

CREATE COURSES FOR PROFIT



TEXTBOOK

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Lesson 1

The Secret to Course Success

Learning Objective: Find a Topic That Pays

When you begin creating a course on the subject, both you and your potential students care about, look at similar courses you can find. How do you know it's going to be worth your time to add your course to the mix?

Choose a specific topic that thrills your fans and followers – a course they will be ready to pay to have it.

Beyond Demographics

Identifying your paying audience takes more than basic demographic research. Age, gender, education, income, religion, the number of children they have, and whether they own pets is just a starting point.

To identify a paying audience, you need to invest in two other practices. Create a research system that you can use to find the right audience for any product or program. Research the details about psychographics – that will tell you what your students will pay.

What is psychographics?

Psychographics is a form of emotional demographics. It measures beliefs, attitudes, lifestyle, expectations, preconceptions, and personality.

Psychographics includes fears, hopes, interests, habits, passion, and challenges. It consists of the conscious and unconscious decision making behind demographics.

Understanding the psychology of your ideal buyer is vital to know before creating your course that they will pay for and get benefits promised.

Here is an important point to understand – you don't want someone to purchase your course, but not take it. You want the students to engage with NAMS, Inc.

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you and buying other products and programs as well as recommend you to their audience.

You want lifetime fans. Get the psychographics right means you know how to reach them. They become repeat buyers. You can see that they purchase your other offers, plus they will trust you when you present affiliate offers.

Think about your favorite experts that fit in this category, people whose offers you always check out because you like and trust them. Your first experience with those experts was a good one. Their sales pages or post struck an emotional feeling with you. You purchased and got the help you needed. They delivered what they promised, and you know you can trust them in future sales.

People always respond well to value, but psychographics also involves defining what value means to your ideal student. Someone hoping to impress their new Italian mother-in-law who is seeking a recipe for Pecorino Ravioli with Walnuts and Figs is going to perceive a recipe for that dish priceless. In contrast, a recipe for Fig Newtons will not work because that's not what she's looking for and not what she urgently needs. That is about 'perceived value.' It's all in the eye of the beholder.

Your demographics will only show that your ambitious cook is 29-35 years old, college-educated, married, no children. It will not show you that she has an Italian mother-in-law and has only recently become interested in cooking.

There are several ways to collect psychographic information.

- ☐ Targeted surveys and polls with limited questions and choices
- ☐ Sliding scale market surveys
- ☐ Open response surveys
- ☐ Focus summaries
- ☐ Polls

Multiple third-party apps create all types of market research and offer numerous options using them. Some can do quizzes and feedback plus collect the names and email information from anyone taking the polls, surveys, and quizzes.

On your blog and social media, pay attention to the comments people are making. That helps you see real-time what kind of response you will get for your course. Polls and surveys get people thinking. They can start a conversation that you can review for clues.

Psychographics give you the data about your audience's inner needs and secrets that you can't afford to ignore. You can get started by asking yourself the right questions about your ideal student and follower so you can research the answers.

- ☐ What does your student think about [your topic – work from home, learn new skills, budgeting, etc.]
- ☐ What do they believe about [your topic]
- ☐ What do they value about [your topic]
- ☐ What do they want when it comes to [your topic]

No matter what mix of psychographics and demographics you use, it's all about supplying what your ideal student needs to solve an immediate and pressing problem.

The Pain Points

Psychographic information can help you more accurately identify pain points that will cause your ideal student to take your course. If you want to ensure you reach her, you will need to go deeper.

That's the key to the rule of useful market research. When you think you've done your research, dig deeper.

Most course creators do token market research and jump into action creating their courses. But let's look deeper – how many of those are sold and generating income.

The better plan is to dig deeper.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice multiple research methods | <input type="checkbox"/> Take time to analyze responses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identify your ideal student | <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-check results |

Successful course producers get specific. They don't teach a course called "Beekeeping" - they teach courses like "An Introduction to Keeping Bees – Everything You Need to Know Before You Start."

After the introduction and overview, they present next-level, specific courses like "Honeybee Pests and Diseases: Keeping Your Hive Healthy" or "Preparing Your Honeybee Colony for Winter."

Recognizing the Real Stumbling Block

In the previous example, preparing a bee colony for winter is a specific task aspiring beekeepers need to know. Just before Fall could be the best time to offer this course – not in early spring – so you need to take into account timing too. As winter approaches, you can count on that aspiring beekeepers are all about how to prepare the hive for winter – that's their most current and immediate stumbling block.

Honeybee pests and diseases provide an example of a real pain point for aspiring beekeepers. You need to know your potential students so that you can identify what they are stuck on. For instance, preparing hives for winter, or what is causing them panic and pain right now, such as sick bees, is a motivation to do something about it.

You don't need to know what your ideal students' 'pain point' is – they might have several pain points. Again, you need to know which specific pain point is stopping them from moving toward their goal right now.

And, you need to know what their most immediate goal is, as well as their ultimate goal. That is the way of thinking and mindset you as a teacher need to develop.

Identify where your ideal student is stuck, and you're halfway to knowing what the topic of your course should be. It's usually the step they are always complaining about or asking how to do, over and over.

Especially do your best to find out which similar courses they keep investing in. Someone who keeps taking "Business Budgeting," "Finance for Business" and "Money Management for Business" courses is someone who hasn't got

past their business finances sticking point if these courses are all at the same level.

The obstacle keeping them at a standstill is your hint to what your students will rush to pay for. Identify it using detective work, polls, surveys, and even formal market research if you have the budget for the latter.

Run a SWOT analysis to isolate the problem area.

You do this by identifying:

- ☐ Strengths
- ☐ Weaknesses
- ☐ Opportunities
- ☐ Threats

Your SWOT analysis relates more to your strengths and weaknesses. The opportunities and threats come from your ideal audience and your competition, respectively.

Match Their Needs to Your Skills & Experience

You've identified their big pain point. Now ask yourself, "Where do I fit in? What can I help them achieve? What can I show them?"

Once you've answered that, ask the million-dollar question:

"How will this change their lives?"

Even a small transformation in mindset and/or circumstances can get your ideal student un-stuck and help her move forward with renewed excitement toward her goal.

Think about things you have helped others do in the past:

- ☐ What do people always ask you for help with?
- ☐ What do people ask you questions about?

- ☐ What did you help them do? Understand? Achieve?

Whatever you decide to teach, it has to be transformative – just like coaching.

It has to help your ideal student:

- ☐ Master at least one vital aspect of a new skill
- ☐ Get past an obstacle
- ☐ Complete a task she has never been able to complete before
- ☐ Help her understand something that has previously always been a frustrating closed door
- ☐ Undergo an epiphany
- ☐ See a significant improvement in her life, learning, business, hobby, etc

You may end up with a list of four or five ideas or more. That is when you should run a poll!

But first, make a plan.

- ☐ Is this course going to be a one-off, so that their choices are 'either/or'?
- ☐ Or can you position these topics into a series of courses, each one escalating in complexity, building on the one before, and increasing your student's skill or knowledge level?

SERIES: SEWING MASTERY	
Course 1	Sewing Mastery: Sewing a Simple Seam
Course 2	Sewing Mastery: Sewing French Seams
Course 3	Sewing Mastery: Inserting a Simple Zipper
Course 4	Sewing Mastery: Inserting a Blind Zipper

How to Ensure Your Course Stands Out

The preceding example is over-simplified to get across our point. These are not course ideas that would generate paying customers in the world of sewing. It's more like something people could quickly look up and find a YouTube video to show them how to do each seam.

That is something you have to watch out for too.

Ask yourself:

- ☐ Why will my ideal student pay money for my course? What am I offering her that she can't find easily via Google or YouTube?
- ☐ What significant advantage will be taking your course give her, versus researching this herself?
- ☐ What can I share or show her that my competitors can't or won't share or show?
- ☐ What is the ONE selling point that will light my ideal student up like a Christmas tree?
- ☐ What will ONE benefit of my course my ideal student gets excited about? What is ONE feature I can include that others don't?

That is where it boils down to taking the time to get to know your ideal student accurately. Only you will be able to decide what your most significant advantage is going to be.

Simplify a topic that others have never made simple. Your particular skill is knowing what to focus on and what to cut out.

Save her time showing her a method that will get the job done in half the times, compared to your competitors' courses.

Offer a complimentary one-on-one email after every lesson or module, so that she can get your answers to her questions.

Offer a live critique webinar at the end of the course, where students can share the result of what they learned in the course (for example, websites they've designed) and get a valuable critique from you.

Offer access to your team of outsourced contractors to set up a particularly tricky step. For example, have your expert team members format and upload a Kindle book for her after you've helped her edit her novel.

Offer a closed Facebook Group for paying students only, where they get daily private access to you.

Take the time to research and get to know:

- ☐ Your strengths, skills, preferences, and weaknesses
- ☐ Your ideal student – her most urgent need and what change she needs to make
- ☐ Your competitors – what need they are not fulfilling

By the end of the process, you should have a solid, researched idea for a course that will sell.

Lesson 2

Why Picking the Perfect Name Will Make or Break Your Course

Teach Them What to Expect to Fulfill Their Expectations

Before creating catchy titles, you need to let potential students know what you are offering to teach them, how you are proposing to teach it, and what they are going to get at the end of the course.

Your course name should let people instantly know:

- ☐ The topic
- ☐ What type of course it is
- ☐ What learning style it engages
- ☐ What it promises

For example, kinesthetic learners, those who learn by doing, would respond well to something called a “Hands-On Guide to ”or “Hands-On Introduction to.”

If you are teaching students to use a physical tool or piece of software.

If your student is a linear learner who prefers text, a “How to” title may work better, for example, “How to Run Engineering Simulations.”

The next step is to check your course name on Google. There’s an excellent reason for doing this if you type in the prefix “how to” and the topic “engineering simulations” you will, in most cases, see multiple repeats of the same generic name over and over.

What tips you off to how you could get specific. Say you want to teach the ANSYS system. The “hands-on introduction” part is generic, and you’ll get lost in the pages. Getting specific in your title and calling your course “A Hands-on Introduction to Creating Engineering Simulations Using ANSYS Software” immediately catches the attention only of those who are struggling with ANSYS.

The generic data in your title, “A hands-on introduction to”:

- ☐ Tells people it is a practical guide
- ☐ Attracts kinesthetic learners
- ☐ Promises to show them how to do something
- ☐ Tells them it is an introductory level.

The specific detail in your title:

- ☐ Makes your course stand out
- ☐ Attracts those who want to master ANSYS
- ☐ Disqualifies those who don’t use ANSYS

And that is a good thing!

Avoid Boring Course Names While Being Descriptive

Your course names might be descriptive, but they should never be boring.

Boring course names mean NO SALES! It doesn't matter how great the topic is if the name falls flat no one will ever "buy."

Here are five tiny tactics that will help you spice up your course titles:

Use Active Verbs

Active verbs excite and inspire action.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grow | <input type="checkbox"/> Finish | <input type="checkbox"/> Design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make | <input type="checkbox"/> Publish | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create | <input type="checkbox"/> Speak | |

Mention a Key Benefit

If you can find a natural way to show the benefits of your course in your title, your chances of capturing attention will skyrocket.

What do YOU think makes your course more appealing? Is it "the easy way" to do something? Is it "the Super-fast Way" to do something? Is it a "complete course"? Is it a "Master Class"? A "Bootcamp?"

Tapping into the right benefit means knowing what appeals to your perfect student. Is she looking for a Bootcamp in a community setting, with other learners who are jumping in, full of determination? Then "Bootcamp" is going to appeal to her more than "Masterclass."

If she's already at an advanced level, however, then a "Master Class" would be more appealing. And if she's pressed for time and doesn't want to spend weeks learning what you teach, a "One-day Workshop" or "the Super-fast Way" is going to be most appealing.

Build a Promise

Words such as “Bootcamp,” “Complete,” and “Masterclass” also make implicit promises, so make sure you are capable of delivering on that promise. If you promise a super-fast method to complete a task, gear all your energy towards ensuring that is precisely what your impatient, time-strapped student is going to learn.

How do people negate the promises they make in a course name? Well, let’s say you did promise a “super-fast” course.

Here’s what that would look like.

PROMISE: “SUPER-FAST”	
Keeping the Promise	Breaking the Promise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Repeat the promise quickly at the beginning of the lesson and move on.<input type="checkbox"/> Give instructions clearly, but with a minimum of words and maximize clarity.<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a well-edited and tested script ahead of time.<input type="checkbox"/> Keep your lesson focused and prepare carefully ahead of time so that you hit every point efficiently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Go into a long rambling introduction.<input type="checkbox"/> Tell your life story, share your ‘why,’ talk about your epiphany, tell them why it matters.<input type="checkbox"/> Wing it. Abandon the cue cards or script you wrote because you’re getting tangled or realize you missed one of the points.<input type="checkbox"/> Backtrack because you missed a point.

Simply put – your course should reflect your title promise and deliver it.

Avoid Clichés

You've probably received emails about courses that make you click away instantly. Often this is because the presenter has used a popular title format, so popular it's become a cliché. Or it incorporates familiar clichés like "pushing the envelope."

Cliché example: "Taking [Your Topic] to the Next Level."

Clichés tell your ideal reader nothing useful. They're like certain politicians, and they sound dynamic for a split second, then you realize the words they're speaking don't mean anything.

Target Specific Values

If you can mention the most relevant value that is important to your ideal student, be sure to include this too.

Example: "Ethical Leadership for Entrepreneurs"

But you'll never know if your title is a real winner until you take the next step.

Test Your Titles

When you are brainstorming titles, you need to add one more secret ingredient - emotion. You can, of course, run polls on your top 3-5 contenders, or you can use a program such as Co-Schedule's free Headline Analyzer.

Even if your course title seems cut and dried, it should tap into universal emotions your ideal student might feel when she considers your course topic. "Ethical Leadership for Entrepreneurs" might seem like a dull name to the average person, but to those who hold ethics and integrity sacred, it can powerfully evoke emotional resonance.

But as with everything else about course creating, try improving on what you've decided is perfect – you might be surprised to find out there's a name that works even better.

Also, make sure your title suits a course – not a blog post or magazine article. The power words “easy” and “step-by-step” provide steady reassurance about a task they are probably already afraid to tackle.

Only when you've come up with at least three to five strong course title contenders should you then test it on your target market in real-time.

Always take naming your course to a higher level, even if you think you've nailed it.

Remember, make your course name aspirational. Use the name to identify the problem you'll solve and point toward how it will change your student's life if she signs up. That's the way to create a course name that will sell.

Lesson 3

Best Way to Design Fun + Valuable Lessons

The Learning Objective is to create a memorable course with entity identity.

You've identified your ideal student, come up with a specific angle, and thought up a course name that should sell. Now it's time to step out of the research zone and design a dynamic, transformative course.

What Can You Bring?

Imagine you invited a bunch of people to a picnic, and they're expecting you to deliver what you promised – a great time. Great food. An amazing **experience**.

Remember that an excellent course doesn't just teach something; it transforms.

And it's more than just a load of new information for your student. It's an experience, the way vacation in an exotic and beautiful location would be an experience.

There are three components you need to create such a transformative experience:

1. Your teaching
2. Your course material
3. Your students' commitment

You generate that commitment and enthusiasm in your students by making sure that your teaching style and course content are exceptional.

Don't panic if you're thinking things like, "I've never taught a course" or "but I'm not special and extroverted." The way to ensure you and your content are memorable is not a matter of talent or even skill. It's a matter of the right **preparation**.

Document Your Course Creation Process

The difference between great courses and confusing ones is preparation. It's also in repetition, which gives your lessons or course modules a sense of continuity.

Make sure you create:

- A lesson structure sheet or style guide
- Templates for lesson modules, handouts, slides, etc.

When it comes to structuring, students should feel they know what to expect with each lesson. Human beings love repetition, especially in the Western Hemisphere. We're trained from early childhood to respond to it - look at the average picture book for babies, where certain sounds or lines are repeated almost on every page.

The element of repetition brings a sense of order, gives reassurance, instills confidence, and augments what students learn.

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As long as your actual content is focused and fresh, repetition acts as a dependable, sturdy frame to hang the information on. It helps your students learn better.

Create a Structure

Before you start writing content for your course, the framework can be in the form of a Worksheet or Checklist which you just fill in for each course – and create a separate one for each lesson.

It's like driving to work without a GPS. If you have to take a different route every day, you don't know what to expect. You're trying to figure out where you are, and you wonder if you've missed a turn or stop to read maps. Maybe you even have to backtrack. And the whole journey feels stressful.

If you take the same route every day, you know what to expect. Your body and brain could easily do it on autopilot. Far less stressful.

That's what structure and repetition give.

Create Lesson Templates

Bring that same sense of structure and repetition to each lesson or module. That gives each lesson – and your course – a branded identity, making it feel more than the sum of its parts. As a result, your course becomes an entity in its own right, which makes it memorable not just among your students but in your niche and field. Give your course entity identity.

The structure is the secret weapon pros use to make designing their course feel like a piece of cake.

Select Your Format

Part of creating your course structure involves deciding what format or formats you are going to use as your primary teaching style. While it is a

great idea to identify your ideal student's learning style, make sure you teach what you find most comfortable.

If you decide to use a third-party teaching platform like Teachable, this will be pre-determined in part by what they provide as a structure, so make sure you choose the course creation and hosting platform you find most copacetic.

How do you teach the best?

- Live or pre-recorded?
- With or without an audience?
- Large groups or small?
- Do you prefer giving workshops or weekly lessons?

What works best for you? Teaching by:

- ☐ Podcast
- ☐ Webinar
- ☐ Video
- ☐ Are you creating digital, written content?

Put serious thought into the way you want to present your lessons and choose a primary format comfortable to you.

Identify your strengths, then play to them. The more comfortable and relaxed you are, the more dynamic your lessons will be.

Accommodating other learning styles can quickly be done by providing support materials such as:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transcripts | <input type="checkbox"/> Worksheets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slide Sets | <input type="checkbox"/> Handouts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Checklists | <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Lessons |

Supporting your lessons with companion materials make your course even more valuable to your students – and helps turn your lessons into permanent resources they can return to, again and again.

Be Yourself

Take a look at the courses you've taken yourself or check your competitors' courses. As you go through them, make notes. Write down each course's pros and cons – what you liked and what you disliked.

Pay attention to anything that worked for you and got you excited, but don't copy other instructors' formats, and delivery methods. Be inspired by them. If your course is similar to an established course, mainly if the original course is highly prevalent, yours is only going to look and feel like an imitation. That won't help you build a good reputation. Copying someone else is unethical. It won't endear you to influencers, especially the people you copy! Plus, you'll get lost in the crowd of imitators, far down the list.

Remember, this is all about standing out. Bringing your unique twist or mix to the classroom and making sure your course is memorable.

Don't worry that you're not as polished as someone else. Polish is a matter of following a sound system, honed by practice. Enthusiasm and clarity can match a slick delivery any day.

The key to releasing teaching tension is not allowing yourself to think about yourself and your insecurities and emotions.

Instead, focus on your student:

- ☐ How you can help her with what she needs from you.
- ☐ What you know, you can share and deliver.

Even if you are recording a video lesson, imagine your ideal student avatar on the other end of the camera. Talk directly to her.

Teaching Aids for You

In the professional storytelling world, storytellers find one audience member who looks and feels sympathetic. Storytellers bring their gaze back to that person every time they feel nervous. Telling the story to a compassionate listener can have a magical effect not only on the storyteller's nerves but in

her delivery. It's much more fun to tell a story to someone who is genuinely enjoying it. It's why we let ourselves loose, speaking, or reading favorite bedtime stories to our kids.

When you're recording a story, adopt this principle. Decide who you want to talk about your topic to. And who you want to stand in as your ideal student avatar in your imagination. That will give your presentation a more natural rhythm and warmth.

When creating your lesson structure, decide what you will use as a prompt system or learning aid for yourself:

- ☐ Script
- ☐ Point-form outline
- ☐ Cue cards

Using a formal script may make your delivery seem dull. Most people seem to prepare simple cue cards, or cryptic cue cards containing numbered bullet points. Many storytellers and public speakers use simple cue words designed to remind them of what happens next.

1. State problem and course goal.
2. Where to find handouts.
3. What will be covered in the lesson
 - a. Types of database
 - b. Organizing your database

You can jot notes in a one-page summary or on your hand. You can color-code points, emphasize them in bold, use single words instead of writing out points. If you prefer, memorize it and practice, practice, practice. Whatever feels most effective. It doesn't matter which prompting system you use, as long as it works best for you.

And, of course, practice is essential. Storytellers will tell a story over and over again until they feel they can tell it in their sleep – until they 'own' the story – before they ever say it in public. Your lesson should explore natural and be conversational before you record it or walk into a live virtual or local classroom for real.

Practice out loud. Imagine your ideal student avatar.

If you have a team, run the lesson for team members, and ask for a critique or suggestions. Encourage them to ask questions. This particular step can feel nerve-wracking, but there's no better way to refine your lesson than allowing yourself to find out in advance what people are not understanding.

Asking for feedback and encouraging a test audience to ask questions will point out any flaws in your lesson and allow you to fix and refine your course. Many people will offer a new course as a Beta run-through to get valuable feedback before the full launch of your course.

How to Outline Your Lesson

Outline each lesson carefully, using the Lesson Outline template that you created.

Most lesson outlines contain similar components:

Lesson Introduction	Learning objective/takeaway	
Housekeeping	Where to find support materials	
Quick Anecdote	Should illustrate the need for the lesson	
Interactive Component	For example, fill out a workbook, submit a question, etc.	
Lesson Outro	Repeat the same outro with every lesson	

You may find it easier if you build each lesson backward to make sure students will reach the objective successfully.

Edit your lesson carefully. Reduce long sentences. You don't want to run out of breath in the middle of them. Cut out any point that is not directly relevant to the lesson problem and goal. Say them out loud and rewrite any point that your tongue trips over. Use dynamic power words when appropriate, as well as active verbs.

Time your lessons. That is where practicing out loud is priceless. It's better to go slightly too long than too short if you're recording classes since you'll be able to shorten them to your needed length in video or audio editing, but don't be sloppy about this. If you rely too much on post-production editing and don't plan your lesson carefully, you will most likely find that you have omitted significant points or need to chop too much.

Creating a lesson should be as enjoyable for you as it will be for your students. Give them your very best, and they'll come back for your next course.

Lesson 4

Create a Course That Will Build Your Business

You don't have to be responsible for every single step in creating your course. Consider outsourcing or automating parts of course creation and leveraging other specialist's skills instead of trying to construct it all from scratch. After all, you're running a business! Building a course could be your full-time job, but that would mean letting other tasks fall to the wayside.

Hiring the right freelancers or team members means you can make your fantastic course happen AND keep your business growing at the same time.

Choose and Use a Teaching Platform

Text platforms like Teachable automate much of the process for you, providing structure and outlining tips, tutorials, wizards, prompts, and storage. You do give up some control, but you can still brand your course.

The drawback of using a platform like Teachable is that their parameters restrict you. The advantage is that the structure part is already pre-decided and created for you. There are ample tutorials available, both from Teachable itself and in YouTube videos other people have made showing you how to set up a course.

Teachable, in particular, make it easy by providing its step-by-step guide, "How to Set Up Your Course." The article covers course creation in detail, explaining steps such as embedding forms and other resources into lessons, creating course bundles, pricing your course, setting up drip content, and more.

Important - read the terms and conditions – the fine print. With some platforms, there are fees, or the platform takes a percentage of your course sales. With others, they 'hire' you as an instructor, and it's you who gets a portion of their course sales. With the latter type of platform, such as LinkedIn Learning formerly Lynda.com, there is an application process, so being accepted as one of their instructors is not a sure thing.

Or you can do-it-yourself by teaching from a simple Facebook Livestream or through a webinar platform such as Zoom, which offers various options and price points, depending on your needs.

Zoom offers many features and advantages. Many of them with a basic, free account, allows you to host up to one hundred participants and hold an unlimited number of meetings. The restrictions or conditions you need to be aware of is that there is a forty-minute limit per session, plus you may want to warn your participants that they'll be visible, live, on their webcams. But even Zoom's most expensive monthly plan doesn't exceed \$20.00 per month and allows unlimited time opposed to the forty-minute sessions restriction in the free version.

The most critical criteria your teaching platform needs to have is the ability to record your lessons.

Features to check out include:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fees and percentages | <input type="checkbox"/> Standard features, such as |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra or hidden costs | screen sharing, mute, guest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Storage options | presenter, slide sharing, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer support | <input type="checkbox"/> Payment conditions |

☐ Security

☐ Limitations

Take time to research various platforms and hosting options before you make a decision on which option is best for you.

Think about the long-term:

- ☐ Is this course the first in a series?
- ☐ Is course creation going to be a significant part of your business?

If so, choose a well-established, reputable platform capable of growing with you. Plus, paying for professional help when setting up your course is a business strategy you'll want to explore.

But most of all, don't allow unfamiliarity with course platforms paralyze you. There are many platforms for building and offering courses, and partnering with a freelancer or VA who knows them inside-out will help ensure that your course runs the first time smoothly around, leaving you worry-free and looking like the pro you are.

How Much Outside Help Do You Need?

Getting other specialists to help you with the course set up, graphics, shopping carts, transcripts, slides, recording, or other areas of course creation makes perfect business sense. But how do you know what you need to do yourself and which parts you need to outsource?

Start by recognizing the ineffectiveness of trying to do everything by yourself. When you fall into this common trap, you are failing to take into account the actual value of your own time and the value of the tasks you are trying to cover. How much do you charge clients an hour? How many hours will it take you to learn a new program or system? To set up something that is not in your area of expertise. Think about it, if you charge clients \$150 per hour, working five hours a day, and it takes you five days to learn a new program, try to set something up while using it, troubleshoot it, correct your mistakes, and then find out what you set up is glitchy, you've lost \$3,750.

Even if you only charge \$50 an hour, working four hours per day, you've still lost \$1,000 at the end of five days.

Now compare that to paying someone skilled in working with that program \$250 or less to set it up for you, which they will probably do in an afternoon.

That still leaves you in the black. You continue to make your full \$3,750 or \$1,000 while your freelance contractor is setting up your task for you.

It becomes a no-brainer!

You have to decide whether or not to outsource something, measure the actual earning time you will lose against what it costs to outsource the task or activity. Add relevant factors such as how much learning curve do you have to allow for how much prep time do you have to invest in training the contractor. If you are outsourcing a task, your freelancer is already highly skilled in, such as an Infusionsoft-certified virtual assistant setting up your Infusionsoft shopping cart, that prep training time will be nothing. You may have to allow for her training YOU in how to use it, once they set it up.

Tasks you should look at doing yourself would be those tapping into your particular money-making skills, the activities, and functions you are passionate about.

A simple way to find out is to ask yourself, "If I could get other people to take care of my business, what business activities and tasks would I still love to do myself?"

Look where those decisions are coming from. Do you want to do them yourself because you think you can do them better than anyone else? Because you have your system and you 'don't have time' to teach it to an assistant? Or because you have a hard time giving up control?

Any of these motivations are not keeping tasks out of enjoyment or passion. It's staying stuck in a safety zone and falling victim to the habit of perfectionism. Perfectionism sabotages more entrepreneur businesses than any other obstacle.

If you decide to keep a task or activity, be sure to sift through your reasons and motivations.

Create a Long-Term Plan

Another reason to outsource as much as possible is that it saves energy that you could be putting into doing more creative, money-making activities, aka maximizing your particular passion and skill set. Trying to do it all yourself is exhausting. Focusing on only the parts of your business that you most enjoy creates energy, as well as building your confidence and assurance.

Outsourcing also makes your business instantly scalable. It is capable of expanding and growing as quickly or as broadly as you want. You can plan on branching out and creating multiple courses simultaneously.

By leveraging other specialist freelancers, you will be able to create a long-term plan right now and waste no time setting it in place.

You need to consider now who is going to handle tasks like:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Repurpose old | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Platform setup | course materials | Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uploads and | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphics | <input type="checkbox"/> Website setup |
| downloads | <input type="checkbox"/> Promotion | and maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Content creation | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling and |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Project | <input type="checkbox"/> Updating | booking |
| Management | Systems | appearances |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Support materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Email updates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A place students | they can | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter |
| can hang out with | download | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership sites |
| you | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor/Coach | |
| | Programs | |

When looking at this list, it becomes clear why you will need help with most of the above. It just makes sense to let others who are passionate about tasks you hate and have them take over and handle them for you.

Benefits of Creating a Team

Starting with one assistant who possesses vital skills, you are deficient in is a viable first step. The areas she is most proficient in should be the ones that cause you the most grief, should you try to tackle these areas yourself.

But, better yet, create a team.

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Start by creating an outsourcing budget and plan. Decide precisely how many team members you need, which areas you need them to cover, and in what order you need to add each member.

There are definite merits to adding team members one or two at a time. You can try each member out, iron out any bugs in communication and process, and when you're ready, onboard the next team member.

Starting with a virtual assistant whose skills lie in your weakest areas is a sound strategy. Also, consider hiring experts for one-time-only tasks such as setting up your website or performing a photoshoot.

If you have several team members, you may want to hire a seasoned project manager or business manager to coordinate them for you.

It can be unnerving to go from thinking you have to do everything yourself to managing a team but start one task or one specialist at a time. Create an SoP manual and document all your processes so that your entire team is on the same page with how you do things.

Creating a Team – The Hidden Biggest Benefit

Having more than one set of eyes on your course and all its components is the most significant advantage of creating a team. If you run your team in a solution-oriented, positive, no-blame way, you'll get helpful feedback and transparency.

You'll have people to bounce ideas off, discuss pros and cons with, and test course components for you.

You'll get suggestions, brainstorming partners, not to mention people who think of and anticipate tasks you aren't even aware need to be done.

Outside input keeps you honest. If you're taking a lesson in the wrong direction, getting input from team members will get you back on track.

And these people, if you choose them wisely, will be experts whose own passions and skills are in the area you don't own.

That gives you three easy ways to keep your business growing while your busy teaching your course. Have team members:

1. Working behind the scenes on admin tasks
2. Taking care of email communication and follow-up
3. Providing customer service and answering course questions – fast

Meanwhile, focus on what you're great at – the teaching!

You're running a business! Building a course could be your full-time job, but that would mean letting other tasks fall to the wayside. Hiring contractors means you can make your excellent course happen AND keep your business growing at the same time. So, start planning to outsource parts of your course creation straight away.

That's the way to ensure a professional, successful course launch.