

Online Marketing Made Easy ^{w/} Amy Porterfield



Social Media | List Building | Content Marketing

The Online Marketing Made Easy Podcast with Amy Porterfield Session #105

Show notes at: <http://www.amyporterfield.com/105>

Amy Porterfield: Hey there, Amy Porterfield here. Welcome to another episode of The Online Marketing Made Easy Podcast. I am thrilled that you've joined me today so thanks for being here. Today's episode explores the question I get asked a lot and that is, "Amy, where do I start?"

I know why I hear this question from my just starting out or from my newbie students. In fact, it's a question that can come up at any stage of business. It might look a little different. For my newbies, they will ask where they start. My more seasoned marketers will ask where they focus.

The thing is, there are so many things that we should be doing, at least that we think we should be doing. Social media alone can send anybody into a tailspin. Should you focus more on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, or should you put more focus on live social streaming like Periscope and live video on Facebook?

Then you have to think about funnels, email marketing, webinars, and product creation. I could go on and on. Sometimes the list feels absolutely endless, even for a seasoned entrepreneur. But for those just starting out, that list can feel absolutely daunting, stop you in your tracks daunting.

To tease today's episode just a bit, my recommendation to the "Where should I start" question is likely not what you're expecting. It's not list building or webinars or even creating a course. It's none of that so stay with me and we'll dive into the specifics in just a minute.

Before we get there I wanted to tell you about the freebie I've prepared for today's episode. This freebie is for anyone building a business online, not just for my newbies listening today. I put a lot of thought into this one because I wanted to make it extremely useful for my entire audience, including you.

Since we're going to talk about growing and streamlining your business today I wanted to create a resource to help you identify the areas where you should be seeing some more support; specifically, when to hire and who to hire. Today's freebie is called Where Should My Support Dollars Go? And when you download this special resource you will see that I've listed who you should hire depending on where you are in your business right.

It's incredibly useful for all stages of business. To get it now just go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/105download> or just text the phrase 105download to 33444 and that freebie, Where Should My Support Dollars Go?, will be all yours instantly. Good stuff, right?

It's time to move into the meat of today's episode. What I'm going to recommend here might not be for everyone just starting out because it's going to take some patience, some perseverance, and a lot of discipline. But if that doesn't scare you off, keep listening.

When I talk about a newbie or those that are just starting out, I'm assuming that I'm talking about those that are likely not selling anything yet. You're not posting consistently on a blog and you don't have a consistent podcast or video show just yet. You post on social media but you're still not really clear about who your ideal customer avatar is so you're not really sure you're talking to the right people yet.

In addition to that you likely feel a bit confused and scattered. You don't have a list and you're not really sure exactly what you want to do in your business. You have a good idea but you haven't solidified it just yet. You are still experimenting and still feeling around a little bit. You're getting things going but you're just not there yet.

First I want to tell you we've all been there. We all have to start at the very beginning. So, if you feel like a fish out of water as you build a business inside the World Wide Web, believe me, we've all started in the place you're at right now and there is definitely potential for some amazing success if you stick it out.

Here is how I suggest you approach the Where Do I Start question: My recommendation is that you approach your business in two phases. Phase I is focused on how you will make money right now. It's the temporary phase. You likely won't be in this phase much more than a year or maybe 18 months at the max. In Phase II you will move into the ultimate business model that will work best for you and your ideal customer avatar. In Phase II you

are creating a business and a life you love and you're working with the most perfect, ideal customer for what you have to offer.

Jumping back to Phase I, because I want to really dive into both of these phases, in Phase I your goal is to make money right now. You want to use the skills and knowledge you already have and usually the best Phase I business model would be consulting or coaching or maybe even a service-based business where you actually do something for somebody else.

I suggest you approach your business in two phases, again we're going to dive deep into both, but let me back up just a little bit. I always say how your business looks today will dramatically change in just a few years. I don't know anybody who has started a business today and then in two years they look at it and think it is exactly what they were doing two years ago. It always changes.

The reason for the change is that you are going to grow even more. You're going to learn about your audience even more. You're going to really understand what you're really good at and what you hate to do. And, you are going to really figure out what will make you money. You need that time in the first year and even sometimes into year two to figure that all out and that's why your business typically looks different today than it will in a year or two down the road.

Before I talk to you about specifics of each phase, it's important to understand that both phases, Phase I and Phase II, must be totally aligned. Let's say you are a marriage therapist and you ultimately want to create a course about repairing a broken marriage. In Phase I you might take one-on-one coaching clients. You are actually coaching either couples or individuals about their broken marriage and how they can fix it and what they can do.

You are getting really tactical with them and really personal with them. You are in the trenches with them in Phase I. Then you move into Phase II where you actually start to build out a product suite of online courses around this overarching message of counseling couples to have better marriages. Do you see how the two are totally aligned? That's a perfect example of having a Phase I and having a Phase II inside your business.

I'll explain to you what a business model in Phase II will look like but, here's a hint, Phase II may be all about building a business model around creating online courses. Here's the good

news, if you hate the thought of spending time in Phase I and you want to jump to Phase II; you don't want to stay in Phase I...I want you to know there is a sliver lining. All the work you do in Phase I will set you up for unbelievable, unshakeable success in Phase II.

If you do the work in Phase I you can reap the benefits really quickly in Phase II. How do I know this? Because this is exactly what I did in my own business. You have probably already heard me talk about this if you follow my podcast or any of my free webinars. But, when I started back in 2010 the first two full years of my business were focused on consulting and coaching.

I didn't look at my business as two phases. I fell into consulting and coaching because I was desperate to make money and didn't yet have any online courses and I didn't know any other way to make money. Right away, when I quit my corporate job I thought, "Oh shoot! I'm kind of in trouble." I didn't have a lot of money saved so I needed to make money right away and I started consulting.

You've probably heard the story where I absolutely hated the consulting/coaching business. It was really because I didn't know how to set any expectations, there were no boundaries whatsoever, I had clients that expected craziness from me, I was doing social media for small brands and big brands, and again, their expectations were insane. I couldn't even meet half of them.

I had too many clients so I was spread way too thin. I didn't manage it well. It worked for me in the sense that I got into the trenches and did the work and really started to understand my audience and what they needed, so I feel like that shaped me immensely, but what didn't work for me is that I didn't know that could be temporary.

I thought, "Holy cow! I've started a business that I don't love." I created a business model that is not what I wanted. I had screwed up and was a total mess. I felt like a failure. I had left corporate with big expectations for myself and ended up with a business I didn't love.

In hindsight, as I've been doing research for this episode and really thinking about my newbie students since I get asked this question a lot (Where do I start?) I started to realize if I took that experience and said, "Okay, Amy, you're going to be doing this for only 18 months. You will consult and coach for 18 months and then you will transition into Phase II, the ultimate business model you want, which is creating online courses. Stay with it, get

your hands dirty, get into the trenches, do the work, understand your avatar, work on your online courses, but we will actually start to sell those courses in Phase II and really phase out of the consulting/coaching.”

If you told me there was a deadline or a light at the end of the tunnel for me I would have approached it so much differently. Quite honestly, I would have had a better attitude. Shame on me that I didn't have a better attitude. I know, that was my fault. But if I had seen the light at the end of the tunnel and realized that I could shift my business model I would have approached that so much differently.

I wanted to share that with you because I'm glad I did it and I think it truly did set me up for really quick success in Phase II. I just didn't realize what was happening at the time so I want to make it really intentional for you. I am coming up with the whole recommendation of two phases because most people, when they are just starting out in their business, make really bad decisions if they are desperate for money.

That's why we typically say "yes" to everything, we start taking on things we actually resent, we travel all over the world for speaking gigs that are really not going to help your business grow, and we say "yes" to helping other people when we would really rather say "no." We just make these decisions because we are desperate. We don't know what's going to work and we need to make money right.

Everything we think we should be doing is getting put on the sideline and that frustrates us and makes us feel like everyone else is succeeding but ourselves. Do you see the downward spiral this can really send most people into?

Instead of making some bad decisions about your business model early on, I say don't make those big decisions about your business model just yet. Allow yourself some flexibility, some breathing space, and some room for experimentation in Phase I so that when you get into Phase II you hit the ground running.

Let's talk about Phase I and what that might look like for you. The first thing you can consider is doing some consulting. There are some layers of consulting I want you to look into. Of course you know about consulting. But let's talk about what that might look like.

The first thing you might want to do is retainer-based consulting. Retainer based means that you get a retainer for a certain amount of hours you do every single month. The pros to a retainer-based business would be that you have consistent income and you can grow with the client. You are sticking with them every month. You get a retainer fee. You are working with them so you're growing with the client. That means you learn a lot about them.

The con is that at times you are at the beck and call of a client. Because you have a retainer the hours are a little bit abstract and they can call you whenever they need and you usually only have one or two clients so if you lose one it puts your business at risk. An example of this is if you're a copywriter and you say, "Okay, I'm going to give you 25 hours a week."

That's a really big chunk so you can't have many clients and if you lose a client you just lost a big chunk of your revenue. There are definitely pros and cons. I did the retainer-based business in my early years. I had just a few clients at one time. One time I had up to eight clients, which was way too many, but for a little while I had three clients near the end of my consulting/coaching.

I worked the bulk of my 40 hours a week just for those three clients. At one time it was even only two. I liked this because I like that feeling that I am rooted somewhere and I know what to expect so it worked for my personality. Again, there were some pros and cons there.

Another way you can approach consulting is through packages. You create packages and then people come to you and tell you they want Package B. One of the great things about doing packages is that you are telling them what you are going to do and what's included. There is some real structure to it and I like that. I often tell my students if they are going to do any kind of consulting that I like the idea of creating packages so that you can control it a little bit more versus a retainer-based business where one day you are working on X and another day you are working on Y. You aren't always sure what's coming down the pipeline. In a package-based consulting type business you know what you are working on.

The pro to this is with a package there is a finite end to the project. You will say, "I'm going to design your website. We're going to start on this date and end on this date. This is exactly what's included. The package is \$5,000." It's that kind of thing.

You can also market yourself and find a niche. Let's say you are a website designer. You can choose to design websites for therapists and offer three packages. You can really make a name for yourself in a niche when you have packages like that. You also become an expert and you have expertise in a specific area, which I think really helps grow your business and moves you into Phase II quicker. I like the idea of packages.

A con to a package-based consulting business is that sometimes the packages are short term so you have to hustle to fill up more packages. It just depends on the length of those packages, how long they actually last, working with a client. Again, another example might be that you provide copy and strategy for a specific nurture campaign funnel. You are working on that over two weeks and then you're done with the package and you deliver it.

Another way to look at consulting is through ongoing gigs or preferred vendors. You sign up for a series of projects with one vendor you're working with. That's another way you can look at it. I think a pro to that is that you've got ongoing revenue and you're locked in for a certain amount of time and the project has a deadline. A con to that would be that you are locked into this series so you might miss some other opportunities.

To give you an example, you might fill a series of monthly video blogs for a client and every month you know you have this ongoing gig that you're going to do to write video scripts for a client or whatever it might be. That might look a little bit like a retainer-based or package-based business but it's always the same vendor. It happens every single month and you're kind of locked into it. It is just a little bit of a different way to look at it.

Another way you can do consulting is with one-off projects but we're not going to cover that because they are all evil. I do not want you picking up random one-off projects to try and build a business. This is kind of what I did in my really early years of consulting and I hated it. You never really get comfortable with the client. You're never really sure if you are delivering exactly what they want. The timelines are usually very tricky. I just don't think they are the best way to do business.

I don't want you constantly writing random bids for people either. I think the retainer-based or package-based consulting, to me, would be the best way to go. You can also have a mix of these things. You could do some retainer, some package-based, and you could have an ongoing gig with one of your vendors. You can kind of mix and match these but you want to be deliberate and intentional in terms of how you run your consulting business.

Switching gears a little bit, you can also do a coaching-style business. Maybe you do weekly calls with a group or individual or monthly calls with a group or individual. You might be a health coach and you get five clients and they all get one-on-one time with you and every other week you talk to these clients and then they get email access to you and whatever else it might be. This is how you are bringing in income.

I think you are probably familiar with coaching. Again, you can do it as group coaching or one-on-one coaching. Usually if you do one-on-one coaching you can, of course, take less people but sometimes you can charge more so you have to kind of weigh your pros and cons there.

Those are the two types of business I think are probably best for Phase I. One more layer to this is that you could also look at your business more like a service-based business. I mentioned being a copywriter before where you could do a retainer as a copywriter. That's kind of like a service-based business where you're doing it for them.

You also want to decide if you're going to provide a service where you do the work for them or if you are going to consult at a higher level or coach at a higher level where you're not actually getting in there and doing the work but you are consulting in a true sense of the word "consulting."

For me, I definitely did a mix of both. I would coach on social media, but then I would consult. During my consulting I would actually do a lot of the work. I would write blog posts for people, I would do their social media posting, I was more of a do-it-for-you kind of service. I had a mix of coaching, consulting, and do-it-for-you service packages. Again, the packages work really well for you when you're doing a service-based business because it can get a little out of hand if you don't have boundaries.

You also want to decide how much you are going to do for these people. Let me tell you, people want the do-it-for-you services. There is money to be made there. It's just really tough at times. Maybe you don't do your entire Phase I as a service-based business, maybe you mix it up a little bit. That is just something to think about.

There are other ways to build a business model. These next few things I'm going to talk to you about are more Phase II. Of course you could do them in Phase I but I wouldn't

recommend it. In Phase II, one of my favorite business models is to create an online training program or suite of online training programs.

Something you might already know about me but my entire business model is through online courses. The only way I make money right now is through my own online courses or promoting a few select affiliate online courses or tools like LeadPages. I don't get paid to speak. I choose that.

I don't want to speak on stage and get paid for it, at least very rarely will that happen. I don't do one-on-one consulting or coaching or mastermind groups or anything like that. My entire multi-million dollar business is based on creating and selling online training courses. So, believe me when I tell you that is very doable when you do it right.

Over the next few weeks I'm going to have a lot of podcast episodes that are focused primarily on how to create your online course. If that gets you excited, definitely listen up for the podcast episodes to follow this one because we're going to be diving into a lot of those topics around creating online courses.

There are other business models. You can do a mastermind business model where you do live events, in-person events, and online events. There is a coaching component to your mastermind groups but there is a lot of money to be made if you are a really good facilitator in mastermind groups. You could start your own.

That feels like more of a Phase II kind of thing because you want to get your name out there. You want to make sure you are really good at what you do and you want to be the authority. The way you do that is by starting to ramp up your business with coaching and consulting in the beginning, posting regularly on social media, and putting consistent content out there in Phase I. That will really set you up to building an amazing mastermind group in Phase II.

It goes without saying, I guess, that in Phase I when you are coaching and consulting or doing service-based businesses, you want to be doing the other things that are important. You can't do it all but I think creating consistent content on a weekly basis is super important. Growing your list, even if it happens really slowly in Phase I is really important.

Those are two things I talk about in my free list-building webinar I have. We talk about creating consistent content and setting up an infrastructure to build your list everyday. You can do that in Phase I. So if you want to check that out go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/listbuilding>. I have a free master class all about it.

Another way you could have a really awesome business model is through eCommerce. If you sell a physical product, of course, eCommerce is a really cool thing to do in terms of building a business model. You could probably do that...You don't need phases for that. If you already have a product and you know how to talk about it and know how to promote it online then you could be doing that right from the get go of starting your business.

That's not really where I specialize. I don't talk a lot about eCommerce. I did interview Steve Chou in [Episode #103](#). He's an expert in eCommerce so that was probably my only episode I have ever talked about eCommerce. It might be worth checking out if that's something you want to do.

Remember, the question you want to ask in deciding your business model in Phase I is, "How can I make money right now?" The quickest way to make money right now in Phase I is through coaching or consulting based on your skills and knowledge. Phase I also lets you sharpen your skills and gives you the opportunity to get into the trenches with your ideal customer avatar so that you can understand their needs and their wants and their genuine pain points.

This intel is incredibly valuable as you begin to hone in on your own messaging for your business. As I mentioned, Phase I lets you breathe a little. You get to be more creative. You get to get inspired. You get to go through different online training programs from other people so you can start to learn more. You don't have to make those really big decisions about your business just yet. That's what I mean about the breathing space.

If you're not yet building your ultimate business model that means you don't have to make the really big decisions that can cost you a lot of time, a lot of energy, and a lot of money. When you're just consulting or coaching you've got some wiggle room there. That's why I really love the idea of giving yourself a little slack and breaking up your business into two phases.

Let's look at Phase II. Again, this is the real juicy stuff. This is the ultimate business model that's going to work for you. Here are a few things to consider. If you're pretty clear about what Phase I will look like then I want you to now focus on what Phase II will look like. Again, there are a few things to consider.

Your time in Phase I will shed a lot of light on what Phase II should ultimately look like in terms of creating your ideal business model. How do you want to spend your time in your business? What would a typical day look like? How can you support your avatar at the highest level when you're in Phase II? How does your avatar want to engage with you and take in your content?

A membership site might be fantastic but if your avatar is not at all interested in a monthly membership site then it's probably not your ideal business model. These are the things you figure out in Phase I. Again, there needs to be alignment between what you want to do and what your avatar needs and wants from you. That's what Marie Forleo calls "the sweet spot."

Spending a little time really understanding what you want to do, what you want to deliver, how you want to teach, and what your audience really needs and wants from you, that intersection is really important to figure out. You usually figure that out in Phase I.

In many situations, including my own, a business model that offers a lot of flexibility, consistent revenue, and an abundance of opportunity to impact your audience is one that you are building online training courses. That's why I'm so passionate about teaching you all how to create online training courses. It really is an amazing business model. Again, there is a lot of flexibility, consistent revenue when you set it up right, and if you love to create content and you love to teach then this is definitely a business model I want you to look into.

Here's something you might find valuable, if you go into Phase I as a consultant or coach, you can be working on your online training program at the same time. Once you've been at it for a few months you will get pretty clear right away in terms of who your avatar is, what they need from you, what they want from you, and what you really want to teach them.

From there you can start working on your course creation business model. You can start putting your outline together and start working on the content that's ultimately going to go

inside your course. You don't have to wait until Phase II happens in order for you to create your course. If Phase II is a course-creation business model you want to create you can start working on that in Phase I.

Once you hit Phase II you can hit the ground running with promoting your program. I guess that's probably why I'm partial. This episode is a little biased. I totally get that. But, I'm known for teaching what I know best. I'm known for teaching what I do in my own business and I can say with all certainty that building a business model around creating online courses is, like I said earlier, an amazing experience. It's one I at least want you to start to consider. Just think about what that might look like in your own business.

All of my episodes are really actionable and I want to walk you through, step by step, what this might look like in terms of you getting started with Phase I and Phase II of your business. If you're a newbie and just starting out or if you're struggling and feel like this is not what you were supposed to create and like you are doing something wrong, you might want to hit the restart button and look at your business in these two phases.

Let me walk you through it: First, I want you to decide on your business model for Phase I. Again, consulting, coaching, or some kind of service-based business is likely the best fit for Phase I. From there I want you to choose the date you will start Phase I. Some of you are already in it and are already doing coaching and consulting. If you are already in it, great! If not, if you are really, really, really just starting out, choose the date you will start Phase I.

Then, this is the fun part, choose the date that Phase I will end and Phase II will start. This is where I did it all wrong. I didn't even look at my business in two phases and thought I was stuck in Phase I forever. I stayed there way too long. I say stay in Phase I for about a year, give or take a little bit. I think a year is pretty safe for you to learn all you need to learn. Again, you can be working on other stuff like list building and content creation and outlining your course. You can be working on that in Phase I.

A year is probably a good timeline. There might be some overlap between the two phases. That's fine but there needs to be a definitive date when Phase I no longer exists. Again, I never set a true date and I felt trapped. I don't want you to feel that way as well.

In choosing the date that Phase II will start, you might not know exactly what you want to create as your ultimate business model for Phase II. That's okay. The work you do in Phase

I will shed so much light on what you like to do and what you want to do and what you're audience needs. It's okay if you're not totally sure about what Phase II is going to look like yet. Still, choose a date in terms of when it's going to start because you'll get really clear as that date starts to approach.

A few extra notes: If you're in a 9-5 job right now and you want to work on your business on the side, the goal of deciding on a Phase I is so that you can quit your day job as soon as possible and fully focus on your own business. You might be doing some consulting on the side as you are in your 9-5 job.

As you build that coaching and consulting business you get to quit your 9-5 job because that can sustain you and help you move into Phase II. You will likely not move into Phase II while you still have a 9-5 job. I just want to put it out there that would be really tough.

If you think you want to skip Phase I and go directly into Phase II, your ideal business model, just be cautious. One of the reasons I suggest Phase I is to help you figure out what you like to do and what you do best as well as help you understand and know your audience and their needs even more. Coaching and consulting and done-for-you services are the things that get you in the trenches. I know I've said that a million times throughout this episode but I really want to hit home with it because you really do learn a lot.

In Phase I, to prepare for Phase II so that you can hit the ground running the minute the date hits, you can study your avatar inside and out.

1. During Phase I you become obsessed with understanding who this avatar is.
2. Start to list build. As you understand who your avatar is you can start to create freebies for this avatar to start growing your list. You don't need to do it at record speed and have hundreds of thousands of people on your list but you can at least start.
3. Begin to create your course. Again, I'll be talking about that in the coming episodes, but you can start to really decide on what you want to teach, what that's going to look like, and really learn what it's going to take to create a course. That course can actually be created once you move into Phase II and that's kind of cool.

A few final words on this before we wrap up, if you're not necessarily a newbie, meaning you have been at it a while but you are struggling a bit with where you should focus, you

aren't really asking me where you start but instead are asking, "Where should I focus to actually grow my business?" My answer to you is to look deeper into the business you've created and ask yourself a few questions:

1. Have you created a business model that is actually working for you?
2. Do you love what you do inside your business model?
3. Does your audience really see a need for it?
4. Do they connect with you and engage with you or is it like pulling nails anytime you talk about what it is you're doing or selling?

You know in your gut if you are actually creating something that there is a true desire for. That's one question you want to ask yourself.

You want to ask yourself if you should be staying horizontal longer in your business. With horizontal and vertical, I talked about this in [Episode #100](#), and basically that means whether you should be focused on one project in your business and staying with it longer, like I did with The Profit Lab over two years (I really only focused on one product), or is it time to be adding some extra things to your business like coaching, mastermind, or maybe a membership site on top of everything else you've created.

Most people need to stay horizontal longer. When you're in the coaching or consulting business I say to stay there about a year, if you're going to do two phases, so that's like staying horizontal with coaching or consulting for a year. But really, where this horizontal or vertical really comes into play is in Phase II when you've been at it as while and you sometimes want to jump ship and try something new or maybe you need to go back and refine and tweak the project you are making money with that you could be making a whole lot more money with if you really did it right. At <http://www.amyporterfield.com/100> you can hear all about how to stay horizontal versus when it's time to go vertical.

The third thing is to ask yourself, if you've been at it for a while and your business isn't growing at the rate you want it to, whether you have the right team in place to support your growth. Sometimes all it takes is a few extra people to support you to allow your business to get to where it needs to go. That's just something I want you to think about.

That's a really good segue into reminding you to download my special freebie for today's episode, Where Should My Support Dollars Go? One aspect that anyone at any level should be thinking about is how you want to make the most of your time by hiring the support you

need. Listen, I know this part is scary because I'm telling you, getting help for your business is a must and when you put out money before you're making a lot of money that's the scary part.

Some people don't even know what they would have someone do. Don't worry, I cover that in this freebie. I give you a resource of 100 different things you could have extra support do for you to kind of free up your workload. I cover that for sure.

Just to remind you, if you go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/105download> you can get the freebie instantly. Or, if you like to text just text the phrase 105download to 33444 and you can get your hands on it right away.

There you have it. I hope there were a few light bulb moments in this episode to help you look at your business differently or approach it with a different perspective so you can make sure it's growing at the rate that makes you insanely happy to be in the business that you've created.

Thank you so very much for being here with me and make sure you take action on this. If it spoke to you don't waste the time you just spent with me here. Instead, start moving toward taking action. I would love to hear about your success so if you choose a date for Phase I and Phase II jump on social media and let me know. I want to hear all about it.

I also want to tell you to be patient with yourself. Success, for most people, especially myself, does not happen overnight. If you just stick with it and believe in what you're doing and really insanely take care of those you serve you will see the success you're after. Good luck in all you do. I can't wait to connect with you again next week. Take care.

Show notes at: <http://www.amyporterfield.com/105>