Module 1: Your Product Creation and Launch Plan
Lesson 1: The 30,000 Foot View

Hi there! I’m Danny Iny, and I'm so excited to welcome you to the very first lesson in the Course Builder’s Laboratory! As I said in the introduction, this entire module is about getting clear on what you're doing, where you're going, and how you're going to get there. This first lesson will give you the 30,000 Foot View – in other words, the big picture of what's involved in taking your business project from idea to profitable pilot.

In This Lesson

To help you understand how all the pieces fit together, this lesson will focus on the big ideas that drive the Course Builder’s Laboratory. Those big concepts are:

1. The difference between the strategies of Audience Building and Course Building,
2. The purpose and value of piloting your idea, rather than just building out a full product from the get-go, and
3. How your ultimate vision for your business, the assumptions you need to validate about creating that vision, and the resources that you'll need to acquire will influence your short-term goals.

By the end of this lesson, you should have a good understanding of what a pilot is, and how running a pilot in the near-term will support the creation of the business vision that you aspire to.

So let’s dive in, starting with the difference between Audience Building and Course Building!

Audience Building vs. Course Building

We start with this because two of the first questions that my students usually ask are:

1. What results can I expect to achieve in this program?, and
2. What will be required of me in order to do it?

There are two categories of answers to those questions, depending on whether the student is interested in following the Audience Building path, or the Course Building path. Both options are valid, and can lead to a thriving business, but the best choice for each student depends on what their goals are, and what they’re willing to do to achieve them.
So here's an analogy that helps to understand the two different options: imagine it's summertime in a national park, and there's this great mountain in the park that hikers and climbers come to every year.

The hiking trail winds around the mountain; it takes much longer to get to the top, but the incline is never too steep, so the pace stays relatively steady.

The climbers don't have patience for the winding road, and instead go straight up the rock face. It's harder work, and takes more effort, but it's a much shorter path to the summit.

The hikers and climbers represent Audience Builders and Course Builders.

Audience Building, which is a strategy that I'm a big fan of as well, is the hiking path. You build your audience with a landing page and giveaway, and as the audience grows, you interact with your subscribers to increase engagement. If all goes well, then after about a year, when the audience is large enough, you're ready to start running surveys and launching your first pilot offer. It's a solid foundation for a business, but it takes time.

Course Building, which is what we teach in this program, is the climber's path, right up the rock face. Instead of spending time building an audience, you'll reach out to the people who are already in your orbit. Instead of publishing a lot of content, you're going to go straight to a powerful engagement plan, to bring people onboard with your pilot. And instead of waiting a whole year to think about your first sale, you'll power through to a profitable pilot within 60 days. This path can be a little harder and scarier at times, but that's exactly why you've chosen me and my team to guide and support you through it all. With our help, you can absolutely handle this, and I'm looking forward to helping you become one of our best success stories.

Now, these two paths aren't mutually exclusive, and they can actually complement each other very nicely; an audience is the best foundation with which to build and launch your courses, and course building is one of the best ways to jump-start and speed up the growth of your audience.

Since you've signed up for the Course Builder's Laboratory, though, we're going to work under the assumption that you've chosen the course building approach. Now, of course, this is your choice, and you'll articulate what matters most to you in the goal setting exercise at the end of this lesson, but my strong suggestion is that, if you want to get the most out of this program, you put your audience-building efforts on hold for the next couple of months.

And, having given that general advice, I also want to emphasize that we know and believe that each and every one of our students is unique, and has their own priorities.
and needs; so if you have any hesitations or questions about this decision, I want you to reach out to your Course Building Coach, either through the help page in the Member's Area, or by sending an email to us at team@CourseBuildersLaboratory.com. That message will go straight to your Course Building Coach, and if you don't know who your coach is, or you haven't been assigned one yet, that'll get the introduction underway, so we can help you.

The bottom line is that, whichever path you choose, we want to celebrate with you at the top of the mountain, and my team and I are all here to support you in getting there, through every step along the way.

Okay, now that we've covered the difference between Audience Building and Course Building, and you understand the big picture difference between the two, let's turn our attention to our second topic for this lesson, which is understanding what pilots are, and why they're so valuable.

**What Pilots Are, and Why They're So Valuable**

This is very important to understand, because it's the foundation for everything that you'll learn and do in the Course Builder's Laboratory, and for good reason: pilots can save you enormous amounts of time, energy, and money, regardless of whether you're starting your first business venture, or you're an old hand at selling online.

To understand why that is, and what pilots even are, let's compare how most people build and sell – or try to sell! – products, versus our methodology.

For most people, the impetus to start building a product is a brilliant idea about what they think the market needs. Once they've had that brilliant idea, they retreat to their "bat cave", and work for months, and sometimes even years, building out their masterpiece of a product. It's only when they finally emerge with the finished product that they turn their attention to selling what they've built... and often discover that nobody is interested in buying.

Now, some people just get lucky; they hit on just the right idea, and prepared it in just the right way, even though they didn't have any interaction with their audience along the way. It's a bit like a monkey typing Shakespeare on a keyboard; it can happen, but not often, and it's definitely not a good strategy for business success!

The piloting process that we teach in this course is very different, and much more effective. Using it, you'll quickly validate that you're on the right track, pursuing an idea that people are truly interested in paying for. And you won't have to spend years, or even months building a product before you know that people will buy; if you follow our
process, you can absolutely have sold your first pilot successfully within 60 days of getting started.

So what is a pilot?

Put simply, it's the simplest and roughest version of your product, that you can create in the absolute shortest amount of time, and still create a good outcome for your students, or customers. It isn’t scalable, doesn't rely on any complex technology setup, and it’s likely going to be very rough around the edges – but that's fine, because your students will know that it's a pilot, and part of the deal is that they get access to this material before anyone else, with lots of extra support from you, at a price that is heavily discounted from what the product might ultimately cost, in exchange for their feedback on how you can make it better.

This has powerful implications for you: it means that you don't have to do a lot of prep or development work before selling the pilot, so you can get it launched and get money flowing into your bank account much, much faster. It also means that the final version of your product will be that much better, because it will be informed by the feedback you gather from delivering this actual training to your pilot students – and this exact process is a big part of why our own training products are so successful for our students.

It also sets you up for further success, because running a successful pilot creates a track record of successfully selling this content in this format, and creating these outcomes for your students. That track record is going to be important when you approach other industry leaders for support down the line, and the experience you'll have had supporting your students will lead to case studies and testimonials, which can be priceless as you continue to grow and scale your business.

Now, here’s a very important insight that most people miss; if you had to divide your whole business planning and growth process into two buckets, with one being the market research and validation, and one being the growth and scaling of your business, the pilot would fall into the first bucket. It’s not about making a lot of money, but rather about validating that you're on the right track, with something that can genuinely help people, and that they are in fact willing to pay for.

This leads to a very important insight, which is that pilots are really just big experiments, and like any scientific experiment, if it doesn't work, that's not a failure, because you've learned something important about what you tried to do. Now, I'm not saying that we want your pilot to fail – of course, we want it to be a huge success, and that's what we're going to support you in creating through this program. But when a pilot does fail, which happens from time to time, I still see that as a good thing, because you've just saved yourself what could have been years of your hard work, time, and money. And you’ll also save face, because part of the narrative of a pilot is that it is
something you're trying, and you want to see how it goes... so if it doesn't work out, that's okay.

But, all that being said, the purpose of this training is to support you in building a successful and profitable pilot, and launching it to the tune of at least $2,000 in revenue within 60 days. If that's what you want, of course.

How a Pilot Will Support Your Unique Goals

You see, pilots can be incredibly powerful, and can be used to achieve a lot of different business goals, including quickly recouping the cost of this course – but that's just one of the many goals that you can use a pilot to work towards. That's why the next thing I want to explore with you is what your goals are, and how this course can best help you to achieve them.

Knowing what your goals are is very important, because without them, you might end up building something very successful, that you won't be at all satisfied with. As a colleague of mine once told me, success looks very different to different people; for some, it can mean a laptop on the beach, and for others, it's a glass castle. It takes a lot of work to build any success, and it would be a real shame to put all that work in, and end up with something that you don't even like.

So think for a moment, about where you’d like to see your business, 3-5 years from today. Do you aspire to build an empire, complete with a giant team of amazing people, as I have in my business? Do you want to earn a comfortable mid- or high-six-figure income, while traveling the world? Do you want to work closely with your clients, in person, remotely, or maybe through live events? Or do you want to build a business that is comparatively more in the "set it and forget it" camp, where you still have to be present and help your students, but there's a lot more flexibility in your personal life?

These are all valid options, and I invite you think about it for a little while, to get a sense of what the ideal picture of the life you're building might look like. You might want to go for a walk and think it over, or you might want to do a Perfect Day exercise, where you write out over the course of a few pages what a perfect day in your life will look like. If you want to take that route, you can use the Perfect Day exercise that is provided below, which includes prompts to help you think through the difference parts in your day, and what you'll want them to look like.

Regardless of how you paint your personal picture of the ultimate goal, the next thing to do is come one step back from that picture, and think about the business or product line that will support you in creating it. For example:
• **You could build courses**, which are sold through launches or on an evergreen basis, and can be anywhere from a few weeks to many months long. Our Audience Business Masterclass and Course Builder's Laboratory are both examples of full-scale courses.

• **You could run a coaching or consulting practice**, focused primarily on individual or small group work, and perhaps even run a mastermind. These are also components of our business. I offer private consultations for higher-level students, and I run a mastermind with a small group of successful entrepreneurs all working on taking their businesses to the next level.

• **You could start a membership community.** There’s a bit of an art to this, but if done right, it can be a great way to provide valuable ongoing benefits to your customers, and ensure long-term revenue for you. This is something that my friends Sean D'Souza at Psychotactics, and Steve Kamb at Nerd Fitness have done very successfully.

• **You could also produce live events**, from small, intimate workshops, to massive gatherings like Chris Guillebeau’s World Domination Summit. Many highly successful entrepreneurs make great money and provide a ton of value through live events.

You could build a successful business that helps a lot of people with any one of these models, or with several of them, if that’s what you want. But it’s important to know what you want, so that you don’t just ride the momentum of your successful pilot in the direction of something that doesn’t fit with your goals.

Now, how does this tie in to the pilot that you’re going to develop through this course? Well, whichever goal you're working towards, there are things that you will need to figure out in order to get there; for example...

...are you able to help people through the structures that you eventually want to end up with, whether that means a course, a coaching group, a live event, or something else?

...are the customers that you want to serve interested in the format and structure that you want to provide? That’s a very important question, because if the market doesn't want it, everything else doesn't matter.

...will you actually enjoy delivering the content and outcomes through your chosen format, as much as you think you will? This is important to validate, because often we see what a particular business model or structure looks like from the outside, but haven't got a good idea of what it’s like to really be running it.
And that isn't all; in addition to validating these key assumptions, you'll also need to develop some foundations that will support the creation of the business and vision that you aspire to, like...

...the financial resources that will give you the flexibility to focus as much time as you need on your business.

...the credibility and authority that will reassure people that you can in fact deliver on the promises that you're making.

...the industry relationships that you'll need to reach the scale that you aspire to.

And of course, there's the marketing knowledge to actually launch and sell your pilot, which you'll learn through this course.

**Choosing the #1 Goal for Your Pilot**

Depending on which of these things are most important for you right now, you'll choose a different short-term goal to focus on through this course. Depending on what assumptions you'll need to validate, what financial constraints you're facing, and what your overall priorities are, any one of the following goals might be right for you:

**• The most important thing for you might be to recoup the cost of the course.** Maybe your finances are tight and it would really help your cash flow to make back the money you spent on this course. Maybe you want some extra cash to reinvest in your business, and give you more bandwidth. Or maybe you just like to see a fast ROI on your investments. These are all good reasons why recouping the cost of the course, by launching your pilot within 60 days and generating at least $2,000 in revenue, is a good near-term goal for you.

**• Or, your goal might be validating demand for your offer.** The most fundamental thing you need to know in order to be confident entering a new market or opportunity is that people actually want what you're selling. So if you're entering a new space, or trying to build something for the first time, your priority might be to just validate that people are willing to pay for what you want to do, in the format that you want to do it. In other words, your primary goal will be the information that you'll gather from your pilot – though, just to be clear, you still have to make sales in order to gather that information.

**• Another goal that you might choose is to build a track record.** Particularly if you're entering a new space or branching out in a new direction, one of the biggest challenges is that you don't have proof that you can actually help people in the way that you say you can. A pilot is a fast way of generating that proof of concept, and getting some case studies and testimonials that you can...
showcase. In this particular case, you could conceivably even work with people for free, though I don't recommend it; my strong bias is that if you can't get people to pay for what you're offering, they don't want it enough for the opportunity to be viable. But that being said, in this scenario the case studies and success stories would be a lot more important to you than the actual cash.

- **And finally, your goal might just be to try out a subject area, and learn how to pilot.** Some of our students join the program because they're very excited about applying our methodology to build their business, but they're not sure where they want to focus. And while choosing a focus for a pilot is necessary, because you have to pilot something, it can be a lot simpler and easier if you treat it as a sort of test-run. You aren't necessarily committing past the pilot window; rather, it's just an experiment that you're running for 60 days to see if you like the topic area, and to learn how to pilot. That way, regardless of whether you choose to stick with the topic area or not, you’ve learned how to apply our framework to whatever business you do choose to stick with.

Now, obviously, these goals are not mutually exclusive; you could conceivably accomplish all of them, with a single pilot. But it's still important to know what your #1 priority is, because – if a trade-off presents itself, and you have to make a choice – it's really important to know what matters the most.

To think this through, use the exercise below, called **My Vision and Goals**, that will prompt you through a series of questions to articulate a quick picture of what your ultimate goal is, step back from that to the mechanism and business model that you hope will drive it, and then think through the assumptions that you need to validate and skills and resources that you need to acquire in order to make it happen. And from there, you'll choose your #1 short-term goal or priority.

**Review and Next Steps**

And that concludes your very first lesson in the Course Builder's Laboratory. Before we wrap-up, I want to quickly review what we learned today, and go over the homework, action items, and next steps that will drive you to success.

So let's review what we learned in this lesson. We talked about:

1. The difference between the strategies of Audience Building and Course Building,
2. The purpose and value of piloting your idea, rather than just building out a full product from the get-go, and
3. How your ultimate vision for your business, the assumptions you need to validate about creating that vision, and the resources that you'll need to acquire will influence your short-term goals.

Now let’s talk about your next steps.

**Homework, Action Items, and Next Steps**

Your homework for this lesson is pretty simple: beyond just understanding the concepts that I've shared with you, I want you to start thinking about what your big vision and goal for your business is, either just in your head, or using the Perfect Day exercise.

Once you have that picture in your mind, use the My Vision and Goals exercise to find the best way for the pilot you'll launch through this program to support that big vision in the near-term, and choose your near-term #1 priority.

Now, just to be clear, I’m not asking you to choose the goals that you're going to be married to for the rest of your life; your priorities can and probably will change, both through this program, and over the course of life in general. But it still helps a great deal to know what we're shooting for in the near-term.

If you understand the difference between the strategies of Audience Building and Course Building, you understand the purpose and value of piloting your idea, and you've chosen your #1 near-term priority, please share that with your Course Building Coach, and then move on to the next lesson. And if not, that's fine, too – that's what your Course Building Coach is here for. Please make use of the support and guidance that we offer, by reaching out to your Course Building Coach and sharing your progress, your thoughts about where you’re going to focus, and your questions – anything that you’re confused or uncertain about in this program is fair game for your Course Building Coach to help you with.

And once you are ready to proceed, move on to Lesson 2, which is called Start Where You Are, and Use What You Have. In that lesson, you'll take stock of the resources that are at your disposal right now and refine your goals for piloting. And then you'll take the first step towards planning your pilot, by choosing the format and structure that will fit best with your goals and available resources.

**Conclusion & Wrap-Up**

Now, you'll hear me say this a lot in this course, because it's important: if you’re not sure about anything we’ve talked about or how to apply it to your own unique situation, please reach out to your Course Building Coach, either through the help page in the Member's Area, or by sending an email to us at Team@CourseBuildersLaboratory.com.

Remember, if you don’t do the work you won’t see the results, so put in the time. And if you get stuck, email us at Team@CourseBuildersLaboratory.com - we’re here to help!

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That message will go straight to your Course Building Coach, and if you don't know who
your coach is, or you haven't been assigned one yet, that'll get the introduction
underway, so we can help you.

You can also connect with your fellow students in this program and share information,
tips, techniques and strategies in the Course Builder’s Mastermind group, which you can
learn about and access through the menu at the side of this page.

With that, all that's left is for me to thank you for your attention, and dedication to this
process, and congratulate you again on taking this first step towards a better future for
yourself, your family, and all of the people whose lives you'll enrich through your pilots
and courses. So go do your homework, reach out to your Course Building Coach if you
need help, and I'll see you in the next lesson!