous.

Well...

When he decided to create an online course about Scrivener, he said, "I was just using it casually. I definitely wasn't an expert. I never written a book or anything."

And he went on...

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"I purchased every book on Scrivener and studied everything I could find on it. I'd study a particular feature, and then record a tutorial on it. Short 3-5 minute chunks mainly so it was easier for me to create, but it turned out to be one of the most popular features."

Or, long story short, he created his course by learning one feature, filming a video about it, and then learning another feature, and filming another video about it.

He learned as he created, and he went on to become a HUGE success.

And that's why I love his story:

If you want to create an online course about something – ANYTHING – and you feel like "I don't know anything that I could teach..."

I have 5 letters for you:

#### LEARN.

And as you LEARN, document the process, and you too can create a course about almost anything.

This can actually be an advantage for your course. Why? Because the teacher who knows the most, is not always the best teacher.

You see, "expert-experts" often fall victim to the Curse of Knowledge:

They skip over important information, because it's too obvious to them. And what happens? The student gets left behind.

That's why a teacher who's just one step ahead of their students can sometimes create a more valuable course.

Needless to say, you should always be honest about your experience and credentials. But now you know that you don't need to be the world's foremost expert to teach a course.

Now...

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People are literally creating courses about every topic imaginable: dating, how to be a landlord, how to fly a drone, watercolor painting, spiritual life coaching, copywriting, dog training, and more...

#### The question is: What will YOU teach?

Maybe it's already clear in your mind. Or maybe you're still looking for an idea.

So let's move on to the CRUCIAL next step:

We have to make sure you choose a course idea that 1) you're passionate about and 2) you can make money teaching it!

## Step 2: Choose a Profitable Idea

Let's get specific:

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You can create a course about something you already know. Or you can create a course about something you're just learning.

But how do you choose a specific idea? And how do you make sure your idea is PROFITABLE? You don't want to spend time creating a course and then find out later no one wants to buy it...

In fact, this is the BIGGEST mistake new course creators make:

They create a course, but they don't make students actually want to learn about the specific topic they chose. No wonder they struggle to attract students!

But I've got you covered...

The FIRST lesson about choosing a profitable idea is this:

#### If someone already created the course you want to create, that's GOOD NEWS!

I know that's counter intuitive, but bear with me...

When you come up with an online course idea that has NEVER been done before, that means one thing: there's probably no one interested in buying it.

## Seriously.

You might think, "But people need what I'm selling," and maybe they do. But the internet is so large that if people need it, and are willing to buy it, there WILL be someone else selling it.

As a matter of fact: if you come up with an idea for an online course, and you can't find someone selling a course similar to what you want to offer, I'd find a new course.

Of course there are specific strategies for figuring out what to create an online course about...

...and I'll share more of those with you next. For now, I want you to know this: If there's competition, that's a GOOD thing.

With that said...

### I have 3 strategies to help you to come up with profitable course ideas:

- 1. Take inventory of the things that people ALREADY come to you with, ask you questions about, or want your advice on.
- 2. If you're a freelancer or are already running a service business: Take inventory of the things your clients struggle with the most and ask you questions about all the time.
- Find The Pain And Eliminate It. This means going out into the real world and RESEARCHING problems that people have. Then, you can create an online course that solves those problems.

Number 3 is my favorite strategy because it gets to the core of WHY people buy online courses. And the short answer is:

### People buy courses because they've got a problem – and they want to solve it.

Maybe they're looking to learn how to use a complicated piece of software. Maybe they don't fit into their favorite jeans and want to lose weight. Maybe they're stressed out and overwhelmed and want to take control of their calendar.

Whatever the case: people buy online courses because they have a problem in their life and they want to solve it.

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I know this might sound like I'm over simplifying it, but it is that simple. Think about the problems your friends, colleagues, and family members come to you with... LISTEN TO THEM.

And then see if you can create a repeatable course that helps people solve problems JUST LIKE THAT.

Sometimes it's an acute problem that people need to solve right away. For example: How to potty train your puppy (I could have used that one...). Other times it's a lingering problem. For example: How to be more confident.

You can create a profitable course for both types of problems. But what I can tell you from my experience is this: The more specific of a problem you solve, the easier it will be to sell your course.

If you're at the point where you're choosing an idea, I've got a useful worksheet for you that walks you through the steps. It's a simple technique I use for my own courses to find a pain and eliminate it.

So, make sure you grab the the worksheet. It only takes 15 min. to complete. And you'll walk away with a specific, profitable course idea.

## **Download the Course Idea Worksheet**

Now...

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What's next once you have an idea?

## Step 3: Test Your Idea

To test whether your course idea has potential, it's important you don't just ask your friends and family...

The good news is this:

If you use the strategy and worksheet I shared above, chances are there is a market for your course.

## **CREATING AND SELLING ONLINE COURSES**

But still, before you spend a lot of time creating a course, let's make sure you're building something people will want to buy.

So how do you test your idea?

There are 2 good ways...

#### Testing Strategy #1: Create a Free, Mini Email-Course

Here's what I mean: Instead of creating videos, worksheets, and additional resources, simply create a mini-course, and deliver it by EMAIL.

You don't need a course website. You don't need fancy software or design. Just deliver your course in email format.

The best part? If you do this, you're not just validating your idea, you're also building an email list of future for your PAID course at the same time.

If you want more info about creating a mini email-course, <u>I wrote up a case study of one of my</u> students, Guillermo, who did this with great success.

You can take this one step further, too:

### **Testing Strategy #2: Pre-Sell Your Course**

What if you could sell your course before you create it?

Well, you can...

Either you can create a sales page and ask people to "apply to buy"...

Or you can put up a "coming soon" page that explains what the course will be. Send it out to your audience or run some ads to your sales page and see if you can sell it.

You can either set a start date in the future and actually sell it. Or you can create a dummy "buy now" button and simply track how many people click on it; not perfect, but it will give you an idea if your idea has potential to be a big hit.

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Both strategies – creating a mini email-course or pre-selling your course – are easy ways to test your idea.

Once you've tested your idea, the question is:

How do you create a course that your students will LOVE?

Well, let's move on to the next step...



## **Step 4: Create a Course Outline**

It's tough to create a multi-week course when you're doing this for the first time. There's a lot of content to create... And you want your content to be top-notch!

That's why the key to creating an amazing course content is to start with a clear outline.

And whether you're creating a free email-course or your first paid course, here's what you absolutely need to remember:

#### START SMALL.

Look...

When people create online courses, they think they need to create some big, in-depth online course that covers EVERYTHING they know...

...but that's a mistake.

Don't do that. It's a waste of time. Especially if you're JUST getting started.

My first online course was 3 little videos and a worksheet. And yet, it helped kick off my entire business.

Just 3 little videos and some worksheets.

Seriously.

With that said, how do you decide what to cover in each lesson of your course?

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Well, that's why you need an outline. Think of it as your course curriculum. And here's what I suggest you do:

First, look at the problem your course solves.

Then, ask yourself this: "What are all of the intermediate steps people need to take to achieve this goal?"

And that's how you break your course down into individual lessons. For example...

Take a look at what <u>dating coach Francesca Hogi</u> (who uses <u>Zippy Courses</u>, my software that makes creating and selling online courses a cinch) is doing here:



Francesca has a mini-course about flirting. It's only five lessons (remember: keep it small!); and she breaks the topic down in logical, bite-sized lessons, like this:



First, she addresses the fear of flirting. Then she talks about how to get someone's attention, then how to talk to them, and so on.

# Do you notice how each lesson brings the student one step closer to the end goal of the course?

That's exactly what you should do in your outline.

After you break down your course into lesson like this, you can do the same thing for each individual lesson.

## Finally, one more, important tip for outlining your course:

DON'T pack too much content into each lesson. For a short course, lessons should be 5-10 minutes long. Definitely don't create lessons that are longer than 20 minutes; even if your delivery is great, students will often tune out.

What's great is, now that you know the purpose of each lesson, creating the actual content becomes very straightforward.

So, let's look at content creation in detail in the next step...

# 5 Step 5: Create Your Course Content

Most online courses are delivered in a VIDEO format.

Plus, I always include WORKSHEETS, that help students implement what they learned.

So how do you create this content?

Well, the first thing I want you to know is this:

Your first online course won't look that great, and that's OKAY. Here's why...

When you want to create – and sell – online courses, you may look at other people who do it (like me) and think: "Wow, their design is great, and so are their videos. I could never do that!"

But here's the problem:

You're comparing yourself now to where we are now. And that's a mistake. You need to compare where you are now to where we were in the beginning.

As an example, take a look at this. These are 3 screenshots from my first ever online course. The videos were low quality. They were grainy. And I apparently couldn't even afford a haircut.



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But those 3 videos went on to generate six figures in revenue. Why? Because, while the videos were low quality, the content INSIDE the video was great.

Now you might think, "Well, you're different!"

But I promise you I'm not.

I recently interviewed another of my customers from <u>Zippy Courses</u>, and he said, "It all starts with a whiteboard on a chair."

#### Why?

He's an accountant, and he teaches business owners how to understand their numbers. In his video he did just that. Even though it was just a silly white board resting on a chair, the content was valuable, and it helped kick off his online course business.

So the lesson is:

## Don't get too hung up on production quality. Instead, focus on teaching valuable content – by giving insanely practical, step-by-step instructions – and I'll guarantee your students will love your course.

Which also means that the FORMAT of your course doesn't matter; it could be text, audio, or video.

With that said, the most popular format for students is video:

You can either record direct-to-camera videos. Or, you can record a video of your screen, as you go through the slides of a presentation.

And you don't need to hire a high-end videographer to shoot or edit your video lessons... You can use your phone, and there are many easy-to-use tools and software available.

Worksheets should be PDF files, so it's easy for people to download and print.

With that said, you probably still want to know which tools to use, and HOW to do it...

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...and that's why I put together a useful list of tools and software recommendations for you. It also comes with a useful "lesson checklist," so make sure you grab it BEFORE you start creating any course content:

#### **Download the Course Content Creation Guide**

The next step is getting your course online!



Idea? Check!

Content? Check!

Time to get your course online, so you can start selling it!

The good news is:

It USED to be a real pain to get a course up and running (and then you had to coordinate everything with your email service, too; it was a mess)... But not anymore!

Today you don't need to be tech-whiz to get your course up and running:

Zippy Courses makes creating – and selling – your course a cinch!

After all, I built this software because I was frustrated with the other solutions that were available. Needless to say, my own courses run on Zippy, and I'm proud of the product we've built.

With Zippy you can quickly and easily create your course page, protect your content, sell your course, and manage your students.

I won't list all the features here. But you can read about some of the cool BUILT-IN tools that help you make more course sales here: <u>5 Surprising Ways to Rapidly Increase Online Course Sales</u>

Or you can just give Zippy Courses a try yourself ;-)

With that said, you might be wondering:

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#### "Why do I need to create my own course site?"

As opposed to using a course platform, like Udemy and many others.

The answer?

It comes down to CONTROL.

With your own course site you have total control over your course. Including price, design, students, a dedicated website (or a subdomain of your main website, like "course.yoursite.com"), and so on...

Personally, I just don't like being at the mercy of one single company, when it comes to MY business.

Also, I don't like sharing my revenue!

(Unless it's with hand-picked partners.)

Which brings us to the final phase of building a successful online course business... Selling and promoting your course.

The first decision is: How much will you charge?

## Step 7: Set a Price for Your Course

For many new course creators, this is a tough decision.

But when it comes to pricing, you must realize:

#### People like buying courses - even when they can find the same information for free.

It's counterintuitive, I know.

But while people "could" find what you plan on selling elsewhere..

...they still have to find it.

They also must figure out what information is legit... and what information is junk.

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And figuring out the difference can be a full time job for even the most savvy people.

Or they can find someone who created a course, who charges a fair price, and buy that.

It's what I do. And it's what other people do too. That's why the online course industry is exploding right now.

Time is one of the most valuable things we can never get back. Why waste time "figuring out" what's good or not when you can buy a course.

#### Plus, paid courses also provide things that free information just can't:

- A proven structure that leads to results
- Dedicated student support
- Personal accountability
- A community of like-minded students

And so much more. If you've ever joined a high-quality course, you've likely experienced this yourself. So don't undercharge when you sell your own course.

# To help you set a price, I suggest you use a very simple pricing rule. I call it the "Similar Outcome Approach."

Here's how it works:

Think of the ideal outcome of going through your course. And then ask yourself, "What would someone have to pay to get the same results with a different method?" You can compare it other courses, software, hiring someone to do it, or hiring a coach.

You should also consider the "cost of doing nothing" for your students. Say you help someone clean up their diet, lose weight and live a much healthier life. What is that really worth? A lot more than if you think of your course as a collection of videos and PDFs...

With that said, don't obsess over optimizing your price. In the beginning, just position it in the right price range.

Here's how I like to categorize it:

	A course that tells people WHAT to do	A course that SHOWS people how to do it	A course that SHOWS people how & helps them do it
A course that solves a small problem	\$0 - \$50	\$50 - \$100	\$100 - \$200
A course that solves a medium-sized problem	\$100 - \$200	\$200 - \$500	\$500 - \$1,000
A course that solves a BIG, serious problem	\$200 - \$500	\$500 - \$1,000	\$1,000 - \$5,000

The table above should help you get started.

Want more tips on pricing your courses? Here's are some more advanced pricing tactics you may want to consider:

- Why Discounting Is for Dummies
- How to fix the DUMB pricing mistake people make
- What Converts Better: \$100, \$99, or \$97?

Awesome! We've got a price.

From here, you'll soon move on to the next step...

## 8 Step 8: Get Students for Your Course

Remember, you don't want to build a course and then go looking for students...

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You should know who your students are – and have an idea where you'll find them – BEFORE you spend a lot of time building a huge course. That's why in steps 2 & 3 I helped you choose a profitable idea and TEST it first.

However, getting students for your course is an ONGOING process. And as your audience grows, so does your course business.

So let's talk about how to do that.

The BEST way to get students for your course is to get them signed up to your email list first. Why? Because <u>email is still the easiest way to make sales online</u>.

The good news is, you don't need a huge audience to make good money with an online course...

Take a look at this:

	ТНЕ <b>\$10</b> К	
	LAUNCH	NO. OF SUBSCRIBERS NEEDED (AT <b>3% CONVERSION RATE</b> )
Units sold at \$100	100	~3,300
Units sold at \$200	50	~1,700
Units sold at \$500	20	~700
Units sold at \$1,000	10	~330
Units sold at \$2,000	5	~175

## HOW MANY SUBSCRIBERS DO YOU NEED TO HAVE A \$10K LAUNCH?

Let's say your goal is to make \$10,000. If you're selling a \$100 course you'll need to pitch it to about 3,300 people (assuming an average conversion rate of 3%).

Where are you going to find 3,000 people?

If that sounds like a lot, I can promise you, it's much easier than you think. And of course, you don't need 3,000 people. Get your first 100 subscribers. Then your first 500, 1000, and you're already well on your way.

And if you already have an email list... Great! Even if it's just a few hundred people – heck, if it's just a few dozen people – that's a great start.

To build your email list you can use my proven – over 100,000 people have downloaded this ebook – list building strategy to get to 5,000 subscribers.

### Free eBook: Get 5,000 Subscribers

If you want to follow my advice, you can use the <u>mini-course strategy</u> that I shared above, to build your list, too.

Once you have a list of 1,000 people or so, you're ready to launch your course. And that's the final step!

# 9 Step 9: Launch Your Course

You've got a course. You're building your audience. Time to sell it!

Now...

Maybe "sales" sounds like a dirty word to you. Or you just might not have any experience selling anything, so you don't know where to start... But don't worry. I'll share a simple 3-step pitch formula with you here.

First, you might be wondering:

## "Should I sell my course as 'evergreen' or open and close enrollment?"

Personally, I prefer to open and close enrollment because most of my sales come from my email list. But both options are viable. I'll explain...

Does your course solve an acute problem?

If people want and need a solution right away, it's often best to sell it as evergreen. For example, a course on "How to Use Macros in Excel." People likely need a solution NOW, so if you make them wait, you might miss out on lots of students.

Or does your course address a "lingering" problem?

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For courses that address big, lingering problems – things that people have been thinking about for months or years – launches are great because you can build anticipation. Something like "How to Become a Morning Person" falls into this category.

Makes sense? Cool.

Now, no matter how you sell your course, here's...

#### The 3-Step Course Pitch Formula:

This simple formula takes people through 3 distinct phases of the sales process:

Problem, Desire, and Solution.

Here's how it works ...

#### **Step 1: Describe the PROBLEM**

Remember, your course solves a specific pain or problem. So, to kick of your launch, you need to remind people of the pain they're facing right now.

Sounds negative, I know. But you need to show potential customers that you understand their problems and their struggles. By describing their pain in detail, it helps you connect with potential buyers.

#### **Step 2: Create DESIRE**

Now it's time to create desire by showing the contrast between the world as it is (step 1) and the world as it could be. And that's what you should describe in this step: describe the PLEASURE!

You don't have to mention your course yet. You can use phrases like, "Imagine if..." or "Picture a world where..." and then talk about the outcome your course delivers.

#### **Step 3: Pitch your SOLUTION**

Your potential customers are aware of the problem and they want to find a solution. So now it's time to show them that you can help them. Tell them about your course, what's covered, and how it will help them.

It's even better if you can SHOW people how it will help. For example, you could share a key insight from the course. Or share a case study from a client or student.

The important point here is to create the contrast between the before and after first, and then introduce your course as the solution that will get them from pain to pleasure.

My final tip is this:

## Learn From People Who Already Did What You Want To Do!

I know it seems self-serving right now, but this is important...

You could try and figure everything out on your own. And you may end up wasting a lot of time (and money) doing it.

Or...

You could simply turn to someone who already did it, and shortcut your success by following their advice.

If you want my complete blueprint – and full support – to get your course up and running FAST, you can check out my premium training, Seven Figure Courses:

## Learn More About Seven Figure Courses