

COURSE BUILDER'S LABORATORY



John Ford
HR Mediation Academy

John Ford, a mediator and soft skills trainer, believes that there can be peace at work. For the last 20 years he's been helping mediate the workplace and has even started teaching these same skills at several local universities.

In 2014, John wrote a book on this same subject entitled "Peace at Work" and signed up for Ryan Eliason's program to figure out how to market it. "What Ryan really helped me see was that if I was lucky, my book would just be a glorified business card, but it definitely wasn't the endgame." So he shifted gears and looked for other ways to take his ideas and offer them to the world. He settled on building an online course to complement his book and got to work hiring a web developer, setting up a shopping cart and filming videos. But he still wasn't sure how he was going to make it all work. That's when Ryan hosted Danny on a webinar and John found out about Course Builder's Laboratory.

He signed up immediately. "Truly, it was one of the best moves I made. [CBLab] ultimately is what put me onto the path of being able to actually deliver what I was dreaming of."

Upon starting CBL, John quickly realized he was overlooking the cornerstone of his own advice to HR managers – LISTENING. . He needed to pivot. "Here I thought I was this great, sharp listener, and what I really realized was that I hadn't been listening in the way that I really, really needed to listen to my audience." While he was trying to sell what people needed, he was missing what they were really asking for, what they identified as their struggle.

Rather than wallowing in frustration and disappointment, John decided to create a course that was built on what his audience was asking for. He decided to use his existing course as an upsell down the road. "It's going to be the next thing that I pilot, but I've started in the right place."

Another shift that John made was in the size of his initial pilot. After a call with Danny, where they talked about the size of his existing audience and how to set reasonable expectations for conversion rates, John decided to drop his target from 24 people to 12. He filled his seats easily and welcomed a group of 12

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people into his program at \$247 apiece. In the end, he says he's glad he kept the group small, "I think everyone assumes it's easy to communicate. With 12 people in the group, you're trying to communicate to them as clearly as you can about how to participate, and how to access the replays. You can say it 101 times and still, magically, the message doesn't get through. I know that if I had had 24 people in my class, it would have just been so much harder. I've been able to give each student more attention and hand-holding without completely draining myself out. So having fewer people was actually a plus."

With his first pilot, "Challenging Workplace Relationships" nearly complete, John's next project is his mediation course. He plans to pilot that course before returning to his existing course and iterating based on the feedback he's gained from his current students. "What I'm imagining is that each time, the course will just keep growing, I'll be able to put more of my attention on marketing, building my email list, having joint ventures, and just figuring out what comes next."

To learn more about John and his work visit <http://johnford.com/> or <http://hrmediationacademy.com/>