

Blueprint Tracker

3 Phase Plan to Start and Scale Your Online
Course Business



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Earnings Disclaimer

There are no guarantees concerning the level of success you may experience by following the steps in this manual or creating an online course. Each individual's success depends on his or her background, motivation, and dedication.

Hello!

My name is Lisa Parmley, and I created and offered my first course back in 2001. I have nearly two decades of experience running a course business. I've earned well into the 7-figure mark with my first online course and created two additional 6-figure courses over the years.

My three main courses have been in the following industries; test prep, search engine optimization, and building websites. I have also interviewed and learned from 100+ successful course creators for the course creators series on Coursemethod.com. These interviews are all available to you so you can learn from them too.

The Blueprint Tracker allows me to share some of my journey with you. Hopefully, my knowledge will help make your journey starting and growing your online training business faster and easier.

If You're Just Getting Started, You May be Wondering, Can You Make Money with an Online Course?

Ultimately, the answer depends on you, but the eLearning industry *is* expected to reach \$325 billion by 2025.

According to Statista's research, online courses alone (self-paced eLearning programs) made up 46 billion dollars in 2016.

Course creators using the Teachable learning management solution (LMS) have earned over 338 million dollars. Teachable was only founded in 2014, so they've hit this massive amount in only a few short years.

Thinkific is another popular online course platform; this one was founded in 2012. Course creators have earned over 200 million dollars on their platform also in a few short years.

And these are only two platforms out of hundreds of potential platforms a course creator can choose from.

There's a ton of potential in the online course industry.

Although these are big numbers, what this means for you is there's money to be made running an eLearning business.

From sketching to professional development and fitness training to parenting, course creators are earning big from a variety of topics. Most importantly, they're helping people solve real-world problems and reach their goals.

Why Create an Online Course?

For one, you may already be sitting there with knowledge others can benefit from and will pay for. Especially if you're willing to put your knowledge together in an organized way.

For another, offering an online course is a highly scalable business model.

When I realized working for someone else wasn't my thing, I first thought about starting a resume service (I know, real unique).

The problem was with a full-time job and social life, I knew I would struggle to make much money because I'd only have a few extra hours a week to work on it. I knew I'd trade time for money, and it would be next to impossible for me to transition from a full-time job into my own resume service business.

I was thrilled when I was first exposed to the idea of selling information. I could create a book or course and sell it over and over again. It was a more significant time commitment upfront, but once I got my business rolling, I made money without nearly as much effort.

You may already have a business where you're coaching one to one (or one to a small handful). You may be thinking you'd like to move to an online training format so you can now coach one to many. Online courses allow you to accomplish that. If

you're currently offering services, you may be able to show others how you offer those services through an online course and earn an extra revenue stream that way.

Another plus of offering online courses is that your profit margins are high. Depending on the market you're in, you may be able to earn hundreds or even thousands of dollars from one sale of your online training. And your actual costs may be minimal since you're not manufacturing your product or even shipping it.

Due to the high-profit margins, you can probably use paid ads to get customers. With businesses based on affiliate marketing and other advertising models (like AdSense), paid advertising typically won't work.

3 Phases of an Online Course Business

I've broken the online course process down into 3 phases; the pre-development phase, the development phase, and the growth phase. From there, I include checkpoints and tasks for each checkpoint. This is the most efficient process for both starting and growing your course business. Doing tasks in the right order helps set you up for success and much quicker.

I suggest you complete each phase and checkpoint in the order I put them together for you. If you've already started your business, you may want to go back through to the beginning and see if you missed any checkpoints. Implementing these earlier checkpoints and tasks may increase your revenues and enrollments.

Here is each checkpoint along with the main tasks for each.

Pre – Development Phase

It's here in this phase where you do the groundwork for your business. The first place to start is to make sure that if you take the time to create your course that you can find buyers for it. This is crucial. You don't want to go through a 15 part business building plan to have it all fall apart.

From there, you want to move onto the branding for your business as well as building the platform. This is essentially your website, along with social media accounts. Next, you work on automating email collection with a lead magnet and follow up sequence. At that point, you can grow your subscriber list.

At that point, you should focus on getting traffic to see if the automated system you put in place drives subscribers. The quick traffic wins checkpoint gives you the tasks to start siphoning traffic from other sites. Let's get started.

Checkpoint 1:

Research

The very first step to take is to research your topic idea to make sure it's worth pursuing. You need to validate it through research, especially if you don't have a list of people waiting to buy your course.

Researching will also help you find out more about the market. Uncovering details about your market can help you develop a unique angle, so you stand out from competitors.

Start with research to save yourself a lot of time and frustration later on. Here are the main steps to the research checkpoint:

Topic Idea. Come up with your topic idea. You should have a relationship with the topic or some knowledge on the topic. Or if you're paying or partnering with someone else, they should have that relationship with, knowledge, and/or experience on the topic.

Research Competitors. Research the market by finding all your competitors. Dig into the market and see who is offering similar information.

Research Quick Traffic Wins. Research quick traffic wins to see where you can get initial traffic to your opt-in page and start building your list.

Research Paid Ads. Research paid ads to determine if you can model paid advertising from your competitors. You don't have to use paid advertising, but it's still worthwhile to research this. At this point, you just want to see if competitors have made paid advertising work.

Research Marketplace. Research the existing marketplace to see exactly what your competitors are offering. Keep track of the main benefits,

features, and components they include with their training. You eventually want to see how you can stand apart from them and make your offer unique.

Make a Decision. Decide if you've got a working topic idea based on what your previous research uncovers. The research includes your competitors, how competitors are getting traffic, the packages they offer, the format of their course, and other comparisons to what you're thinking of offering.

Your Unique Angle. Develop your unique angle(s) based on your data collection and research. Ideally, you want your training to be different from others in the marketplace. Your unique angle will help you accomplish this.

Checkpoint 2:

Branding

Developing a brand strategy is something most small businesses never take the time to do. However, it's essential. Branding involves creating a distinct identity. It helps you stand apart, which will give you an edge. This is even more true when you're in a competitive market. Your course may provide the same transformation that a competitor's product offers. Often in these cases, it's the unique angle and brand that wins customers over.

Brand Research. Revisit your competitors and try to determine what type of brand strategy they have (or don't have). Keep track of this in an Excel sheet or other spreadsheet.

Target Audience. Figure out who your target audience is (this is often called developing an avatar). Uncover what your target audience has in common with each other and how they may perceive the topic you're covering.

Brand Strategy. Use your brand research and target audience brainstorming and determine what type of brand your audience would respond to. Be sure also to consider who you are and what you stand for as you develop your brand strategy.

Domain Name. You need a brandable domain name, which might take some to brainstorm. You also need to make sure it's available for a price you can afford. Once you've settled on the right name at the right price, register it immediately.

Course Name. Decide on a brandable name for your training course. Make sure the acronym (where you take the first letter of each word) is appropriate and suitable. Consider whether it is a name your target

audience would understand and be attracted to.

Brand Design. Choose your colors and typography along with your logo. Decide on your design elements like buttons and course images. Make sure all these fit your brand strategy. Ideally, your design and brand all work together but are different from your competitors.

Checkpoint 3:

Platform Building

We're still in the pre-development phase, so you're not ready to create your course yet. First, build out a minimal platform and get some quick traffic wins to it (discussed in the next checkpoint).

Tool Stack. Base your tool selection on the learning management system (LMS) you choose. Ultimately, you want to decide on the LMS, email marketing solution, site hosting, site builder, and e-commerce solution you will use. Some LMS providers offer all this, which is why we start there.

Minimal Site Development. Your domain and your hosting need configuring. You'll do this whether you're using your LMS or your hosting account and another site builder for the external pages of your site (these are the pages not within the course). At a minimum, build out your:

- home page
- about page
- contact us pages
- legal pages

Social Expansion. Set-up your social accounts now before the names are gone. If they are already taken, then choose whatever is closest to your domain. Ultimately, you may focus on building a following on just one platform, but at least set-up all your social accounts now. This includes securing them and adding in profile images.

Optional: Strategy for Building Traffic to Your Platform. Create a strategy if you're going to build up your own platform now. For instance, if you plan to use Twitter, then make sure to create a strategy and start tweeting now. In this case, you're building up your platform from scratch. If you're planning to use YouTube, then get the plan ready and start implementing it now. If

you are going to try SEO, then you need to start now. Find long-tail keywords and create the content now. SEO takes a long time to get going, so if you do this now, you may start getting traffic by the time your course is created and ready to launch.

All these methods rely on you building up your platform. This takes time. You cannot post a video or a few social media posts or throw up an article on your site and expect to get traffic the next day or even the next week (and often not even too much within the next month).

You don't need to commit to this now. I show you how to get quick traffic wins in another checkpoint coming up. These quick wins involve siphoning traffic from already developed sites. But if you plan to build your site or social platform, you need to start doing that now to get traffic for your course launch later.

Checkpoint 4:

Lead Magnet

You want to start collecting email addresses. It's smart to set up a lead magnet and opt-in page right away. As you build your email list, you'll keep in touch with your subscribers.

I interview many course creators who are successful but have yet to create a lead magnet. I can only imagine they would be much more successful when they implement this and start collecting email addresses. So if you already have a course set-up and earning money, consider adding in a lead magnet your top priority.

Problem to Solve. There are lots of issues your target audience is looking to solve or the information they need. Figure out what you will solve with your lead magnet. It's best if your lead magnet leads right into your eventual product. For example, if you're planning to create a horse riding course, your lead magnet can solve a particular problem like riding gear. A checklist of riding gear could work. Figure out what you're going to offer here.

Create a Lead Magnet. Whether you'll offer a PDF download, a video, or a mini-course, create your lead magnet. Make sure you have several links and site mentions in the lead magnet, so your subscribers remember who you are.

Double vs. Single Opt-in. Decide which of these you will use up-front. With single opt-in, you will build your list faster, but there is a risk. With double opt-in, you will lower the risk and build a better asset, but your growth is slower. That's because only a certain percentage of your subscribers will confirm their email address. If you choose double opt-in, make sure to build out a page that explains how subscribers need to confirm their email before they can get the lead magnet.

Lead Magnet Delivery. The delivery of your lead magnet usually takes place on a separate page. Once they confirm, they can be redirected to the delivery page, or you can email them instructions on how to get the lead magnet. Make sure you have a user-friendly delivery system. You may even offer multiple delivery methods, including redirecting them to a separate page and delivery within the email, depending on what type of lead magnet you're offering.

Follow-up Sequence. Plan this out and create it. First, make sure your subscribers get the lead magnet, then walk them through it. This can take a few emails set up as part of an automated sequence. Then keep in contact with your subscribers once a week, if possible, or at least once a month. You can use a sequence or write this fresh each week (or whatever timeline you plan to send them like monthly, etc.). Plan to give them something valuable here and there. You don't want months to go by and then out of the blue, ask them to buy your course!

Referral Generator. Tell your subscribers you would love it if they referred your lead magnet to others. Ask if they know anyone else who would benefit from it and ask them to share the opt-in page. You can also incentivize this.

Landing Page. Create a landing page (also called a squeeze page) for your lead magnet. This is a separate, dedicated page that practically sells your visitor on giving you the information you request (typically just their email address and their name) in exchange for the lead magnet.

Opt-in Form. Create an opt-in form (or a few) and put them on your site. You might include opt-in forms on your homepage, sidebar, footer, and even within pop-ups. Any of these options are great choices. At this point, you are ready to start collecting email addresses!

Checkpoint 5:

Quick Traffic Wins

This is where you get traffic from other sites that already have it. In this case, you're siphoning traffic off from them. Ideally, these sites share the same audience as you.

Ultimately, you are mentioned or linked to on the highly trafficked site by sharing your knowledge there. This serves as the siphon. Sharing your knowledge or content on popular sites with the same target audience as yours allows you to build up your brand and platform as well as get some quick traffic.

This is an ongoing activity, but if you start it now, then you will build your list. This early traffic will allow you to make tweaks to your sign up process if it's not working or not working as well as you'd like it to.

Quick traffic wins allow you to leverage what others have built up. Start getting traffic to your lead magnet, so you have a subscriber list when you launch. It's also possible you have a reasonably successful course already, in which case doing some of this now will only help you grow. These are great quick traffic methods to consider at any stage.

Here are the tasks:

Analytics. Install Google Analytics or some other tracking program. Analytics is a reliable program, plus it's free, so start with it. It will allow you to determine if you're getting any traffic and where your traffic is coming from. That way, if you choose to become active on a particular forum and Analytics shows that 100 visitors came from it over the last month, you know it's smart to keep posting on that forum. Alternatively, if you're active on another forum, but it brings you no traffic, you know it's not worth it to keep posting there. Analytics will help guide you.

Email Signature. Create a signature line for your emails. Set your email provider up to automatically add this signature to every email you send. The best signature will include a quick line about your free lead magnet with a link to it. Now you are automatically marketing to everyone you send an email to.

Forums. Sign up to the forums you found in the Research step. These can be related to your topic, or they can be general (some general forums will have categories related to your topic). Reddit is an excellent general forum with categories on every topic imaginable. You will need to research to find forums on your specific topic. Once you find an appropriate forum, create a profile, and start contributing. Answer questions and give feedback to recent posts. Start your posts with any tips you want to share. Include a link back to related pages on your site in your posts and create a signature file with a link to your lead magnet if allowed.

Blog Commenting. Find top blogs in your topic and make sure to read the latest blog posts as they are posted. Leave a useful comment and include the link to your lead magnet within it and in the site profile (if the blog allows it).

Q & A Sites. Quora and Yahoo Answers are two great Q & A sites to start with. Set-up a profile at each and make sure you create settings, so you are notified of questions in your topic area. Answer any questions related to your topic. Make sure to include a link to your homepage or lead magnet in your profile. Work in links to either when you can within your answer.

Facebook Groups. Join Facebook groups from the Research step or find them now. You're leveraging by contributing to groups that are already established in your topic. Make sure you include your link in your about/profile area. Be supportive, answer any questions, or give tips in any posts you can.

Help a Reporter Out (HARO). Sign up for a HARO account and start getting the emails every day (they will send them three times a day on weekdays). Reply to the queries that relate to you and your topic. Make sure to include a link to your site like Jane Smith, Founder of xzy.com. Make it easy for them quote you if they use your reply. You can get links and mentions from a variety of different sites, including big-name sites like Entrepreneur and Forbes, with this method.

Keep Going! Set up a plan to continue working on Quick Traffic Wins over time. You might spend most of a week getting started with it and schedule some time each week after that. For instance, squeezing in a 2-hour block a couple of times a week to do these tasks repeatedly will help you reach your target audience and help you build your list. That way, you have someone to launch to when your course is done.

Development Phase

In this phase, you'll start creating your course as well as all the marketing material you need to sell it. By the end of the development phase, you'll have everything together to launch your course.

Another great thing is you already had your platform set-up as well as your lead magnets with email automation. Now you'll keep going and add in the potential to start selling your online course through email automation too after your launch. So you will have your course and the sales process complete.

Checkpoint 6:

Course Creation

This is where you finally create your course. If you've already created a course, you may want to take a look at the main tasks here because you may have missed something. You may also find a tip to use in your next version.

Course Goals and Objectives. What is the end goal of the learner? You want precise, realistic goals. This must be spelled out in your course and possibly in each module or section of your course.

Create an Outline. Starting with your course boundaries (which are what it will and won't cover), come up with the steps your learners need to take to reach their transformation. Create an outline. Continue to add to your outline, so you have modules and lessons within each module. Put the modules and lessons in the right order.

Script It Out. Include stories, examples, and the main idea for each lesson. Stop at a rough draft for now. Include the goals within the introductory lesson and maybe even in the introductory lesson for each module. Each lesson should ideally be around 500 words to 1,500 words long (this will keep your lessons under 10 minutes in length). Each lesson should also be geared to a specific outcome if you want to follow microlearning best practices. If you're producing video, think about what type of video will be best for the learner. You can choose from live-action videos, slide show presentations, animation, and screen captures.

Create Visuals. Create the visuals you'll include in your lessons. If you're creating a presentation slide show, then create diagrams for your videos. Work on finalizing your script with your visuals. Visuals are essential even if you're only doing text lessons.

Video Type Selection. If you plan to create videos, what type of video will help the learner best learn the material? The main types of videos to choose from include slide presentations, animation, screen capture, and live videos. Go through each lesson and assign a video type (or assign a combination like live and screen capture, etc.).

Record Videos/Audio. Record each of your lessons, including the audio, live-action videos, presentations, and screen captures. You may need to do a voice-over first and then run the presentation after. Edit the audio and video for each lesson.

Video Intros. Get videos intro ready to go along with your videos. Consider showing learners where they are within your course.

Assemble Your Videos. At this point, you should have a thoroughly edited video for each lesson along with an intro.

Supplemental Materials. This includes bonus materials, an action plan or workbook, extra audio, transcripts, or anything else you are considering providing to your learners. You'll want to make sure you create all this now.

Quizzes & Assessments. Create any quizzes and assessments that will be useful for your learners.

Upload to LMS. This is where you'll upload your course to your learning management system (LMS). Upload text-based lessons, videos, audios, any supplement materials, and create your quizzes and assessment. Make sure everything's in the right order and is as helpful as possible for your learners.

Checkpoint 7:

Sales Page

Here you need to draft out and then polish your sales page. You can create a written sales page or a video funnel. You may want to start with a more comfortable and faster medium and make improvements over time. A written sales page is typically a more comfortable and quick way to get started. In many cases, they convert higher than video because creating a good sales video can be a lot more complicated.

The following is a crash course in setting up a sales page. You can switch the components around, but I've given you a tried and tested blueprint for your sales page here:

Strategy. Figure out the main benefits and the overall offer of your digital training. It's instrumental to go back to your research now and compare how your competitors positioned themselves. If you can fill a gap in the benefits they already offer, then that is great. When it comes to the offer, there may be areas you're not clear on yet. For example, how long will the guarantee be? What level of support will they get? Sort all this out.

Choose Medium. Decide on the medium you will use for your sales page. As mentioned, a good suggestion is to start with a text-based sales letter. You can always add a video later. Will you have a long-drawn-out funnel? Consider this carefully because when you add in more moving parts, it can become more difficult and take more experience to make it work.

Headline/Hero Section. Come up with several headline and subheading ideas based on the most significant benefits your training provides. Create a document with your sales page draft on it. You might try out 20 headline and subheading ideas. From that list, you'll need to choose what you think your audience will resonate with the most. Try to distill your headline down

to as few words as possible. People often won't take the time to figure something complicated out. In addition to the text for your heading and subheading, you need to figure out your hero image. This can be a plain background, an image, or even a stock video (or video you may have). Spend some time figuring out your Hero section (it's the top of your sales page and what people will see before they start scrolling). If you can't hook them there, then you lose them until you can bring them back again next time.

Social proof. If you have any social proof, then it's worth it to add a little right after the Hero section. You can include one testimonial or an area where you put 'Featured In' along with a list of the publications you're featured in or seminars you've spoken in. Replying to HARO queries is a great way to get some 'Featured In' publications. If you don't have any, skip this spot and come back to it later. If your course is brand new, then you may want to explain that in the copy. Tell your prospects they are getting it for a great price since it's so new. You can entice them with a little extra support if you have trouble getting your audience to enroll.

Buy Button. You should include a pricing table and a buy button in several places throughout the sales page. A spot near the top of the page works well. People who are coming back again might click on it right up top and order, so it's worth it to include it here. If you need to justify the price, then at least have a buy button here without revealing the price.

Introduction. Introduce the problem in this first section. Then lead into how your product will overcome it. For instance, if you're offering a course on decluttering, then you need to paint a picture of how bad it feels to have a cluttered home or office. This can even just take a sentence or two. Then pivot to how it feels to have an organized, simplified, decluttered space. Lead into how your training solves the issue.

Benefits. You will likely already cover a benefit or two in your headline and subheading, but there are probably several others you left out. Include all

the benefits in your copy.

Testimonials/Social Proof. Expand on the social proof from above. You can include all your best success stories, anything nice someone said about you or your company, or any statistics you may have. If you don't have any, that's OK, but you need to remember to go back in and add them to this space later on when you get them.

Buy Button. This is another excellent place to include a pricing table and a buy button.

Features. What is included? List everything out. For example, 1:1 calls, print books, 12 months access to 24 videos, a 24-page action plan, or whatever you're offering, make sure you are listing it all out. You can also tease out the benefit each feature provides.

Guarantee. People want to know about a guarantee. If they don't like it within 14 days or 30 days, they want to see if they can get their money back. And they want to know if they will be hassled about it or not. So a risk-free, no questions asked guarantee is nice. If you're offering a membership, they want to know if they can cancel at any time, so spell that out too. If you're offering a better than a money-back guarantee or there are any special conditions here, then include that also.

Price Justification. Here you can justify the price by comparing it to something else. So if you have competitors that offer a live seminar for \$2,000 + they need to pay travel expenses, you can compare your \$200 course with that. You can compare it to other more typical costs, like dinner out at a restaurant, etc. You can also be very straightforward with the price, too, and list it. It's nice to include the benefits again here since they may see that a low career trajectory or whatever you are offering can be corrected for the price of your training.

Buy Button. This is a standard place to include a pricing table and a buy button. You can mix these in like shown previously or only have this final buy button. I suggest only having one at the end if you need to do a lot to justify the price. If it's not too expensive or is in the range people expect, you can try placing these throughout your copy. You can include testimonials and success stories (if you have any) right above them (pull one or two out and include it here just to reiterate that your training works).

FAQs. It's nice to add in some frequently asked questions. You may start with a few that you think people might be wondering about (the guarantee again and the exact features of the training are good ideas). Then over time, once you start having more people write in and ask you questions, you can add the most frequently asked questions here.

Checkpoint 8:

Course Sequences

You already had your sequence or newsletter started during the Lead Magnet checkpoint. Now you need to get some additional sequences or broadcasts set up.

At a minimum, you need a sequence that walks your subscribers from your free lead magnet to your paid course and one that walks your buyers through your course.

Buyer Sequence. Now that you have your course created, you should have an email sequence to help walk your buyers through the course. Here are some ideas for email topics:

- Thank you
- How to access the training
- Walkthrough of the training
- Highlight special features or special training
- Success stories as they come in
- Generate referrals

Launch Sequence. Your launch sequence is typically for when your course is brand new, and you want to launch it out to your list. The idea is to talk to everyone who signed up for your lead magnet and has been getting emails from you ever since then. You want to get them all to consider enrolling in your new training program. One way to do that is to break down the sales page into bite-sized chunks you send out over several emails (don't copy the sales page copy word for word but include the same ideas). The emails are typically done closer to real-time since these center around a launch date. So they are done as broadcasts. Here are some suggestions for what to include in the emails you send:

- Frame your new course as a way for them to get more information on a topic they already showed interest in.

- Talk about the benefits they will receive when they enroll in your training.
- List out any frequently asked questions.
- Include success stories
- Justify the price and how enrolling will help them overcome their problem.
- Include the money-back guarantee.
- You can offer the launch to your existing list for a lower price. In that case, keep mentioning the deadline, so they get that deal.

Lead Magnet to Paid Training. This is where you try to incorporate what worked from your launch broadcasts to an automated sequence. What's great is you already have your lead magnet completely automated. Now you want to automate getting subscribers to your lead magnet to buy your paid training. Start by keeping it simple. You could write up five emails using the suggestions for your launch sequence. Or if you send out weekly broadcasts, be sure to mention your paid training as a way for them to learn more in each one. Once your launch is over, make sure to add this to your lead magnet sequence. Now you are automating sales of your training!

Checkpoint 9:

Course Launch

You've completed most of the launch steps, but there are a few left to tidy up. These last few center around your eCommerce set-up. You'll want a smooth checkout process. Ideally, a prospective client will go to your sales page, click to order, enter their information, pay, then immediately get a login and password to access your course. Here's a breakdown of how to get a smooth checkout process:

Method for Taking Payments. A lot of online course platforms already offer a means to accept payments. In that case, you should use what they offer. You may need to sign up for and connect Stripe and connect up your PayPal account. Alternatively, you can get a merchant account. The costs for a merchant account are higher than using one of these other methods, so I don't suggest it when you're starting. There are a lot of cost-effective options, so you don't need it, especially at first.

Checkout Page. You need a checkout page, which may also be provided by your online course platform. If not, then you will need to integrate one from an e-commerce provider (like SamCart, Infusionsoft, ThriveCart, or one of the many others). If you can edit your checkout page then it's useful to add in a few items like your benefits, the list of what they're getting, success stories, and your money-back guarantee. This will help you increase your conversions.

Thank You Page. With most e-commerce set-ups, once a successful payment is taken, the buyer is redirected to a thank you page. These are pages you can usually set up (but with some e-commerce systems, it will be a default page). If you can customize this, that is great. You will want to include the following on this page if possible:

- Tell them the transaction was successful
- Thank them

- Include the name of the product they just bought
- Include the company name that will show up on their credit card statement (it may not be your company name, so in that case, it's essential to let them know the name that will display there; otherwise, you can get a lot of chargebacks).
- Tell them how they can access the course

Receipts. With some e-commerce systems, you can customize your receipt. If possible, then you want to include a few things on the receipt like:

- The name of the product they just paid for.
- The amount of the purchase.
- The company name that will show up on their credit card statement (again, this is very important, especially if it's different than your company name).
- Your contact information, email address, and business address (this can be a box-like from the UPS Store and not your home address or a physical office).

Automate to Buyer's Sequence. Often this is done with tags. If so, then make sure your new buyer gets the right tag and is signed up to the correct sequence (which in this case is the buyer's sequence).

Automate Log In Information. Often your online course platform will have a way to send out an automated email with the new learner's username and password along with where they can access the course. Make sure to customize this if possible, and make it user friendly. You want people to be able to get into the course quickly and easily.

Test it. Go through the process yourself to make sure you're providing an excellent overall experience for buyers.

Launch it. Put a buy button on your sales page and send out those launch emails to your existing list. Make sure to link to your course on your site. It is

now live! Depending on how much list building you did, you will hopefully start to see sales and now have a process to gather leads and convert some of those leads into buyers. If you just have a live course, but no list or traffic at all, you'll need to start attracting traffic to your site. I suggest the Quick Traffic Wins as the best place to start with this.

Update Lead Magnet Sequence. Once your launch is over, make sure to add your Lead Magnet to Paid Training sequence to your original, shorter lead magnet sequence you had before you launched your course. You are extending that out now to lead to your paid training. Now you are automating your sales!

Growth Phase

This is where you start to grow and scale up your business. At this point, you already have a sales process. You have at least a little traffic to your opt-in page coming from somewhere (it might be from comments you've left, social media, guest posts, etc.). That traffic may be small, but it is something to build on.

You have a lead magnet people are opting into (again, it may only be a few people a month, but it's something to grow on). You have subscribers opting into your lead magnet that is converting into buyers (again, it's OK if it's a minimal number). If you've reached this point, then congratulations! Now you can start to ramp things up.

If you're not quite here yet, then I would go back and revisit each of the previous checkpoints. Traffic is often a problem for businesses when they first start. Other top items to review include your lead magnet, your opt-in page, and your course sales page. Go through it all, thinking you're a prospective customer and look for holes. If the holes are too big, then that could explain why no one is buying (or signing up).

You don't have to do these in the order I've presented here, but you should attempt each checkpoint over time. Here's how to start growing your online course business.

Checkpoint 10:

Course Improvements

You want more of your visitors to enroll in your course, and one way to do this is to improve on your course. Here's how:

Set up Feedback. This is a way for you to initiate feedback from your clients. It can be a form you link to from within your course and emails or just a comments section in your course. Make sure to proactively ask for this instead of waiting around for people to initiate it themselves.

Review Feedback. You need to set aside time to go through the feedback and see what makes sense to improve.

Brainstorm Improvements. Whether you've gotten feedback or not or in addition to it, there may be areas where you think you can improve on the course. Brainstorm all your ideas. It's best if you can think about it from your customer's perspective. If you were them, how could you improve the course? How can you make it more complete, more streamlined, faster to implement, more comfortable to implement, and any other ideas you may have.

Version 2.0 (or Whatever is Next). Create a new version with the feedback implemented.

Update Marketing Materials. Add the improvements to the sales page, your emails, and anywhere else.

Relaunch. Launches can bring in a lot of money in a short period. So there's no reason to be shy with launching. If you upgraded your course, then go ahead and do another launch. You can offer the new upgrade to those who haven't purchased yet for less during the particular launch period. Or you

can add in something special during the launch period (like more support, etc.).

Checkpoint 11:

Increase Conversions

You want more of your visitors to enroll in your course. Increasing your conversions is a great way to increase your revenues without continually seeking out more traffic.

Improve Lead Magnet. You should consider continually improving your lead magnet. If you can get more people onto your list, you can hopefully convert more of them to your paid course. Changing the medium may increase conversions. If you were offering a PDF, then you can consider adding in a video (include both formats). This could boost your conversion rates for your lead magnet.

Improve the Copy for the Lead Magnet. Sometimes simply coming up with a better headline or other copy for your lead magnet can increase your conversions. And if you made improvements to it, make sure you add those in your sales copy. That might entice more of your visitors to sign up for it.

Additional Lead Magnets. Consider offering multiple lead magnets. Can you capture another segment of the market? Connect who your buyer is with a different angle to attract them.

Adjust Email Sequence. Adjust the emails you're sending between the opt-in(s) and your paid course. Get those emails to convert higher. Add in more emails with thoughtful, relevant content. Lead them toward your paid offering. Get feedback on your emails and go through them yourself and see what makes sense to add-in.

Opt-in Forms. Do you have opt-in forms in all the strategic places on your site? If you are doing OK with your opt-ins and sales, and now you add in a pop-up, you might make more money. Consider how you can upgrade your

opt-in forms and the copy on your opt-in forms. For instance, if you were using a plain button that said 'submit,' you can try to use a color that helps the button stand out and say 'SIGN UP' or 'YES, I'D LIKE THE FREE PDF.'

Improve Course Sales Page. Do you have all the elements on the course sales page? Go through and make sure they are all elaborated on as best as possible. Are people writing in and asking you questions about your sales page? That is a sign it's not as straightforward as it could be. Fill in those holes. Elaborate on your guarantee, maybe make it stronger. Include a FAQ section or add more to it. Consider a better or just a different headline. Add in more success stories if you collected more. If it's all text, consider adding in a video. Even more, images can help increase your conversions.

Checkpoint 12:

Increase Traffic

Increasing your traffic will likely lead to more revenues (as long as it's targeted traffic). Here are some ideas on how to improve your traffic.

Do More of What is Working. Try more of what is working for you. This might include driving traffic through blog commenting, forum posting, guest posting, or doing interviews on podcasts. Look at your Analytics for clues on which sites are driving traffic to you. See if you can increase your presence on those sites. Also, if guest posting or podcast interviews are helping drive traffic, then do more of those. If you created ten pieces of content earlier and now those are bringing in a ton of traffic, try creating another ten pieces of content (or even more). If it's working, then do more.

New Traffic Methods. There are dozens of ways to drive traffic to your site. You can try traffic methods that are new to you, including:

- content marketing
- search engine optimization
- building up your social platforms
- paid advertising
- and more.

Take a look at the Traffic to Courses Foundations to see all the different traffic methods available and what might make a good match for you.

Affiliate Program. If you haven't already, then implement an affiliate program and offer at least 20 to 30% commissions. Some course creators will offer even more. 50% is typical. Decide based on how much work you're putting into each client you get. If it's just a course with no support from you, then 50% seems reasonable. If you're offering to coach or building a community, then that will take your time. 30% or so is a more reasonable

commission in those cases.

Referral Program. Happy customers mean more referrals. However, you can't expect your clients to just refer your training on their own. We're all busy people, and a lot of them won't even think about it. Ask them to refer it for you. Build-in referral generating emails into your email sequences, and that way, you won't forget either. You may see more traffic just because your subscribers and clients are telling others about your site and what you offer.

Partnerships. Partnerships can include affiliate programs, referral programs, and other deals. You could offer a partner a deal where they can offer your course for a lower price or where they can offer it with more added to it. This can entice them to try to sell it from their platform. You can set up a deal where you email your list for your partner, and they email for yours. There are practically unlimited options here. You need to start finding businesses that have the same or nearly the same audience as you and strike up partnerships. A partnership can even just be a podcast interview, holding or webinar, or writing a guest blog post. Whatever you can do to strike up a deal with another business who has your target audience is worth considering.

Checkpoint 13:

Upsells

Consider adding in upsells to increase the price you get per sale. Offer a regular version and a premium version if you want to give your potential buyers options to choose from. That way, some can still choose to buy your training for less with fewer extras while others can pay the higher price and get the premiums.

More Support as a Premium. Consider adding in more support for a premium price. More support can include 1:1 email access, group coaching calls, and more.

Additional Premiums. Consider adding in extras as premiums. These might include; more materials like supplements, additional modules, offering physical versions of your course, offering services as an upsell, and more.

Integrate Upsells in eCommerce. Upsells don't do any good if your clients can't find them. Make sure they are included on your sales page (pricing tables work great for this where you have a basic plan alongside a premium plan). You can also include the upsells on the checkout page. When they go to checkout for the basic plan, you want them to have the option to get the upsell (if it's possible to do with your e-commerce system). Some businesses also put these after the customer completes the sale. Often these are called one-click upsells where if the purchaser clicks on the button, the credit card gets charged. Just make sure if you do this, your customers know exactly what they're getting charged and what they are getting. It's not worth tricking people who just bought your product in good faith.

Integrate Upsells in Course. You can also integrate your upsell options in your course. I have a particular page with options my learners can choose to add on even after they've enrolled in my basic plan. You can make them limited in time, but I prefer to let anyone buy them when they want

because, for some people, they will make the difference between succeeding or not. Some businesses get carried away with a one-time offer upsell and are very aggressive with them. I'm sure they make more money as a result, but I try to run my businesses the way I want to be treated as a customer. Upsells are a place I see a lot of businesses ruin their reputation, but you can do these professionally and ethically.

Integrate Upsells in Automated Emails. You can add your upsells to your buyer's sequence. Maybe dedicate an email or two in your automated buyer's sequence where you offer your clients the option to get the upsell. Tell them about it and why it's essential to their success.

Checkpoint 14:

Multiple Courses

Consider creating another course or another product or service that your buyers might be interested in. You've gone through all this work to get them and keep them happy. What else might they want to learn from you?

Think About a Previous Step. Can you go back a step and help people who aren't ready for your first course? If so, you can consider creating that, but always make sure to do the research again.

Think About a Step After. Is there something after your course, like a more advanced version? If so, consider doing the research and possibly creating that option. For both the previous step and the step after, you now have a list of subscribers and buyers. Ask them if they would enroll in a course like this in addition to doing the research.

Think About a Related Step. Is there a related step or related knowledge that your audience would also be interested in? Do the research and ask. Brainstorm all these options.

Membership. Can you offer a subscription if you're not already? These could include monthly tools, audios, or interviews. For instance, if you provide a copywriting course, you could offer a membership where you create a video each month critiquing sales copy. People might pay for that. You could include a community too. There are lots of ways to work out a monthly membership. Brainstorm and research if that is possible in your topic area.

Think About a Service. Is it possible to offer a service to your buyers? Again, if you've put together a copywriting course, could you provide the sales copy for them? You can charge a lot for your service, and some people may not want to do it. Or if you don't want to write all the copy, you could offer a

review service where you give them pointers. This could be a stand-alone product for clients who need it.

Live Element. Could you put together a live seminar (whether online or in-person)? Would your audience respond to that? If so, consider holding a live event.

Checkpoint 15:

Additional Offers

Additional offers include offers not created by you. These could be affiliate offers. In these instances, you get a commission from another business owner when someone buys a course, product, or service you're an affiliate for.

You can offer these to your list of subscribers and buyers, but do make sure they are related to what they signed up for. Be sure to include value when you make any offers. You also need to disclose that you will get a commission, so they know you're going to make money from the sale. Here are some brainstorming tasks to help you find additional offers.

Related Tools. Are there any tools you suggest in your training? If so, consider becoming an affiliate for them. Figure out a strategy on how you will recommend these tools. Will it be through email, a PDF supplement with links to the tools, etc.?

Related Equipment. Similar to tools, is there any equipment they need to succeed? An obvious idea is if you're offering fitness training. In that case, then you can recommend some of your favorite gear. You may even be doing this already. If so, get specific. If you like a particular yoga mat, then make sure to find a specific one, become an affiliate for it, and then mention it to your clients.

Related Information Products. Instead of you creating the course, seminar, or other training that is related to yours, find someone who already offers it. Become an affiliate for them and then map out a strategy for telling your subscribers and clients about it.

Better Deals. You can work out better deals with some affiliates, mainly if you can sell a lot of their products. You can also try to work out a reciprocal

arrangement where you promote their product, and they promote yours. This is more of a partnership, as previously mentioned. These take more time but can be very worthwhile.

Wrapping it Up

These are the exact steps I've used to create and launch my 6 and 7 figure courses successfully. They are also the steps many of the successful course creators I've interviewed have followed as well.

I know following this blueprint can help you too.

From my experience and knowledge, this is the best system of tasks (in the best order) to help you grow your business as quickly as possible.