HOW TO CREATE & SELL AN ONLINE COURSE

FOR BLOGGERS & ONLINE ENTREPRENEURS

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

Introduction

Have you ever entertained the idea of creating your own online course? Maybe you want to give away a free course to build your brand and reputation. Like most bloggers or other small business owners and entrepreneurs, you might see an online course as a great way to build a passive income stream that reliably puts money in your pocket every day and night (or at least monthly).

For whatever reason, if you're considering creating, marketing and selling or giving away an online course, there has never been a better time to do so.

Thanks to the global reach of the Internet and the World Wide Web, there are billions of people who can get access to your course. They can live thousands of miles and several time zones away and get their hands on your course day or night, regardless of where they live, and all they need is an Internet connection. If you are unsure about just how powerful the Internet is for building your business and reaching your financial goals as a blogger or other small businessperson, consider this.

- More than 4.15 billion people have access to the Internet

That statistic comes to us from InternetWorldStats.com, a website that dedicates itself to tracking how many people have an Internet connection. By the way, that number is steadily growing. That means that you could pitch your online course to more than 55% of the world's population, simply by uploading it.

No doubt you already understand the inherent power of the still growing Internet to build your business.

If this is true, why haven't you already built, launched, marketed and profited from an online course? Ask most bloggers or Internet entrepreneurs this question and they will invariably give you some combination of the following answers:

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

- They don't know what topic to pursue.
- They don't know if their idea will be profitable or not.
- How can someone test-drive a potential topic before spending a bunch of time and money on course creation?
- They don't know what to do first.
- What size or length should my course be?
- What format do I use for delivery?
- Should I make a video course or a text-based course?
- Should I include an upsell?
- What marketing method is the best?
- What do I do if my course is a success/failure?

The answers to these and other relative questions are included in this in-depth eBook on finally getting your online course developed, marketed and accomplishing your business goals.

Let's get started by discussing what is easily the most important step in the online course creation process - developing a smart action plan.

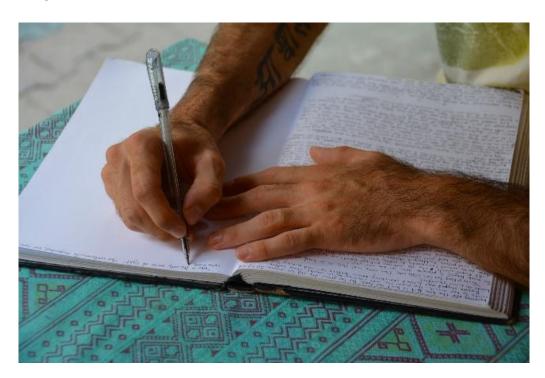Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

Planning Your Course

Before you do a single thing, designate a physical or online journal to your course. Don't use a book or journal you're currently using for anything else. You got your hand on this eBook because either:

1. you have created courses in the past and they didn't work out so well, or
2. this is your first time building an online course.

In either situation, you should dedicate a journal for all of your thoughts and actions. This will prove invaluable after your course has been completed, as you will be able to eliminate steps that lead to failure and focus on successful actions and strategies.

Literally everything should go into this journal if it has anything to do with your course. You may find that something you think isn't very influential to your success turns out to be one of the major components needed for you to see the results you are looking for. Once you have a journal in your hand and you're ready to record your online course creation journey, it's time to take a long, hard, honest look in the mirror.

Learn more about online marketing at

Make a Commitment

It's time to create a doable schedule for getting your course completed. This means writing a plan of action that gets the course ready for use in X number of days. You have to be brutally honest here and not give yourself a schedule that's impossible to achieve. On the other hand, you have to challenge yourself each day.

This means whipping out that mirror we just talked about and making a commitment to yourself that you're going to do this once and for all. There is a good chance this is not the first time you thought about creating a course that solves problems and answers big questions in the minds of your target audience.

As a blogger, entrepreneur, small business owner or other online marketer you're more driven than most people. You probably have a lot on your plate already, and that has led you to put off making a course that you can sell online. Now is the time to stop procrastinating.

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

There can be no more excuse making. Break out your day calendar and figure out a reasonable number of hours you can work on your course each and every day.

If you have no idea how long it's going to take you to record videos or create 10 text-based course modules, just take a rough guess. Your schedule is going to be a liquid entity. You're going to look at it and change it accordingly over time.

At this point you just want to ensure you're making a solid commitment to yourself that you're not going to break … no matter what.

Make sure to leave some time every day for your family, your friends and "me time". You don't want to stretch yourself so thin between your full-time gig and your online course creation that you create a less than wonderful product, or you abandon the project altogether.

Once you have made a commitment and earmarked specific hours, days and weeks for this job, it's time to choose a topic.

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

Choosing a Profitable Topic, Not Just One You Love

You probably have an idea of what you want to cover in your course. Guess what? That may not matter. If all you want to do is create an online course to get the hang of accomplishing this potentially profitable marketing practice, go ahead and use the topic you are considering.

If you're like most bloggers and online entrepreneurs, you probably want to make money from your course. This means you need to ensure it covers material that answers the biggest questions your target audience is asking right now.

You need to solve big problems with your course, and you need to use keywords and phrases that people are already looking for online.

Put Big G to Work

This means using several tools that can help you with keyword research. Sign up with Google Analytics and you immediately have access to the massive accumulation of search data Big G has compiled. From your Google Analytics account you can perform as much keyword research as you need to ensure you are creating a course people are searching for.

There is also a simple way to search Google for the exact phrases and words people are looking for right now.

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

Head over to the world's biggest search engine. Enter "topic idea" plus "online course". Are there a lot of results? If so, and you see plenty of paid advertising concerning that topic, you have hit upon a winner. If there are few or no paid advertisements and not too many pages of results, you should probably move on to another topic.

From the Big G to the Big A

Another way to choose a profitable topic is to get Amazon involved. Perform an eBook search for your proposed topic. If you come up with a lot of results you've hit upon a winner. If you've already developed an email list or medium to large internet presence, ask your audience what type of online course they're looking for.

Other Keyword Research Tools

Google Trends, the Google Keyword Planner, SEMRush, WordStream, Moz's keyword explorer and KWFinder are some additional tools for conducting the research necessary to discover if you have hit upon a topic that has current interest.

They also reveal what keywords and phrases you should include in your course name, sales page and promotional material to ensure free, targeted traffic.

You can run a poll or survey through sites like Survey Monkey or simply reach out through email. Just because you have a favorite idea in mind doesn't mean it will be profitable, and your reputation in your niche could suffer if you develop products and courses no one really cares about.

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

Test-Drive Your Idea

If you've done market research and keyword research to come up with a course idea that will probably be popular, it's time to see if that is truly the case. One way you can test-drive your idea is to offer a free report which highlights problems and questions associated with your course.

Let's say you drive traffic to an opt-in freebie titled "*Top 10 Questions and Answers about Raising Box Turtles".*

Your analytics show that 5,000 people followed the link that led them to your opt-in page, but only 50 people traded their email addresses for your box turtle question and answers report.

You can only expect a small fraction of those freebie grabbers to be interested in actually paying for your online course, so you may have to come up with another topic.

Another proven way to test out your course before you create it is to develop an autoresponder email course that you give away for free. When you do this, you don't need to spend a lot of time or money on this mini course.
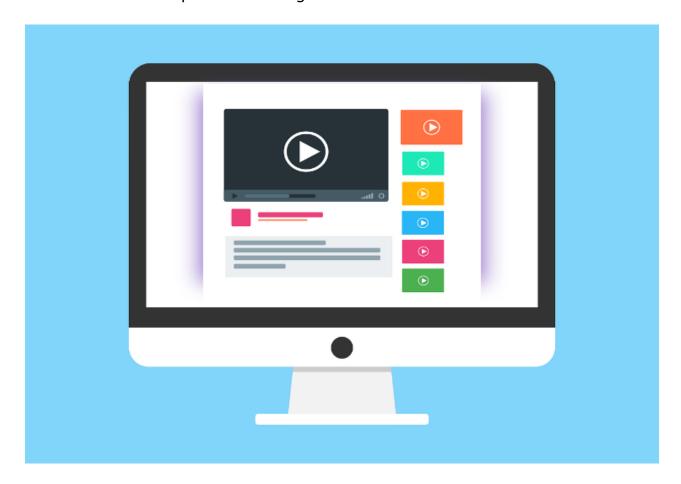
You don't need a website, you don't need to understanding coding or design, and video creation isn't necessary. At the end of your free course ask for feedback. This can help you build your email list while also verifying whether or not your topic is going to be wanted in the marketplace.

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

Figuring the Right Size/Length

Bigger is not always better when it comes to online courses. You should make your course only as long as it needs to be to provide extreme value, not one word, module or video longer. Copywriters will tell you that the perfect piece of copy can't have a single word removed. That same perfect copy will only be as long as it needs to be.

This is what you need to consider when you're planning and creating your course. That having been said, there are some standard practices which veteran online course developers say are good guidelines to follow.

- Video courses should be 5 to 7 modules, plus an introduction and conclusion.
- Online seminars or workshops should be 3 to 5 webinars long.
- Text-based Internet courses delivered by email normally need to be 7 to 10 autoresponders in length.

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

If you're using email to deliver a text-based course, understand that the course material will not be in the email. Each email simply refers your subscriber to a webpage where they can download or otherwise consume the course information.

In the case of video courses, the more you charge, the more modules you should have, up to a certain point. If someone has to wade through 27 videos and attend 12 recorded or live webinars to benefit from your online course, you're not going to meet with much success.

People want actionable information that they can consume and act upon quickly, and your introduction and conclusion should always be extremely short and to the point.

Remember, your customer is thinking *"what's in it for me",* and that means getting right to the meat of the matter. Video modules that are 10 to 15 minutes long drive engagement. If you have to teach a lesson in a video and your length runs 45 minutes, it's best to make that into 2 or 3 modules.

In the case of webinars, either recorded or live, you don't want to run more than 60 minutes. If you are delivering several webinar sessions as an online course, consider making them 30 to 45 minutes each.

Accordingly, a 35,000 word text-based course should not be delivered as one piece of content. That needs to be doled out over several installments or modules.

Consider Your Delivery Options

You can deliver your information through video, audio, text-based content or some combination of those three elements. Your online course can be delivered one module at a time through an email autoresponder sequence, or course material can be accessed through a members only website.

Additionally, you can conduct live webinars or how-to sessions that are recorded to ensure all your customers can benefit from your course information, whether or not they can show up live.

Podcasts are exploding in popularity. This means you may want to consider some type of subscription-based service or one-time fee for accessing your online course through podcast sessions.

It's not so popular these days, but in the past, online courses which were marketed on the internet were sometimes delivered via snail mail. This put a physical product in someone's hands. But, to keep costs down and to allow for the *"I want it right now"* aspect of most internet users, you should probably stick to some type of online delivery.

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

Creating Your Course

When you made a commitment to getting your course created and "out there", you came up with a schedule that would guarantee you finished building your course in X number of days. Stick to that schedule, and break the necessary tasks into daily and weekly work.

After you get started you may see the schedule you created simply isn't working. Tweak your schedule accordingly, but don't make excuses for skipping work on your course.

This stage is either going to involve you putting in the work yourself, or assigning tasks to VAs and freelancers and following up accordingly. Take your outline and your schedule and break your course into bite-sized pieces. If you just have an hour to work one day, you might want to spend that time writing just one chapter of an eBook course.

If you're doing everything yourself and you struggle with eBook cover design, you may want to tackle that task on a day when you have scheduled more time. Break your outline into chunks of work and fit them into your schedule.

Many online courses have video components or modules. If this applies to your course, schedule a couple of hours for learning the ropes of video production, and practice until you are comfortable behind the camera.

Whether you're creating an audio, text or video-based course, it's time to take action. Stick to your schedule, and realize that you may have to jump around, working on your summary first, your introduction later, and you may create chapters or modules out of order. That's okay. Work in whatever way keeps you on schedule and making recognizable progress.

Remember as well that your first course might not be the best you ever create. That is to be expected. Get your initial course done, market it, build an email list, and ask for feedback.

The key here is good enough, not perfection.

Just get started.

> **Important Tip:** Fiverr, Freelancer, UpWork, TopTal and PeoplePerHour are excellent destinations where you will find talented designers, video experts and writers. You can hand off most or all of your course creation process here, and then focus on marketing and sales yourself.

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

Selling Your Course

When you're creating your course, you may consider building an upsell. You are probably familiar with purchasing some product, service or course online, and you when you went to pay for your purchase, you were offered a tantalizing upsell.

Upsells often work because you are dealing with someone who has shown the desire to spend money, and isn't just a tire kicker. Making your online course a success may include adding an upsell.

Getting Affiliates to Do the Work for You

Sites like ClickBank, LinkShare, JVZoo and Commission Junction have thousands of members. Many of these people will sell your course for you in return for a commission.

Get just one of these affiliates involved, and if they have a really big and engaged email list, your course can become an overnight success. You should start getting these affiliates involved early on in the process, by contacting them when you are still in the course creation stage.

Build Your Audience

Creating an audience for your product is easy if you get several veteran affiliates working with you. These people already have email lists they can market to. Your own efforts at building an audience should be ongoing. If you have a blog you probably have started to build an email list. If you're an entrepreneur with a website, the people that read your content are potential buyers.

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

Staying active on social media can build your prospect pool as well. You should be using list building, social media, blogging, affiliates and paid advertising to continually generate leads for your business, and for your course. This should be a never-ending process.

Sales Pages

You need a good sales page to sell your course. This may include hiring a professional copywriter. When you find someone who can write persuasively and in a conversational tone, those are the copywriting skills you're looking for.

A successful copywriter may cost some substantial money but paying for a professional to create your sales page here will almost always improve your sales and profits. You can alternately develop this page yourself, and no matter who writes your sales page, you need to split test continually until you find the page that delivers the best conversion rate.

Pre-selling

Through social media, your affiliates, your blog and email you can successfully presell your course. Offer a dramatically lower price if someone pays for your course now and doesn't mind waiting for it to be delivered at a later date. This can put some much needed capital in your pocket before you even begin creating your course, and can lower your out-of-pocket expenses.

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

Pricing

What are you going to charge?

This is a great question. You'll find that this and other steps in the course creation and selling process benefit from frequent testing. If this is your first-ever course, understand that in the future, people are going to come to expect a similar price on similar courses. Generally speaking, video courses command higher prices than eBook or email courses. The same is true with seminar or webinar course modules.

You should remember that people expect to pay more for a value-rich course than they do for an eBook. Pricing your course between $47 and $197 is a good starting point. However, this is something you are going to have to test with your marketplace.

Remember that once you create your course all you have to do is spend your time marketing it. Don't ask for an obscenely high price, or else you're going to scare away most of your buyers. You should also keep from under-charging for your hard work, because people may not think the course is very valuable if it's cheap.

Online Selling Platforms

ClickBank and JVZoo were mentioned earlier as great places to find affiliates that can sell your course for you. You also benefit from those two online information product destinations as one-stop platforms for marketing and delivering your content.

Udemy is another internet destination dedicated to selling online courses, with the caveat that your course must be at least 75% video.

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

Next Steps

Congratulations are in order. You've chosen a potentially profitable topic, created your course, marketed it and hopefully sold or otherwise distributed a lot of copies.

What do you do now?

As a blogger or internet entrepreneur you probably understand that success equals marketing. You should always be marketing your products and services. This includes, but is not limited to, blogging on your site and guest blogging, using paid advertising sources to promote your course, and constantly staying engaged on relevant social media sites.

Additionally, what you need to focus on now is rewarding the affiliates which have made your online course a success. You can run promotions which award cash or popular consumer electronics items to the affiliates who sell the most downloads of your course.

Consider relaunching. Just because you launch your course doesn't mean you can't do so again. There are a lot of 7 and 8 figure a year marketers that have 3 or 4 launch dates each year. They limit the amount of time a potential buyer can get involved during each launch, and they put this process of relaunching on autopilot.

This is a good time to take out your online course journal. If you recorded every step of the process, you now have in your hands a guideline of what to do and what to avoid when you create your next course. This is a self-improvement tip you should never avoid.

One thing you should definitely avoid is beating yourself up if your first time course creation effort didn't work out as you had planned. Growth is all about making mistakes and using them to become better in the future.

Reach out to your buyers and ask for testimonials. You can also ask how you can get better, and if a lot of your customers talk about the same things, consider improving the course and delivering a free upgrade.

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com

You should have been building your email list with this course. With each and every course or product you sell, you can create a segmented group of individuals you know are interested in that same topic for future sales and profits. If you've done this, email everyone who downloaded your opt-in freebie, not just those who bought your course.

Ask them what type of course they would like in the future, and offer them a substantial prelaunch sale price. Don't forget to share on social media the fact that you created and sold a course. It doesn't matter if the launch was successful or not. Reminding your social media followers and friends about your course after it has been launched and sold can regenerate interest.

Finally, take a deep breath, treat yourself to your favorite dinner or beverage, and feel good about what you have done.

In the future you may look back upon your first online course and laugh. You're going to see so many places where you could've been better. That's okay. This is the learning process of online marketing. You can never create your best course until you create your first course, and you can't sell your course if you work for perfection, instead of "good enough".

Get started, develop and grow your online presence, build and sell your course and learn from the experience.

Learn more about online marketing at www.JonAllo.com