



EPISODE 242

Choosing the Perfect Topic for Your First Digital Course (Perfect...AND Profitable!)

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AMY PORTERFIELD: Well hey there, welcome back to the Online Marketing Made Easy Podcast. I'm your host, Amy Porterfield, and I'm thrilled you're here today.

I have a little bit of a cold so if you listen to my podcast regularly you probably can pick that up right away. But the show must go on so here we are.

Today we're talking about how to choose the perfect topic for your first or next digital course and how to ensure the topic you choose will be profitable.

If you listen to this episode and you get a lot of value from it you might want to go back to [Episode #240](#) afterwards just in case you missed that one. That episode is The Three Types of Profitable Digital Courses You Can Create and How to Choose the Best Type of Course for Your Business.

I break down the starter course, the spotlight course, and the signature course which, I believe, are the three most profitable digital courses out there right now.

In this episode we're building from that and we're talking about how to get your inspiration for any one of the three types of courses. You can go back and listen to Episode #240 later on. You don't have to listen to it first, but I want you to have a really good understanding of the three types of the most profitable digital courses.

Now in this episode I'm going to give you a bunch of ideas as to where you can get your inspiration in terms of what topic you want to focus on for your course.

What makes this episode extra fun is that I'm using my own students as the examples. I think you'll see what's possible and I feel their stories will inspire you and also hopefully spark some creativity so that you know what you want to create inside of your own course.



As I do with all of my episodes now, my listener review spotlight is from Aria. Since she emailed me and did not post this publicly I'm just going to use her first name. A few weeks ago I went live with my podcast episode about my weight-loss journey. It was [Episode #239](#) and I'll link to it in my show notes if you missed it.

Right after I posted that episode this sweet message came in to our support desk. Aria wrote:

"I was so excited to listen to this week's podcast and find out that you're building a new lifestyle for yourself that supports all of your goals. Congratulations on both your weight-loss journey and your improved mindset. A year ago I was inspired by your candor."

I think Aria is talking about when I posted a year ago about my embarrassment around being overweight and not getting on video. She says:

"I was inspired by your candor. This month, I was inspired by your unwillingness to let your insecurities hold you back. You're a rock star, lady, thanks for spreading your light my way."

Then she signed it, "All the best, forever. Aria." I thought that was the sweetest way to end a little note like that.

Thank you, Aria. This message meant the world to me. When I share the private stuff, the non-marketing stuff, with all of you there is always a tinge of questioning whether I am being a little bit too indulgent.

When I get notes like this I just know I am on the right path. So, Aria, thanks again.

Before we jump into how to find your most profitable course topic I just released a brand new freebie called The Ultimate Course Creation Starter Kit. In this starter kit I'll show you how to choose the right type of course for your business (that topic goes back to #240 so if you missed it you definitely want the starter kit).

I'm going to show you how to choose the right course topic for your business, the perfect course name to attract your perfect audience, and I'm going to show you how to kick start your course idea with a little social media validation to ensure you are moving in the right direction.



Go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/starterkit> in order to grab my brand new freebie, especially if you've been considering creating a digital course in your business.

Let's talk about your course topic and how to ensure it's a profitable one. First and foremost, I'm guessing you already have a course topic in mind. Most people I talk to have been thinking about an idea for their course for some time now but they're just not sure how to move forward and they aren't certain if their audience will actually pay them for it.

I'm going to walk you through what I call three topic approaches to help you choose your first or next course topic. Here we go.

Approach #1 – Teach your personal success path

If you've gotten results for yourself in any area of your life you can teach how you did it in your course.

Let me tell you a story of one of my students, Katrina Ubell. Katrina was a practicing physician for ten years. Over that ten years she had gained 50 pounds. She found herself with low energy and frustration over the weight and just hated carrying the extra pounds, especially as a busy female physician.

She knew it was holding her back so she lost the 50 pounds. She figured out what worked best for her schedule and her busy life as a physician and what she needed overall.

She lost the weight and over time other busy female physicians at her work were asking how she did it, "How did you do it? Can you help me do it? I want to know all your secrets."

She actually started helping women, busy female physicians she worked with, one on one to lose the weight. She took what she knew and helped a few other busy female physicians do the same.

From there she realized, "Wait a second, I cannot continue to take on more and more clients because I'm just one person."

She actually created a digital course to teach her own success path, what worked for her in terms of losing weight as a busy female physician. She wasn't creating a course



to help all women lose weight, but the women she knew very intimately because she was one of them.

She built this course and it's funny because when I talked to her she said, "Amy, I knew nothing about online marketing."

She actually said, "I knew negative." Let's take it even a step back about online marketing. She also said she had no desire or ambition to start an online business. But when she realized she knew she could help other busy female physicians and she knew the success path because she lived it, she was inspired.

She went on to create this course and then she learned how to do webinars through my framework I teach with putting together a webinar to sell a digital course.

Get this, she put together her webinar to sell her digital course and made \$255,000 with one webinar and a couple of emails to follow it up. It's crazy, right?

Just to make sure that wasn't a fluke she did again a few months later and made another \$250,000 with another launch. It was the same course, same webinar. How cool is that?

Katrina is a perfect example of creating a course based on her personal success path. I want to point something out here. Notice before Katrina jumped into creating a course she worked with a few people one on one.

You don't have to do that although it's definitely a great way to get a little extra clarity around your own success path because when you teach it to somebody else you see the holes or you get new ideas so it's a really good experience.

You just need to do it with a few people over a month or two or three months, whatever works for you, but getting that one-on-one experience is really valuable.

A lot of my students do that right before they dive into creating their course. Or, while they are creating their course they will work with a few people one on one just to get that experience. I love how Katrina did it and she is such a great star student because she put her head down, she made it work, and she kept moving forward.

Let me tell you one more story. This one is about my student, Cathy Heller. Cathy was a songwriter who went from losing a record deal (which is devastating) to making \$300,000 a year writing songs for TV commercials and TV shows.



When she started to see success in this area a bunch of people kept asking, “How do you do this? What are you doing? How are you making it work?”

That’s a really big tell-tale sign for you. If you’re thinking about a course topic and people keep asking you, “How are you doing this,” pay attention because that is a digital course right there.

She went on from this failed record label to making \$300,000 a year writing songs for TV and she decided she would create a digital course to teach other people how to do it because she knew it could be lucrative and she knew people wanted it.

She validated her idea and then she created her course. She told me later, “Amy, I was so naïve because I knew nothing about online marketing.”

I just want to hit that home because Katrina said something very similar. When you follow a step-by-step program, such as one of mine or if you don’t want mine somebody else’s you trust, when someone is walking you through the process all of that lack of confidence around not knowing what to do can melt away if you find the right mentor.

Just know you don’t need to know what you’re doing before you embark on a big goal such as creating a digital course as long as you find someone who will walk you through it step by step.

Cathy and Katrina are great examples for you if you’re thinking you don’t know enough about launching a course or creating a course to be able to do it. Just know if you find the right mentor and the right program you’re golden.

Back to Cathy. She decided to create a digital course. Along the way she slowly started to build her email list while she created her course. She had 1,200 people on her email list. That is fantastic. I love that and think it’s a really solid number.

When she did her first webinar for her digital course she had 1,000 people sign up. She said, “Amy, I didn’t know how to do a webinar but I put this together, 1,000 people showed up, and I just spoke from my heart.”

She talked about a course that she had created and why she thought it was so valuable.



That, to me, I absolutely love. When you market from the heart it makes a huge difference and people know. And that's exactly what she did.

Here we go, her first launch was three weeks before she gave birth to her baby. Yeah, she was pregnant throughout this whole process. Three weeks before her baby came she made \$150,000. One course. First launch.

Six months later she did another launch and made another \$150,000. Then she ended up creating more digital courses based on what she learned from her audience from the very first course.

She started a podcast and on that podcast she has a lot of sponsors and she makes money from that as well. In 21 months she built a multi-million dollar online business. This is from a girl that said, "Amy, I knew nothing about online marketing."

How cool is that, right? It's so good.

Before I move on to the next approach I want to give you a little behind-the-scenes digital course secret that has served me well for many, many years. Everything you want to teach in your course can likely be found online for free.

Yep, you heard me right. I believe a simple Google search or a search on YouTube, specifically, will probably give you every tip, secret, and strategy I teach inside of my own courses.

But I've still built a multi-million dollar business selling my digital courses. Why is that? Because people that want true results, are serious about getting results, do not want to hunt and peck all over Google to find out how to get those results.

In my case, if you are serious about creating a digital course the last thing you want to do is spend weeks or months hunting and pecking through Google to figure out what to do and how to do it.

You sure as heck don't want it out of order, right? Again, I want to really hit home. People that want true results are going to pay for it. That's the secret I want to share with you.

When it comes to your course topic the way you make it profitable is by putting it into a system, a roadmap, a plan, or a step-by-step guide. Whatever makes the most sense



for your specific content: Systems, processes, and steps sell. That's what your audience will pay for.

You are going to show them how to get from Point A, usually a painful or challenging or confusing place they are at in their life at that moment, somewhere they don't want to be. And you are going to get them to Point B, a place where they are getting results, as fast and efficiently as possible.

That's what sells. So keep that in mind as you continue to think about your course topic. Of course, if you become a student of mine inside my program, Digital Course Academy, then I'm going to walk you through the process.

I have perfected what I call the Porterfield Process for Outlining Your Course. What kind of ego is that? I named it after myself. But I had to because I've been doing this over ten years.

I know how to pull out a process or system from all of those ideas that are circling in your head. That's one thing I know I do well. So I take you through this process that we go through over a week, just a little time each day, to get all of those ideas out of your head and into a Google doc so that you have your system so you can sell a system that people will actually want to pay for.

Even if you don't become a student of mine, find a way to get those ideas into a system, process, steps, or a roadmap so that people will actually pay for it. Good?

Approach #2 – Teach the One-On-One Approach

Teach the one-on-one approach you have used with your clients. If you're already working with customers or clients one on one and you have a certain way you work with your clients, a certain way you teach your clients right now, you can take that approach and turn it into a digital course so you can move away from the one-on-one client work that many of us enjoy in the beginning but get totally burnt out with over time.

You can take that one-on-one work and actually create a course and launch it. It becomes so powerful because you've already proven that your process, system, or roadmap works.



I wanted to pull this approach in and talk about it because many of you listening already work with clients. You already have your framework. You might know it or you might not know it but it's there in your one-on-one client work.

Let me give you an example. This is one of my favorites. This is Lauren Messiah. Lauren was a celebrity stylist. The way she says it, she was sick and tired of working with celebrities.

I know, it sounds crazy, right? But maybe not. We know celebrities can get a little bit looney, right? She was just tired of working with celebrities so she started styling female executives, entrepreneurs, and she started teaching people in actually ten-day workshops how to style themselves.

These were ten-day workshops. She said, "Okay, Amy. When I was doing these workshops they were extremely expensive and my students weren't getting really big results."

I think ten days is a long time to do an event. She also said she was exhausted and burnt out. Sounds familiar, right? Katrina also hit that burnout phase.

She said, "Amy, the only way I could scale was to either do more classes, which I did not want to do (in-person classes), or create a digital course."

She knew she could get more margin in her life if she created a course. So Lauren created Personal Style University. It was her way of taking everything she knew about styling somebody in person and showing them how to do it in a course so they could learn from the comfort of their own home.

She didn't have to run all over LA with these huge racks of clothing, running here and there, dragging clothes, trying to figure out what would work best for this client and that client and that client.

She saved her own burnout but she also created something where these women, who really cared about their style and finding their own personal style, but they got to learn in the comfort of their own home.

When you're talking about executives and entrepreneurs, they are busy. They will take a digital course if it means they can get from Point A to Point B as fast as humanly possible.



This course she sold was \$1,000. In her first launch she made \$50,000. That is a lot more than styling someone one on one. But in her second launch she made \$150,000.

She went on to launch even more courses and, let me tell you, the girl is killing it. One thing I really love about Lauren's story is that she went from an email list of 2,000 people to 30,000 people.

One thing that's really cool about creating digital courses and launching them over and over and over again, notice my students continue to launch whether it be live launches or evergreen. Evergreen is what I move all of my students to. That's where we want to get.

We want to put it on evergreen so you're not live launching. But I always encourage my students to live launch two to three times just to figure out what works and with Lauren, because she continued to launch, her email list grew.

When you launch people sign up for your webinar. Whether they buy or not they are getting on your email list. Now the next time you launch they are more likely to buy.

Launching with webinars builds your email list while you're making money. It's a win-win for sure.

I need to brag about Lauren because 1) She didn't use any Facebook ads for her launches. She relied on building her email list and she really nurtured her email list and didn't spend any money on ads.

I think you should all experiment with Facebook ads. But, knowing that Lauren was able to make that kind of money without investing in ads, because she had a viable email list, that's impressive.

You know how I mentioned that Lauren went on to create additional courses? One of her courses is called The School of Style. She teaches other stylists all her tips and secrets and techniques.

This course was actually bigger than her last. Her first launch with her School of Style was a \$240,000 launch. Pretty impressive, right?

The thing is, and the most beautiful thing to be exact, the students that are coming out of her course, School of Style, are doing really big things.



Four of her students from her digital course are on tour with Beyoncé. Yeah, Beyoncé. Styling Beyoncé. I needed to say it three times to really make sure you heard me right. I was blown away.

She also has students that are styling for celebrity shoots for the Oscars and on commercials and major television shows.

Remember, your digital course is, of course, not just about launching it and making really good money. You could be changing lives every single day and that's the stuff I live for.

To go back to this approach, just to make sure you understand why I told you this story, Lauren took her one-on-one styling approach that she would use with clients and put it into a course.

Then she thought, "You know what, I could expand on this. Not only did I create a course to teach other women how to style themselves, I know a lot about styling. I've gotten great results for myself so I'm going to teach other stylists what I know."

She's used both approaches, working one on one with clients and taking that roadmap to put it into a course, then taking everything she knows about being successful as a stylist and putting that into a course.

She has actually used both approaches and has had amazing success. Pretty cool, right?

I can't guarantee your success if you were to create a digital course and use any of these approaches. But what I can tell you about all of these women, Lauren, Cathy, and Katrina, they were all very serious about getting results. They put their head down and really followed the step-by-step system that I laid out for them.

I think students like that, people that are really in it to win it, their opportunity for success is limitless. I just wanted to put that out there because I know many of you listening are very serious about getting results and that kind of mindset is going to get you very far.

Approach #3 – Teach a Technique, Method, or Tangible Process

I've never talked about this approach before and I've really been giving some thought how to help you find the perfect course topic. This approach is really cool. I think it



might actually spark some great ideas that you haven't even thought about yet that are sitting right in front of you. You can teach a technique, a method, or tangible process that you've used to enhance or improve an area of your life.

I'm going to say it one more time. Teach a technique, a method, or a tangible process that you've used to enhance or improve an area of your life.

When I give you the examples this one will make the most sense in terms of how it's different from the others. So let's do it.

My first example is from my student, Melissa Norris. Melissa created the course, Home Canning With Confidence. It was a \$97 course. Home canning, yeah, like putting tomatoes in cans, that kind of thing. Canning With Confidence.

I had to explain it like that because I wasn't sure what it was when she first told me about it either. Then she explained it and I totally got it.

Let me tell you about Melissa. Melissa was working as a pharmacy tech for many, many years. She had extremely long hours and an extremely long commute from home to the pharmacy.

She had a husband and children at home and it just wasn't working for her anymore.

Over time she realized she could actually create a business by teaching people how to homestead. It is a lifestyle she was raised in since a little girl.

She thought she could turn her experience with homesteading into a business. Specifically, she realized, "Wait a second! I could create a digital course that could take over the revenue of my pharmacy tech job."

She thought about this for a while. She watched what other people were doing and decided she could do that.

Her first course, which I call a starter course, again, was Home Canning With Confidence. It's a foundational program for Melissa's business.

She said some of her students start out not knowing how to grow or can anything and now they are able to feed their families for a year on what they've grown themselves.



Remember, it's all about that impact, right? I wanted to bring this story up because Melissa took a tangible process that she was already doing in her own home. She was canning. That's what Melissa did.

She was raised with homesteading. She goes way beyond canning in her business but this is where she started. She was already doing this tangible process and thought she could teach this type of process to other people that want to can and, eventually, probably expand and teach them other homesteading techniques.

That's precisely what she did.

What I love about Melissa is that she took baby steps into creating her digital course business. That's precisely what I did as well. You all know my story. I took many baby steps to move out of my corporate job with Tony Robbins into my own business.

Melissa told herself that she would not quit her pharmacy tech job until her online business was making twice as much as her pharmacy tech job.

It took her two years to make twice as much in the online business than the pharmacy tech job. Then she quit.

I'm all about baby steps. Whatever works for you, as long as you keep the eye on the prize and you don't give up no matter how long it takes. Melissa is a perfect example of this.

I love her story because, again, Approach #3 is about taking something that's a tangible approach or some kind of method or technique you use in your own life in order to create more efficiency or productivity or enhance something or improve something. Then you teach it inside of your digital course.

A little side note. I had told you that Melissa created this starter course that was \$97, Home Canning With Confidence. In [Episode #240](#), I talk about the starter, spotlight, and signature courses; the three types of courses I want you to choose from to create and then you choose your topic from there.

What I love about a starter course is you learn so much about your ideal customer avatar and then you make the big decisions that are incredibly lucrative.



The starter course always leads to something bigger. At least I believe it does. For Melissa it definitely did because from there she created a lucrative membership site that branched off from her own experience with her starter course.

She learned about her ideal customer avatar. She knew what they wanted. She knew how to talk to them and position her messaging and what they really needed to get results in their homesteading lifestyle.

From there she created the membership site. I hear of so many of my students who start with a digital course, learn more about what their audience wants, learn more about what will be incredibly profitable, and then from there they create something else that really expands their business, usually a membership site.

I love the combination of digital courses and membership sites. I feel like they are like peanut butter and jelly, which is delicious, right? It is in my world.

There is one more example I want to share with you and that is Anna Digilio. You have all heard about Anna Digilio if you watched the Facebook Live I did with her or I just kind of brag about her all the time.

This little Italian is spitfire. Actually, I have no idea if she's Italian. I need to ask her, but that last name is definitely Italian. So either she's Italian or her husband has to be Italian. Anyway, she's a spitfire.

With that, let me tell you about Anna. She was a second-grade math teacher for 23 years. 23 years! Second grade math teacher.

As a math teacher you're not going to know about online marketing. She knew nothing. Again, she is another one that came to me and said, "I knew nothing about starting an online business."

However, she got the idea to take the curriculum, which would be a tangible process, that she used to teach her students and sell that curriculum to other teachers.

She made her curriculum into digital templates that she could sell to other teachers. She started to do this and it did really well. Then she thought this could kind of being a thing. She was doing it on the side. You've got to love a good side hustle.

She started to search online marketing. This cracks me up. She said, "Amy, I Googled online marketing and I found your podcast, Online Marketing Made Easy. I just binge



listened to it and learned about digital courses and webinars and membership sites and list building and all that stuff.”

Then she decided she would take my webinar framework and create a webinar to sell her digital curriculum to second-grade teachers.

That’s what I love. She started out only selling to second-grade teachers. Talk about niching yourself down, that’s exactly what she did. She wasn’t selling her curriculum to all teachers.

It’s the same with Katrina. She wasn’t helping all women lose weight. She was helping busy physicians. Anna’s helping second-grade teachers.

You can expand on that and Anna eventually did when she learned more about her audience. But she started with a very specific niche and I really believe that’s how you get seen and heard in a very noisy online world.

She did her first webinar six weeks after she had binge listened to my podcast and got my webinar framework program. She made \$10,000 on her first webinar. It was the first one she had ever done in her life.

Let’s talk about \$10,000. Some of you are like, “Yes!” Others are like, “Ugh, \$10,000. That’s not nearly enough.”

Imagine if you’re a second-grade teacher all of your life. \$10,000 is a lot of money.

For those of you who think it’s not enough, don’t worry, Anna went on to create a million-dollar business selling her digital curriculum, selling digital courses, and starting a membership site.

She has a million-dollar plus business. It’s only getting bigger. She focused on growing her email list. She focused on creating the right type of digital courses and she really narrowed down on who her audience was.

I absolutely love her story. She’s a firecracker, like I said, and a go getter. She was serious about getting results so she put her head down and did the work.

All of these people that I’ve talked about knew nothing about online marketing when they first got started.



Please, please, please don't ever think you need to have it all figured out before you start your digital course or before you launch that digital course with webinars. Find your mentor. I would love it to be me.

But even if it's not there are other people that teach digital courses in webinars. Find the mentor that you really resonate with, that really gets you, and will be patient with you and walk you through step by step. Let them teach you how it's done.

I'll leave you with this. I believe everyone has a knowledge, a knowing, a skill set they can teach. I believe everyone has something in them they can teach inside of a digital course.

You've either gotten results for yourself or you've gotten results for somebody else or you have this tangible process or method you've used in your life that you can teach others.

Start there. Start with yourself or the people you've worked with one on one. Tap into that. Allow yourself to dream a little. Get creative. Do not...Hear me out, if you're multi-tasking come back to me...Don't let the fear of "what will others think of me trying to teach this" stop you from moving forward and creating your digital course.

Do not even listen to that fear. What others think about you is none of your business. It shouldn't even enter into your mind. If it does say, "Oh, I see you and I'm letting that go."

Creating a digital course business has literally transformed my life and the lives of so many of my students. I've experienced firsthand what it feels like to transition from an unreasonably demanding corporate career to running a high-profit and high-impactful digital course business.

More than anything else, I really just want you to experience what's possible when you create your own digital course. If you're a coach or consultant or an expert in any field or maybe you have a service-based business you owe it to yourself to at least explore what your life and business would look like if you created a digital course and allowed that digital course to take over the bulk of the revenue you're making.

Here's something that happens when you do so. You get to say "yes" to the things you want to work on in your business and "no" to all of the things that are draining you. The digital course is actually bringing in the bulk of your revenue so now you get to say "yes" and you get to say "no" when you want to.



If you love this idea of a digital course I want you to take a real tangible step to get started and that is to just grab my free guide. It's brand new. I just created it. It's called The Course Creation Starter Kit.

In that starter kit I'll show you how to choose the right course type for your business, the perfect course name to attract your ideal customer, and how to kick start your course topic idea with a little social media validation. You can grab your copy of my brand new free guide at <http://www.amyporterfield.com/starterkit>.

Guys, I'm so very thrilled that you joined me here today. I love this topic. You can tell I freaking love talking about digital courses. One thing I want to do more and more is tell the stories of my students.

I want to stop talking just about me and what it's meant for my business and my revenue and just share the stories of other people that are doing it in different ways than I'm doing it and who are crushing it.

Today I really focused on the people that said they didn't know a lot about digital marketing, at least most of the stories I told today, the women said, "I don't know even where to start," but then they didn't let that old them back.

That is what changes the game for you.

I can't wait to talk to you again next week, same time, same place. Next week I'm going to talk to you about how to sell more while creating less and get your life back if you've spent the year feeling overwhelmed, stressed, and confused on most days.

I've got a really special message to share with you and I can't wait to get there. I'll see you soon. Bye for now!