

ONLINE COURSE STARTER KIT

Your quick-start guide to creating, selling, and marketing your first online course. (Checklists, templates, and more.)

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Create, market, and launch your online course

The e-learning market is bigger than ever, and its growth shows no signs of slowing down. 🙌

From in-person classes moving online, to experts making their knowledge more accessible, there's never been a better time to take or create an online course.

Through online courses, creators in every niche can share their expertise and help their students achieve a goal or solve a problem. For some, building and [selling online courses](#) is their full-time job. For others, [creating ecourses](#) is an [online side-hustle](#) or passion project.

Either way, they're part of a big opportunity. The self-paced e-learning market is expected to grow by over [six billion USD](#) by 2024.

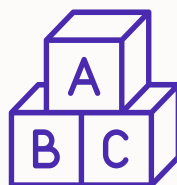
If you're ready to join them, this guide is for you. We'll walk through a step-by-step checklist to create, market, and launch a successful online course.

First up, let's get you that checklist on the next page. Feel free to print or fill out in this file (don't forget to save!). 📄

PART ONE: CREATE YOUR COURSE

1. The basics

- ☐ Choose a topic for your download
- ☐ Pick a digital product format



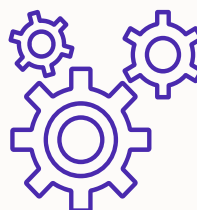
2. Content creation

- ☐ Record your course content
- ☐ Edit your course content



3. Technical stuff

- ☐ Choose a course platform
- ☐ Set your course price



PART TWO: MARKET YOUR COURSE

1. Landing page

- ☐ Build a landing page
- ☐ Write your sales copy
- ☐ Add an email capture form



2. Spreading the word

- ☐ Create an email campaign
- ☐ Post on social media
- ☐ Share with the community



PART THREE: LAUNCH YOUR COURSE

- ☐ Publish your course
- ☐ Announce your launch
- ☐ Ask for feedback



01

Choose your online course topic

To figure out what your target audience wants to learn, conduct customer research. 

What questions do they have? What problems are they trying to solve? These are the questions you need to answer before choosing a course topic. 🤔

It's also important to consider what you're passionate about. Sure, a topic might be wildly profitable, but if it doesn't get you excited, it's not ideal.

Building an online course is hard work. Without passion, that work won't feel rewarding ... and you might be tempted to not finish.

Once you have those answers -- and thus some online course ideas in mind -- use the Passion/Profit Matrix on the next page to figure out which topic to run with.

The Passion/Profit Matrix helps you answer two questions:

1. **Passion:** How excited are you about this topic?
2. **Profit potential:** Will people spend money to solve this problem?

Your perfect course topic falls in the upper right quadrant: The one that you're passionate about and that you'll be able to sell.

HIGH PASSION

**LOW PROFIT
POTENTIAL**

**HIGH PROFIT
POTENTIAL**

LOW PASSION

Click inside the fields to use this template in this document. Make sure to save it to your computer so you don't lose your progress.

You can also print this template to fill out with pen and paper. 😊

02

Outline your course content

Start with the ideal outcome for your students and work backward. 

You don't need to include everything you know about a topic in your course. In fact, you shouldn't. Focus on giving your students a direct solution for their pain point.

Most online course students aren't looking for knowledge, they're looking for results.

To deliver that result, create a module and strategize its format for every step it takes to reach the students' end destination.

No one would blame you if it feels daunting at first pass. To make life easier for present *and* future you, start with an outline that makes it easy to see exactly what you'll need to create next. 

For a step-by-step process to help you create your outline, [see our guide to planning your course content](#). And for a template to make planning your online course content a breeze, turn to the next page.

Module #	Topics to cover	Content format for each topic
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Click inside the fields to use this template in this document. Make sure to save it to your computer so you don't lose your progress. You can also print this template to fill out with pen and paper. 

03

Record your course content

You can record high-quality course videos at home -- no pricey equipment or studio space needed. 😊

If you have an iPhone, [check out this guide to recording high-quality video on an iPhone](#).

Here are some additional video gear recommendations:

1. [Best microphones for online courses](#) 🎙️
2. [Best lights and lighting setups for online courses](#) 💡

If part of your course involves demoing something like coding or Photoshop, consider adding a screen recording to make your tutorial easier to follow.

[Here are five slide deck templates to help you get started.](#)

Get more video pointers in [this step-by-step guide to recording online course videos at home](#). And for even more tips, check out this guide on [how to create course content in every format](#).

04

Edit your course content

Editing your course content can take as long as recording it if you don't go in with a plan. 😬

In the best of worlds, you'd have the budget to hire a professional video editor.

But if you don't, not to worry!

Here are some tried-and-true video editing tips for the D-I-Yer:

1. **Edit in sections:** Trying to edit your entire course in one-go might be doable, but it certainly won't be enjoyable, and you're more likely to miss things when you don't give yourself breaks. Work module-by-module as you edit.
2. **Establish a quality threshold -- then focus on speed:** Hollywood-quality production isn't needed, and ultimately, isn't useful for most creators. Decide what's "good enough" before you begin editing, then focus on getting there as fast as you can.

To dig in deeper to these tips (and get more of them), check out [our guide to six video editing tips](#) you can learn in a weekend, or [this video full of editing tips](#) from Podia's own video expert, Ben Toalson.

05

Choose an online course platform

It's time to choose a platform to host your online course. This is where your course will live and your students will flock. 🏠

We believe that Podia is one of the best platforms out there for creators to sell online courses.

With Podia, you can:

- Build, market, and sell [online courses](#), [memberships](#), and [digital downloads](#) from one dashboard. 🙌
- Create and manage a custom website and landing pages without needing any code. 😊
- Easily upload and publish course content in just a few clicks with our [drag-and-drop uploader](#). 🚩
- Connect with your audience through [email marketing](#) and [live chat messaging](#). 💛
- A whole lot more... ✨

Don't just take our word for it -- [try it out for yourself for free today](#).

06

Set a price

Don't spend too much time trying to pinpoint the perfect number. —

Finding the right price for your course can be a trial-and-error process. Pricing a digital product is as much art as science.

The most important thing to remember is that nothing is set in stone. You can always change your pricing later based on customer feedback.

If you've done your audience research, look to your competitors -- people in the same niche with similar reach -- and scope out what they're charging to benchmark your price against.

If you haven't done your audience research, dive back into the first step of this process and go on the hunt for similar products, including ebooks. What are people already willing to pay to solve the same problem your course will help them with?

As a rule of thumb, it's easier to sell a \$100 product to 10 people than a \$10 product to 100 people, so aim toward the higher end of your niche.

[Learn more in this guide to pricing your online course.](#)

07

Build a landing page

Your landing page tells potential students everything they need to know about your online course. ★

In one paragraph, you should know who the course is for and what it delivers.

For your landing page, include an overview of your course, pricing, an FAQ section, and social proof (like customer testimonials). You can also add a video preview to give visitors a sneak peek at your course content.

Don't go overboard here. Like everything else in your online course, you can always change it up later. Start with the basics and build from there. There's no standardized length of the best landing page, but we recommend erring on the short side until it's proven you need otherwise.

It's not only less work, but it's also less friction for your potential customers to get through before they convert.

For more landing page best practices, tips, and tricks, [take a look at this guide to landing pages](#).

08

Write your sales copy

Good sales page copy can mean the difference between a visitor clicking the “back” button or the “buy” button on your website. 💰

Great copy doesn't just convince customers to buy -- it reassures them that they're making the best possible purchase for them.

Sometimes you need as little as a few paragraphs.

Sometimes you need as much as several pages.

It all depends on how complex your course topic and the result it delivers is. Are you selling to an audience that's already convinced an online course will solve their problem? Then you can go for concision.

If you're selling to an audience that's still on the fence about whether they need an online course, though, it's time to get lengthy.

Here are three resources to help you write sales copy that converts:

1. [How to write a sales page](#)
2. [5 persuasive copywriting techniques](#)
3. [5 tips for writing product descriptions](#)

09

Add an email capture form

An email capture form is a “welcome” sign to your email list and when used correctly, a powerful connection to your audience. 🙌

An email list is arguably the most powerful channel you'll ever have as a digital product business owner.

Emails are where you greet your customers one-on-one for the first time, and for many creators, **where you convert them into buyers.**

For an online course, adding an email capture form to your landing page helps you build your email list and pre-launch your course.

When you pre-launch your online course, you collect email addresses from potential customers, then keep them in the loop leading up to your launch. On launch day, they'll be ready to enroll as soon as your course goes live.

You should email your new subscribers right away to welcome them to your list and set expectations. You can set this up automatically through most platforms with email marketing.

Likewise, make sure you stay in touch while you build your course and get ready for launch. Your subscribers want to hear from you, and the more they do, the more they'll be ready on launch day. 🚀

10

Create an email campaign

With an ROI of \$42 for every \$1 spent, email is one of the most affordable and effective tools for marketing your online course. 

A great email campaign helps your audience realize that your course is the right fit for them in a way no other course is.

Writing the perfect email campaign is a topic unto itself, and we have several guides below to help you navigate it, but the key take-away for a successful email campaign is this:

Write your email for one person. Make it relevant to them and show them how much you feel their pain point -- and how much you can help them stop feeling it.

Here are some resources for writing top-notch emails to market your course:

1. [How to write high-converting sales emails](#)
2. [8 sales email templates for a thriving campaign](#)
3. [10 email subject line formulas to boost your open rates](#)
4. [9 product launch email templates to lift your sales](#)

You can also use [Podia's email copy generator](#) to build a pre-written email campaign that's ready for your product launch.

11

Post on social media

Social media is an excellent way to build buzz around your course launch. 🐝

To get the most out of social media, use a mix of both [organic and paid social media marketing](#) to promote your course.

Paid social media helps you get your online course in front of more potential students in less time. Organic social gives you a better chance to build relationships and interact with your audience.

The biggest differences between organic and paid social media marketing are price and time.

Paid social media marketing gets your message out to a wider range of people and it does it fast. Accordingly, it's also extra bucks.

Organic social media marketing takes longer, but it's also a lot more sustainable -- both from a budgeting point-of-view and from an engagement point of view.

[Not sure where to post? Find the best social media platform for you and your business with this guide.](#) 💡

12

Reach out to the community

The community around your niche is the backbone of your sales. Serve them and they'll deliver invaluable audience research and feedback. ✨

Word of mouth is a powerful marketing tool. If you're part of any membership groups or forums devoted to your niche, let them know about your course. You never know whose friend or colleague is a perfect fit for you have to offer.

Reddit is a great place to find communities around niche topics. Facebook groups are another excellent starting point.

A Google search for “[niche topic] forum” or “[niche topic] community” works wonders too. And, last but not least, diving through the hashtags on Twitter and Instagram can help you find your people.

No matter what community you choose or where you follow them, take care to follow community guidelines and interact with more than your sales pitch. The more you give to the community, the more they'll give back to you. 🍷

13

Publish your online course

The big day is finally here. It's time to launch your course. 🎉

Congratulations on getting this far! It's a big step, and we're so excited for you.

Double-check that all of your videos and course materials are uploaded to your course platform, run through it *one* last time, then publish your course.

The emphasis in the above paragraph is "one" last time. Not one last time, then once more, then twice-more because you think you can tweak a certain module.

Perfect is the enemy of done, and you **don't** need to deliver something flawless -- only something useful.

[Watch this video for a walk-through of publishing an online course with Podia.](#)

👁️ Now the only things left to do are...

14

Announce your online course launch

The hard part is over. Now, you need to let people know about your great work. 

Here are some ways to spread the word:

1. **Send a message to your email list letting them know that your course is live.** Note, however, that this shouldn't be the first email you've ever sent them. It's important to welcome and nurture your email list, even a pre-launch list, before you send your launch announcement. 
2. **Post in forums and membership groups.** If you followed the twelfth step in this guide, they should be primed and ready to hear about your new product already.
3. **Announce your course launch through a social media post.** Use the appropriate hashtags to make your announcement on social media -- and don't just announce it once. Announce it every few days and at different times to catch different segments of your audience. 

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Ask for feedback

No great work is ever fully complete. After your launch, iterate on your work with feedback. 

As students begin to work through and complete your course, ask them to share their feedback.

Student feedback can help you improve your online course moving forward, so you can create the best learning experience possible for every student.

Plus, sales page testimonials are a powerful marketing tool. Think about it -- when's the last time you bought a product without reviews?

The more reviews you have, the less work you have to do to convince future customers to buy in. ⚡

[You can grab some email templates for asking for sales testimonials here.](#)

And with that, you've reached the end of this guide. We hope this starter kit has helped you, and we can't wait to see what you do. ❤️