



EPISODE 218

Seven Steps to Preselling Your Course

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AMY PORTERFIELD: Well hey there. Welcome back to another episode of The Online Marketing Made Easy Podcast. I'm your host, Amy Porterfield. Today we are talking about the seven steps of preselling your online course.

As an entrepreneur your business is constantly changing. That's the beauty of being an entrepreneur. From all of your learnings, your successes, and your once-in-a-while crash and burns you get to decide what to do next and how you want to do it.

I think that's what makes being an entrepreneur and creating your own business so exciting and fulfilling. You get to call the shots. You get to change things up. You get to do things on your terms.

That same kind of sentiment goes for you changing as a business owner. Things you once said "yes" to and things you once did, now you say "no" to. You evolve. You change.

I talked all about this in Episode #211, [Five Things I Said "Yes" to in the Early Years But Say "No" to Now](#). You're constantly evolving as a business owner, as an entrepreneur, and you're evolving inside of your business as well.

Things are going to look different as you start to learn more and do more. With that, it's true for me as well. I find myself changing in terms of what I think and what I do as I continue to build this business.

One thing I used to be really adamant about was that I don't think you should ever promote your course before you have it finished. The reason for that is because I used to presell my course back in the day, many, many, many years ago.

It was incredibly stressful and incredibly overwhelming. Because of that I didn't want that for my students. I was going to take that off the table for them and encourage them just to put their program together and then we will talk about promoting and launching it later.



However, things today are very different than when I first started launching courses almost ten years ago. I pay attention to trends and what's working and not working. Because I've had thousands of students go through Courses That Convert, my program teaching you how to create a course, I've learned a lot about where you are right now and where you want to go.

Through paying attention and learning what my students need I realized some of my students will find it incredibly valuable and useful if they presell their course and get it out there even before it's done.

Just to make sure we're on the same page, preselling a course means selling it in advance of the course being done and then delivering the content week by week in a live format online.

You haven't yet prerecorded all of the modules. You're likely delivering it live to your new paying students and then once you deliver it live over the course of a few weeks you now have a pre-recorded course.

You're going out there and selling it before you have it finished. That can create some stress and put you on the hook for getting it done but that's not necessarily a bad thing. I used to look at that in all negative terms.

Now I realize some of my students need a good kick in the butt to get it done. Preselling just might be that perfect kick in the butt.

This strategy isn't for everyone and that's why I give my students the option to either presell or just have the entire course finished before they promote it. Inside of my program Courses That Convert I teach it both ways.

You get to decide what's best for you. That's precisely why I created this episode today. I want to help you decide if the pre-sell strategy is a good fit. I'm going to walk you through the seven steps to get it done.

I'll give you the pieces you'll need to put together in order to make sure you have an offer and to make sure your course is validated to the point you know people are actually going to want it. I'll also give you the pieces that you need in order to get your first students through the door and you delivering your content in a timely manner.

That's what it's all about. Before I walk you through it I wanted to take a minute to tell you why I actually do like this strategy.



Preselling is a big validator of your course idea - I want you to have a pretty good idea if the course will sell even before you presell it.

Preselling is not the first step in validation. You are going to do a little work before you presell. You're going to interview your ideal customer avatar. You're going to learn their needs, their wants, their challenges. You're going to talk to the people you need to talk to in order to make sure that your idea is going to fly even before you presell it.

Once you do the initial work of validating the extra layer of validation that preselling can bring to the table is pretty awesome. You'll learn even more about what your ideal avatar needs as you start to presell it. That's a huge plus.

Preselling helps you build confidence about your training - Nothing builds confidence more than getting a few paying students through the door.

Preselling helps you with cash flow - I know that building the course and getting your online course up and running can sometimes be a bit of a pinch on your finances. That's why preselling is so great. You can bring in some revenue to help with some of the expenses to get that course off the ground.

Preselling helps you build momentum and accountability - By selling before your content has been created you have no choice but to deliver. Remember, I said you're basically going to be on the hook. Once you sell it you've got to get it out there. That's not necessarily a bad thing.

You get immediate feedback from actual students when you presell - Since it's more of a live interaction when you're delivering the content the first time all of that feedback is really valuable so you might want to tweak your course content before you actually do a full-blown launch after the presell.

There are a lot of plusses to preselling your online course.

One thing that will help you immensely is to outline your course idea before you ever start to think about preselling it. You want to make sure you have a really solid outline. The good news is that I did a podcast episode all about outlining your course.

I walk you through an exercise that is incredibly valuable. I got so much great feedback on this episode. You definitely want to check it out if you haven't yet outlined your course.



You want to do this before you do anything with preselling. It's Episode #206, The Post-It Content Creation Mini Training at <http://www.amyporterfield.com/206>. It's so good I want you to check it out for sure if you need some help with outlining your course before you presell.

Of course, this episode is brought to you by my program, Courses That Convert. I teach a much more robust version of preselling your course with step-by-step plans and templates to help you get this done as fast as humanly possible.

If you want to learn more about preselling and you want me to hold your hand through the process then you want to join Courses That Convert. I have a free masterclass that walks you through what that program is all about and what you're going to learn.

You can go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/courses> to sign up for my free masterclass. From there you can decide if you're ready for my signature program, Courses That Convert.

Now that I've set it all up for you we are going to get into those seven steps. Let's do it.

Step #1 – Determine Your Course Offer

When I say “offer” I mean how much will you charge and what kind of course package are you offering? I'm going to run through some questions you want to ask yourself in order to determine what your offer looks like and, of course, how much you're going to charge for it.

- 1) **What is the problem you are solving?** Get really clear on that one.
- 2) **What are the results you are promising?** The bigger the results, usually you can charge more for that program.
- 3) **How long will it take your students to reach those results?**
- 4) **What kind of access will your students have with you?** That's a big factor in putting your offer together and making it incredibly appealing. It's also a big factor in how much you can charge. The more access they get to you, you can likely charge more for that.
- 5) **Will you be offering a members only community like a private Facebook group?** Again, that's more access to you.
- 6) **How many modules will be in your program?**
- 7) **How many and what kind of bonuses will you be offering?**
- 8) **How long will it take someone to get through your entire program?**



Earlier I asked how long it would take your students to reach the results you're promising. This question is how long will it take to get through the entire program so that they can start to implement? Your students will be asking that question and that has a lot to do with perceived value. They want to get through the program as fast as humanly possible.

If you need some extra help, which many people do around pricing your online course, I want you to check out Episode #107 at <http://www.amyporterfield.com/107>. The episode is called How Do I Price My Online Course.

Step 1 is to determine your course offer.

Step #2 – Set Up Your Early Interest Page

Once you figure out your offer it's time to set up an opt-in page where you can capture name and email from those that are interested in your upcoming course. You'll create a stand-alone opt-in page. I like to use LeadPages to do this.

Just ask for first name and email and on that opt-in page include some information about your course. Just tease it a little bit. Give them enough to get curious about it. Include the fact that they will be one of the very first to know when your course goes live.

When somebody opts in to the stand-alone interest page you want to have a follow-up email ready to go. In the follow-up email you can include a little bit more information about your course and you could talk about when it will go on sale.

You can even include a hint at a discount when it goes on sale since they are on your special list. You don't have to discount it but you can. A lot of people like to discount the first time they go out with a course, especially if they are going to ask for feedback after each module to kind of treat it like a beta course.

If you give a discount then it's easier to ask for feedback after people are going through your course. You could tell them they are going to be the founding members and that is why you are offering the discount. You could play around with that.

I would also link to some piece of original content you've created that is aligned with the course you're going to sell. Give them something of value in that email. It's kind of like, "Now that you're waiting for the course to go live, in the meantime check out my latest podcast about XYZ. I think you're going to find it valuable."



Point them to whatever you might want to encourage them to go check out while you're getting ready to go live.

From there you also want to start driving traffic to your interest page. You'll do that first and foremost with what I call a content blitz. That leads us into Step #3.

Step #3 – Create Your 30-Day Content Blitz

I'm going to walk you through the 30-day content blitz. However, you know my style. I love to create cheat sheets anytime I'm walking you through a step-by-step process.

I have the seven steps to preselling your online course in a PDF cheat sheet waiting for you right now. All you need to do is go to <http://www.amyproterfield.com/218>.

That will take you to my show notes and inside my show notes you will see an opportunity to sign up and instantly download the PDF cheat sheet to walk you through the seven steps to preselling your online course.

Everything I'm sharing with you here has already been put into a cheat sheet waiting for you.

So, Step #3 is to create your 30-day content blitz. First, you are going to come up with ten different content ideas for a blog post, a podcast episode, Facebook Lives, whatever you want to do.

The goal is to be creating content that is aligned with the course you will eventually be selling.

After you come up with ten content ideas you're going to narrow those down to just four ideas. Choose your top four favorites and over the course of the next 30 days you are going to put out one new piece of content every single week.

Once a week for the next 30 days you will have a new piece of content. Again, you can mix it up. It can be a podcast episode one week, a Facebook Live the next, a blog post, or whatever you want to do.

You could make it simple and just do four weeks of Facebook Live. Do whatever works for you. I think that sounds like the easiest way to go.



The second thing you want to do is schedule your content so that you are releasing it every single week. I want you to put it on your calendar and choose the day of the week. I'd like to see it the same day every week, so mark the day of the week you're going to put out the new content as part of your content blitz.

Let's say you are going to be on Facebook Live every Tuesday at noon. That is your content blitz. It's important that you get some consistency for a full month so that you have all of these opportunities to talk about your upcoming course.

For the call to action for each of the four pieces of content it's going to sound something like this. Let's pretend you're on a Facebook Live. At the end you say, "So if you found this valuable and you want to dive deeper with me into this topic I have a brand new course that is coming out very soon. It's called XYZ. My goal of this course is to help you XYZ. If you want to be one of the very first to hear about it make sure to get on my wait list," or early bird list or interest list or whatever you want to call it.

I say to come up with a catchier name but use whatever works for you. Then all of your traffic from your content blitz will go to your early interest page. You want to have a handful of people to email the minute you go live to say, "Look, you asked for this and here it is."

Even if you just have 100 people on the early interest list that would be fantastic. Make that your first initial goal. Have 100 people raise their hands in the next 30 days to say, "Yes, when your course goes live I want to hear all about it."

If you can get more than 100, by all means do so.

Step #4 – Set Up Your Check-Out Page (Also Known as an Order Form Page)

This is where you are going to collect name, email, and credit card information. We're working behind the scenes now to make sure you have everything set up when you are ready to officially presell.

I like SamCart. I think it's one of the best order form tools out there. It's really easy to use. Because we're not setting up a full-fledged sales page for your pre-sell promotion you could use SamCart as your order form.

SamCart also has some features that allow you to add a little bit of information about what you're selling. You could outline the modules, talk about the bonuses, give a little snippet about the promise of your course right there on the order form.



I highly recommend you check it out. I have a 90-day trial for SamCart that I'm going to put in the show notes at <http://www.amyporterfield.com/218>. If you go to my show notes you can grab that special offer for SamCart. It is definitely the order form of my choice and it makes preselling a whole lot easier.

For the record, I'm not a fan of just offering PayPal. I think you need to go pro. I think PayPal looks like it's a hobby and not you selling a really legit online training course. That's why I'm suggesting SamCart and encouraging you to stay away from offering just PayPal.

Step #5- Set Up Your Live Workshop Components

This one has multiple steps. It might feel a little bit overwhelming. But that's why I created the PDF cheat sheet for you so that you don't have to take tons of notes. After I walk you through it in this episode (I'm going to talk it out with you just a bit) you are going to download the PDF at <http://www.amyporterfield.com/218> and you will have it right there in front of you when you are ready to presell your course. Good?

Just take a deep breath because there's a lot I want to cover here but I'm going to go quickly.

When you're setting up your live workshop components you are essentially creating the shell of your member site so that you can deliver your content and have a place to house all of it behind a login for those who pay for your course.

Step #1 inside of Step #5 (Setting Up Your Live Workshop Components) is that you are going to pick a platform. I love Kajabi because it has awesome templates that are really easy to use. You can set up your membership site for your upcoming course really easily and you don't need a coder or designer to help you do it.

You will want to create the structure of your member site so you have it ready to go when you start delivering your course. Each week when you start to deliver your content you will then load up that recording after you've delivered it live to your paying students.

You'll get that recording and you'll put it into your member site. That way if anybody missed your live session or, of course, if they want to go back to it, they have paid for it so now it's behind a login and it's protected and it's only available to those who already paid for your course.



The second step in Step #5 is to determine the details about your training. You want to think about how long the training is going to go. How many weeks? Maybe you will do six modules in six weeks.

Then you want to determine the date and time you are going to deliver the content. What that means is you are going to look at the calendar and, before you sell the course, you want to figure out when you are going to deliver it.

Give yourself a few weeks and decide that three to four weeks from “now” you are going to start to deliver your course. You will do it every “Wednesday” at “noon”. Of course you will record every session and let your paying students know it’s recorded in case they can’t make it live.

When you go to presell your course you want to tell them, “Okay, class starts two weeks from now, Wednesdays, noon. Everything’s recorded. Give me 48 hours after I deliver the new content and I will load it into your members area. I’ll send you an email when it’s loaded up.”

You want to really communicate with your new paying students about what they can expect. You want to figure that out before you presell. You’re going to determine the date and time of each of your live sessions.

You’re going to determine if you’re going to do a live Q&A at the end of each of your sessions. You can but you don’t have to.

Maybe even think about recording a welcome video way before you promote your course and load it up into your member site so that when somebody does buy they get into your members site and there is a welcome video saying, “Hey, can’t wait to get started.”

You can maybe even have a PDF below the video. Tell them you have created a PDF of all of the session dates and times.

Marie Forleo does this really well with B-School. You get a printout and you know because her course is delivered every week for eight weeks after you buy it. It’s prerecorded. It’s not delivered live but she drips out the content.

You can get a printout that will tell you exactly the dates and times of when the new content will be put out there. It makes people feel really at ease when you’re prepared.



After that you will want to choose your live delivery platform. If you're going to deliver it live for the next six weeks you need a platform to do so. I suggest you use Zoom. You can look into Zoom.

You can also use GoToWebinar but those are really great platforms for you to deliver your content live over the next six weeks to your new paying customers. Ideally, you can set it up that you send them a link and every week that same link works for them so that they're not getting a brand new link every week.

That gets very confusing. Zoom and GoToWebinar allow for the capability of sending one link that works every week for the next six weeks (or whatever it might be).

From there you will write your new student welcome email. Again, we're just setting expectations. We're communicating with these new students that haven't yet bought. We are getting prepared. We're behind the scenes right now.

You're going to write an email that once somebody buys from your SamCart order form you can send out an automated email that says, "Thank you so much. I'm so excited to get started with you. Here are all of the details you need to know for the next six weeks."

You're going to include the details in that welcome email as well as in a PDF they can get in the member site.

Finally, you are going to get your team in place. Think about hiring somebody to record your live sessions so you don't need to worry about it. Think about maybe getting a VA to help you through the next few months in order to deliver the content and make sure everything's organized.

Don't try to be a one-man or one-woman show through this whole process. That is too much work. If you're going to presell and put the campaign together and deliver the content week after week after week you at least need to get the support of a VA. I don't want you doing it alone.

We are moving into Step #6. Again, take a deep breath. It's all in the cheat sheet I've provided for you.

Step #6 – Promote a 48-Hour Flash Sale Offer



This is where we are getting into the promotion. You are now ready to email your early interest list with your limited time offer. In that email you will include information about what the program is all about and the price of the program.

If you're offering a discount let them know they are getting a discount and when you plan to increase the price. Let them know the number of spots available. I say to limit it so that it looks and feels exclusive.

You are also going to feel really good if you limit it to the first 20 people and you fill up all 20 people.

Deadline specifics. In this email where you are introducing people to your course to let them know it's live, open and they can buy now let them know how long they have: 48 hours, this date, this time, this offer goes away.

Of course you are going to link them to your SamCart checkout page. That's the 48-hour flash sale first email that goes out.

The next day you are going to send out your second email announcing the flash sale. In this email you will switch it up a bit. You are giving them another chance to sign up but make sure you really rely on that urgency.

Now they have less than 48 hours. Talk about what's included in the price of the program. Let them know how many spots are now available since, hopefully, some people have signed up. Of course you are going to link to your order form.

An optional part of this is to also do a webinar. If you are just starting out and you've never promoted anything before, you're deep in the weeds of creating this course, a webinar is going to feel too heavy.

A webinar is completely optional but if you've done a webinar before and now you're looking to presell and you feel confident you can put a webinar together to presell your course as well, by all means do it. A webinar is just going to fill up all of those spots a whole lot faster.

Step #7 – Deliver Your Content

Week by week you're going to create your slide decks for your upcoming live workshop. You're going to prepare any cheat sheets or checklists and you're going to



email your students before each training to remind them, “Tomorrow I’m live at this time. Here’s a reminder with your link. Here’s what we’re going to cover.”

You’re going to encourage them to get on live and then week after week you’re showing up to deliver the content, record it, and then if you feel good about those recordings you have your online course finished.

A lot of my students like to go back and rerecord everything after they’ve gone through it one time. That might feel daunting but let me tell you, after you’ve delivered your content once there is tons of stuff you’re going to want to change.

You are actually going to embrace the idea of getting in there again to prerecord it now that you’ve got the feedback from your founding members of your course. You know what you liked and didn’t like. You can kill it this time.

That prerecording will go a whole lot faster after you’ve delivered it once live so that makes everything a whole lot easier.

We’ve gone through the steps and your head is probably spinning and you are thinking you could not take action with that. Well, my friend, that’s why I have the PDF cheat sheet for you. Go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/218> in order to download the cheat sheet.

I’m going to walk through the steps one more time:

- 1) **Determine Your Course Offer.**
- 2) **Set Up Your Early Interest Page.**
- 3) **Create Your 30-Day Content Blitz.**
- 4) **Set Up Your Check-Out Page.**
- 5) **Set Up Your Live Workshop Components** - This is where it starts to feel a little bit heavy. You’re going to get a membership site set up. You know I love Kajabi. You’re going to determine how many modules. You could do in that post-it note mini training I talked about earlier. Go through that episode (<http://www.amyporterfield.com/206>) if you haven’t outlined your course yet. Once you do that you will determine the number of modules and how many weeks you’re going to deliver the live content and also the date and time you’re going to deliver it so that your upcoming paying students know what to expect. From there you are going to choose how to deliver the live content. I suggested Zoom. You’re going to write your new student email and then you’re going to get your team in place. Maybe hire a VA to help you if you don’t have a VA just yet.



- 6) **Promote a 48-Hour Flash Sale** through an email marketing campaign. You're going to send two emails talking about your flash sale. Then I would like to see you send one more email, a third email, saying, "You've got an hour left. Here's your last chance." I essentially say to send three emails during your 48-hour flash sale. If you want to get really fancy you'll add a webinar to the mix.
- 7) **Deliver the Content** to the same time and same place every week for the next several weeks. You are going to record it so that you have your course finished at the end of that period. However, if you're anything like me you're going to want to prerecord the course one more time after you've gone through it live because you're going to have a lot of ah-ha moments. Again, that's the beauty of preselling because those ah-ha moments help you make your course better. Getting through it once, oh my gosh, imagine if you just got through it once and then came back to the drawing table and prerecorded it after making some tweaks. It's going to feel so much better when you do so.

There you have it, the seven steps to preselling your online course. As I mentioned in the beginning, this strategy may or may not be a good fit for you. You always have the other option just to validate your idea and then put your entire course together, record all of the modules, get it all buttoned up, and then move into launching your course.

That is always an option for you. That is the way I usually do it and it does create a whole lot less stress. But if you need money now or if you want to validate the idea beyond your initial validation or if you're really looking to kind of ease into all of this and get some feedback from some paying students before you do a full-fledged launch then preselling might be the perfect solution for you.

Don't forget that I go through this entire process with a lot more detail, step by step, and templates inside of my program Courses That Convert. To learn more about that program go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/courses>.

Thank you so much for tuning in with me here. I'm so excited that I got to share this pre-sell strategy with you and I cannot wait to see you again next week. Bye for now.