CREATING COURSES WITH **PASSION**, **PURPOSE** & **HEART**

10 *Steps*

TO DIGITAL COURSE SUCCESS

PINK LEMON

Contents

WHY CREATE A DIGITAL COURSE

Why Create a *Digital Course*

Creating a digital course for your business is a great way to leverage your knowledge and expertise to make money. People need what you have to offer and so digital courses provide a massive opportunity.

The digital learning market is expected to be worth over $325 billion by 2025, and in 2018 digital education and e-learning took more than $46 billion in sales. Not bad eh?

Digital courses are growing rapidly in popularity due to the ease and accessibility of online learning platforms such as Udemy and Teachable.

It's now commonplace for adults to 'up-skill' and learn new things, and digital courses make that possible.

Gone are the days where you would need to physically attend adult education classes in order to learn something new. Now you can find digital courses covering anything and everything at the touch of a button, so that you can learn from the comfort of your own home.

It is a great time to create a digital course for your business as anyone can create a profitable digital course, all you need is a subject that you are passionate about and that you can teach. If you facilitate learning in any way, then you can create a digital course.

So why might someone purchase a digital course?

- It may be to gain further knowledge to support their career
- They may want to up-skill to change career
- They may be starting a business and need to know new areas of expertise
- They may simply want to learn more about the subject
- They may simply want to learn a new skill

So how do you get started?

When you decide to create a digital course, it can feel overwhelming after all, where do you start?

Initially you will need a few items to get you started which include:

- A computer
- Internet connection
- Smart phone

When it comes to creating a digital course, you don't need to spend huge amounts of money on fancy equipment, a smart phone will do. What's important is your expertise and how you deliver it. It's far more important to create top quality content that your students will enjoy as it's the course content that really matters.

What type of course should you create?

To create the right course for your customer, you will need to determine which type of course best suits them and their learning style.

There are 5 main types of digital courses that can be created, these include:

Masterclass course - This is a short course where students can learn about something quickly.

Workshop course - This course dives a little bit deeper into a course subject.

Spotlight course - This course focuses in on a subject and provides a deeper learning experience.

Signature course - This course is your signature course and includes everything that the student will need to know to become knowledgeable in the subject.

Certification course - In this course you can share your expertise to certify students. These courses are often expensive and can be highly profitable.

The following 10 steps will walk you through how to create a successful digital course for your business.

Step 1

Decide on the perfect course topic

The very first step to creating a successful digital course is to decide on your course topic. When choosing your topic, focus on a niche area (a segment of the market) rather than going too broad on a subject.

Don't try to appeal to everyone as you cannot cater to everyone's needs. Instead focus on a core group of people that you can really help. For example, if you were going to create a digital course on social media, instead of trying to teach students all about social media (which is a huge subject), narrow the topic down to a specific area (like a specific platform, or how to get results in a certain area).

The more focused you are on a niche area, the more opportunity you have to convey your expertise, and students are also more likely to get better and more effective results.

In order to define your topic, it's important you know the following:

- Your audience
- What their specific challenges are
- How you can resolve these challenges through your teaching
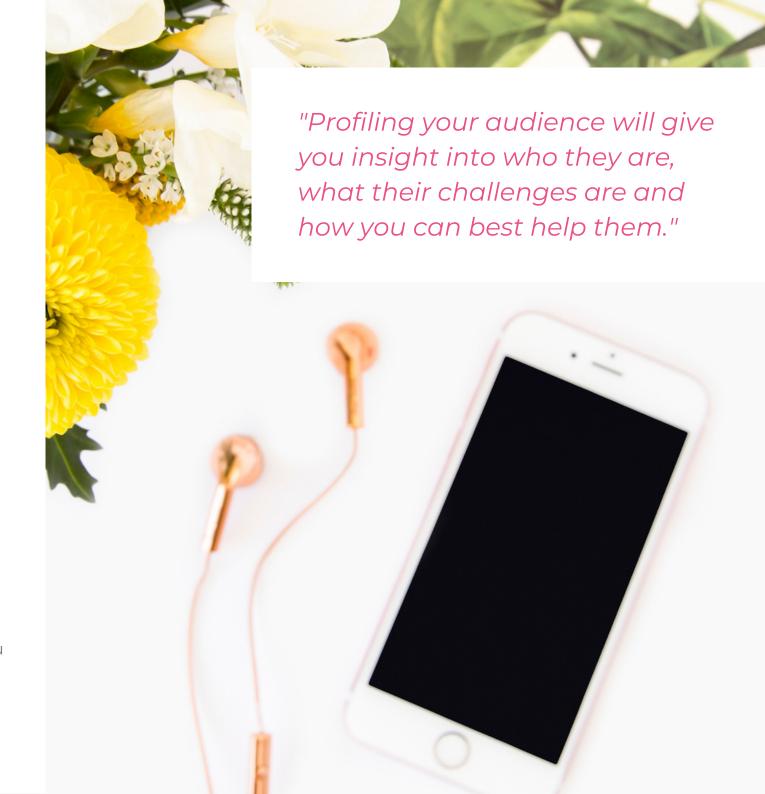
It is also worth considering the following:

- What are you passionate about?
- What could you talk about?
- What do you like to teach?
- What are you good at?
- What do people ask you for help with?
- What comes easy to you?
- What do you want to learn more about?

Once you have decided on your subject area then it's time to do some research to find out what people need specific help with.

There are plenty of tools out there that can help you with this:

- Answer the Public (answerthepublic.com)
- Google's Keyword Planner (ads.google.com/home/tools/keyword-planner/)
- Facebook groups
- Youtube
- Pinterest

Once you have decided on your topic then it's time to deep dive into your target audience. Profiling your audience will give you insight into who they are, what their challenges are and how you can best help them. It will also help you to understand where they hang-out so you know where to go to validate your course idea.

"Profiling your audience will give you insight into who they are, what their challenges are and how you can best help them."

Step 2

Validate course topic

Now that you have your course topic, it's now time to validate your course idea. When it comes to your course, don't make assumptions as you may find that you miss what your audience may actually need help with. You don't want to end up spending a great deal of time and energy creating digital courses that people are not prepared to pay for.

Validating your course idea is a smart idea because:

- It will prove there is market demand for your digital course
- You can generate revenue from pre-sells
- It will give you the opportunity to build your email list
- It will give you the opportunity to talk about your course and build interest around it

So how do you validate your idea?

Before you can test that your idea has merit, you need to define your course proposition:

- Why would someone pay for this course?
- What challenge does the course solve?
- What transition does it facilitate?
- What are the expected learning outcomes?
- Why is your course different from competitors?

With so many social media platforms at our fingertips, it's never been easier to carry out the validation process.

By carrying out research, you will be able to get a clear picture as to whether or not there is a demand for your course.

Below are some ways in which to find out if you have a winning course topic:

- Review your existing data
- Analyse any metrics you may have relating to any existing content that you have created regarding the subject matter - what do those metrics tell you? Is your content being downloaded?
- If you have hosted any webinars, conferences or online masterclasses - have these been well attended? Did you receive any specific feedback regarding the content?
- Have you sent any newsletters relating to your topic? If so, review their analytics

Google Search

It's time to go broad using Google. Carry out a Google Search for keywords relating to your course topic and then keep a note on what you find.

- Can you find similar courses?
- Are you finding content relating to your subject matter?
- What words or phrases are being used?

If you are finding that there are other courses similar to the course that you are intending to create then that's good news because it means that there is market demand. Have a look at the content that is being offered and how the course is structured along with its price-point.

This is all worthwhile research and will give you an insight into what already exists for when you start thinking about the nitty gritty of your course.

It's worth considering your course's point of difference. How will it be different or better? What is its USP (Unique Selling Point)?

If you find that you are stumbling across some paid advertisement then that's great because it confirms the need for the course. If competitors are prepared to spend money to get their course in front of students it proves that there is clearly a need for this type of course.

Ask your target audience

Create a focus group

You should now be in a position where you have a good idea as to whether or not there is a need for your course, so the next step is to ask the people you want to teach. You could create a focus group of individuals who fit your target audience profile and create a set of questions that help you to find out more of what you need to know.

"Facebook groups are a great place to create engagement."

Create a survey

Another way is to create a survey in Google and send it to a selected group of people asking them to complete it. You could find out information such as what kind of course they are looking for or how they like to learn or how much they are willing to pay etc, which will provide you with invaluable insight about your students' needs.

Ask as many questions as possible until you feel that you have enough information to create a course that fits their needs. It may require you to make a few revisions of the curriculum but it's worth doing. You want to eliminate as many barriers as possible to them purchasing your digital course.

Create a lead magnet

Lead magnets are a great way to validate whether or not there is a need for your topic. Lead magnets are valuable pieces of content that is downloaded in exchange for contact details. It could consist of a cheat sheet, checklist, ebook, swipe file, template, video guide etc. If people are interested in your topic, they will download your content in exchange for their email address.

Create a poll in a Facebook Group

There are so many different groups on Facebook that it wouldn't be difficult to find a group where your target audience hang-out. Facebook groups are a great place to create engagement because people are often part of groups because they want to be a part of a community. This means that you can leverage this to get some insight to help you develop your digital course idea.

Find a suitable group and then run a poll asking questions that will give you an insight into what they are looking for. Make a note of the responses along with any comments you get. It's also worth noting the language that is being used around your topic and keeping note of anything that may be useful. This will come in particularly handy when you are in the marketing stage of your course.

Run a free webinar

You could run a free webinar to give people a taste of your content. You could use this as an opportunity to gather feedback on your course topic. You wouldn't need to give everything away, just enough to keep people engaged. It's also a great way to build your email list for future marketing efforts.

So there you have it, some great ways to validate your course content and to gain some insight into your idea audience's needs. Do not underestimate the importance of this stage, as it could be the difference between the success and failure of your digital course.

Step 3

Pricing

"It's a far better strategy to charge a premium price and then add value."

Getting the pricing right for your digital course is tricky because one size does not fit all. If you charge too little then it can put your digital course at a disadvantage as the perceived value will be low, but then if you charge too much, you will struggle to make sales and get your digital course in front of the right audience.

Unfortunately when it comes to pricing your digital course, there are no hard and fast rules because courses can range from £5.00 to £5,000. It all depends on the type of course, the value provided, the intended audience, your experience, and the pricing strategy you choose to use.

When you first start pricing your digital course, it'll be tempting to go in low because you may not have the confidence or proven experience in this area to charge a premium price.

One of the main problems for charging a low price is that you can't afford to invest in marketing the course because what you get back may not feel worth it.

It also downgrades the perceived value of your course. They say you get what you pay for and if you're asking someone to pay a low price then you are saying that there is not much quality or value to be had.

Another reason not to charge a low price is because it will put you in competition with other courses based on price alone when actually you should be marketing the value that your student will receive.

There will also be courses cheaper than yours so you'll never win this race. You will also end up attracting customers who are looking for cheap options and not value.

There are times when charging a low price works but it needs to be part of your marketing strategy. You may want to reduce the price of your course during its launch in order to generate interest, or if you are running a beta testing programme. However, once your digital course has been validated and it's ready to be purchased at full price then consider charging a cost based on value.

It's a far better strategy to charge a premium price and then add value by offering additional options that add to the perceived value of the course. Some of the ways you could do this is by:

- Offering a private Facebook group to run alongside the course
- Offer 121 coaching or a group program
- Offer a payment plan
- Include some valuable resources that students can download
- Host Q&A session for your students where they get access to you
- Create various price tiers
- Host monthly accountability sessions for your students

Ultimately it's down to you to determine what you want to charge for your digital course but remember that your expertise needs to be paid for and that you are offering access to what is essentially a transformative process.

If you can be really clear about the benefits of the course and the difference it'll make to your students' lives then it will make it far easier to charge a premium price.

Step 4

Create your course promise

A course promise sets expectations; it is the promise of transformation you are making to your students (e.g. "buy this course and you will go from [challenge] to [solution] in [timeframe]"). It doesn't need to be complex; it just needs to outline exactly what your students can expect.

People buy courses that give results, so the course promise plays an integral part to their decision-making. Your course promise is a simple statement about the specific and amazing results that your students are going to experience.

What is the problem your ideal customer is facing that you can help resolve? Once you pinpoint this then you can start to craft a promise that assures resolution to the challenge.

This is why validating your course idea is a vital step because it should also provide you with some key insights that help you to write this statement.

A good place to start is by getting really clear on the following:

- What is your course about?
- Why would someone want to take this course?
- What specific results will be achieved by taking this course?
- How long will it take them to get this result?

Once you know the above then you can confidently craft your course promise.

"Your course promise is a simple statement about the specific and amazing results that your students are going to experience."

Step 5

Decide on your learning outcomes

"By having really clear learning outcomes, you will ensure that only the right students will take the course."

One of the most important aspects of creating a digital course is to clarify the learning outcomes for your students because it's the learning outcomes that will lead to the bigger transformation.

This needs to be made very clear to your students so that they understand exactly what the course will be offering them. Don't make the mistake of thinking that your students will automatically know what the learning outcomes are because it will simply result in a lack of sales. If your students do not know how the course will help them, they will not buy it.

Clarifying expectations from the outset will reduce the chance of refunds and complaints.

Once they have completed your course:

- What new skills will they acquire?
- What new knowledge will
- they learn?
- How will they feel upon completion?

By having really clear learning outcomes, you will ensure that only the right students will take the course. This way you can ensure that you achieve higher completion and satisfaction rates, because the course will be exactly what they are looking for.

The goal is to create an engaging and compelling digital course that your students will want to complete. You want to leave students feeling as though it was worth the money they spent and they would happily recommend your course to others. You also want to leave them feeling accomplished and better off.

When you create your learning outcomes, it will help you get clear on the benefits on the course.

This will make it easier to sell your course later on because you can market your course based around the benefits and learning outcomes.

Step 6

Create course framework

"By outlining your course structure first... you will be able to see if it works."

Creating a framework for your course enables you to see how it all pieces together and works. It also draws your attention to any areas that do not flow.

For example, you may decide that you are creating a course that has 5 modules with 4 lessons per module. By outlining your course structure first before jumping into the creation of your content, you will be able to see if it works. So many people jump into creating their course content first without really thinking about how it all works together. This could mean that the course doesn't flow properly or that there is a piece of valuable content missing.

By outlining the course structure first, it also gives you an insight into all the work that needs to be done making it far easier to create a content creation strategy. As you create your course, you will soon realise that there is a lot of work that needs to be done and so it's important that you have a system in place that helps to prevent you from becoming overwhelmed.

This could be as simple as creating a task sheet for each module so that you are breaking tasks down in an easy and manageable way. The more organised you are at the beginning, the more productive you will be throughout the creation of your digital course.

Trello is a great tool to use for creating a digital course framework; it's free and really easy to use. You can also make your boards visually interesting and update them on the go via the Trello app.

At this stage you just want to make brief notes about what you are creating so that you can get all your ideas down. Trello will then help you to organise your thoughts so that you can keep on track.

Step 7

Create course content

So let me ask you, how do you like to learn?

The reason for this question is because everyone learns differently. Some people love to read and so enjoy learning through books and similar resources, others like to listen to audios and podcasts and others (like me), enjoy learning through visual aids. We are all different and therefore how we consume the world around us is different.

There are so many different ways to deliver your course content to your students and knowing what your audience likes will put you in good stead to make these decisions. For example, will you be delivering your course content via video with you on screen or will you deliver it as audio? Will there be visual aids, slides, graphics or downloadable resources?

It's important to get a balance between theory and practical methodologies so that you can provide the optimum learning experience for your students. This is where you can get really creative and deliver it in a fun, compelling and engaging way.

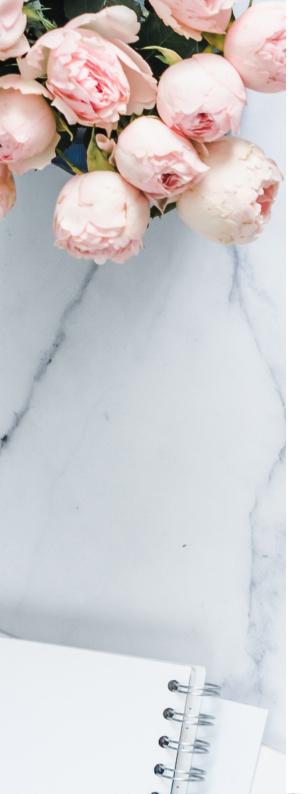Consider delivering your content in a mixed way so that you cater to the needs of all your students.

There is no right or wrong way to deliver your content to your students but if you are unsure on what the best way is then ask them. Create a poll and get some insights on how people like to consume information.

Some of the ways you could deliver your content is as follows:

- Videos
- Tests
- Quizzes
- Audios
- Downloadable pdfs
- Assignments

With so many options available, it's about choosing the right options for your audience. You may decide that the best approach is to have different options available.

Step 8

Design your course material

When it comes to your digital course, we all know that content is important but so is the design and layout of your course. It's important to create compelling and engaging material that draws your student in so they want to learn what you have to offer. Creating a well-crafted course environment will help your student to stay engaged and motivated.

There are two things to consider when creating the design for your course:

- Your brand image
- Your target audience

Your brand image is your identity; it's how you show up. It says a lot about who you are, what you do and the quality of what you provide.

Your branding acts as the backbone of your course design. If you are creating a digital course for your business then you want your brand identity to be at the forefront of everything you create, so that your audience will instantly recognise it as yours.

Your branding is what helps to differentiate your business and is what sets you apart from your competition. How you look says a lot about the quality of service that your customers will expect to receive from you.

Think about courses that you may have taken in the past – or even videos that you've watched on YouTube: was there a graphic, or logo or piece of music that signalled its creator? Did seeing that tell-tale sign of authorship make you excited for what was to come? These are the feelings you want to evoke in your audience: familiarity, trust and excitement.

Step 9

Delivering your course content

"The great thing about using a Learning Management System is they make creating a digital course easy."

When it comes to delivering your digital course, there are 3 main options to choose from:

- Self-hosting through your website using a plugin such as Kinsta
- Online Course Marketplace such as Udemy or Skillshare
- Learning Management System (LMS) like Kajabi, Podia or Thinkific

Let's talk about the most popular option which is a Learning Management System (LMS)... now there are quite a few different platforms to choose from and again, if you choose to go down this road then the platform you choose will ultimately be down to your personal preference.

The great thing about using a Learning Management System is they make creating a digital course easy. They have built their platforms specifically with the needs of their customers in mind so everything you are most likely to need will be there. All you have to do is sign up for an account, upload your course content and you are good to go!

With a Learning Management System you have full control over setting it up so that it becomes your own private digital school that you can connect to your website and design so that it looks like it's part of your brand.

The main difference between Learning Management Systems will be the different levels of functionality on offer which also determines their price points.

For example Podia is a monthly fee of $39.00 for an an easy to use, course building platform. It's very easy to build your course using Podia however it is limited in its design capabilities and marketing functionality.

Kajabi, on the other hand, is a more premium product at $149.00 a month. It is also a very simple to use platform but offers a lot more functionality to support the launch and selling of the course. It positions itself as the complete one-stop-shop to growing your digital online business.

They all have their own benefits and features and it's really down to personal preference when it comes down to choosing which option is most suitable.

Step 10

Launch!

So you have finally finished creating your digital course and you are now ready to go 'live' and launch it. There are many different ways to launch, but what is recommended is that you work from a plan as strategy is key.

Start by asking yourself these questions:

- How much money do you want to make?
- How many sales do you need to achieve your financial goal?

It pays to get specific because once you have a figure in your mind that you want to achieve, it will keep you focused and on track.

Now when it comes to the launch of your digital course, you can approach it in various ways:

1. Soft launch

Create a soft launch where you use your immediate connections to get it out into the world. This means leveraging your community and social media to achieve sales. This approach will help to build confidence and get some students into your course. It is a very informal approach and means that you don't need to launch with a full-on calendar.

2. Planned launch (also known as Open Cart - Closed Cart')

This launch is planned out and very strategic and often includes a pre-launch period where you create intentional content that is strategically aligned with your course.

This approach means that you plan the date when you will open the cart to sell your course. You will also arrange a date to close the cart which creates a FOMO (fear of missing out) for your customers.

This approach is great for achieving lots of sales in a short space of time as it forces people to make a decision quickly because of the limited time that the cart is open for. This approach is carefully planned out to attract customers into your funnel.

3. Evergreen (Organic)

This is when your digital course sits somewhere where students can purchase it at any time, day or night. If you were to use this approach then you would market your digital course through organic marketing such as blogs, social media posts, Youtube videos or email marketing to drive new leads to the digital course.

This approach is a far slower way of achieving sales but the benefit is that it requires very little financial investment.

"Launch success is often achieved after many attempts because it takes time to find your perfect formula."

4. Evergreen (Paid)

This approach is more strategic as it is planned out. It involved setting up automated and paid for marketing to attract and convert students into paying customers.

This approach would require you to have a sales funnel where you would run paid ads to attract prospective customers.

There is of course a financial investment required in this approach, but you may find that it drives a lot more leads quickly to your digital course. There is additional technology involved such as a webinar platform, email platform and sales page.

There are many ways to launch your course; you just need to find the way that suits you, your timeframe and your budget. You may also find that the first time you launch your course, you may not achieve what you set out to achieve but that's perfectly normal. Launch success is often achieved after many attempts because it takes time to find your perfect formula. When you do however, it can be very rewarding and profitable and it's something you can do time and time again.

Summary

So that's digital course creation in a nutshell!

Granted it's a pretty big nutshell, but creating a worthwhile, bestselling course isn't a five minute job!

I'm a big believer that anything worth doing is worth doing well and I hope that this ebook will give you the knowhow and the impetus to achieve your goals and create lasting, top quality content for your customers.

Whatever path you choose to take when creating your digital course, I would strongly urge you to give it a go: it's an incredibly rewarding experience and, done right, it can become a powerful source of passive income for your business.
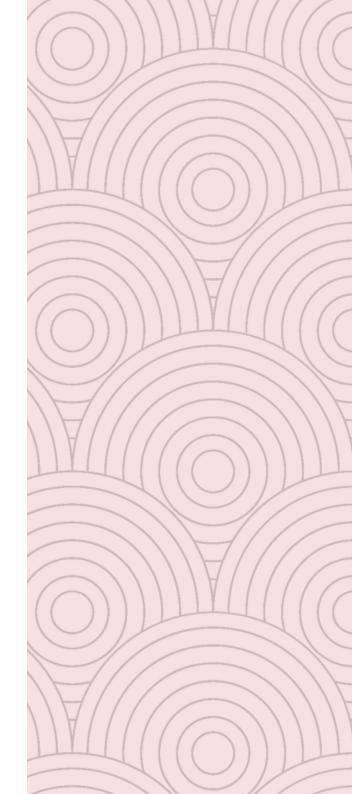
Good luck and happy creating!

So ,what now?

I hope you found this digital course guide useful, hopefully you now have a better idea about how to get started with creating your very own digital course.

If you would like some further guidance or if you would like to work with me to bring your digital course to life then I offer a complimentary 30 minute consultation.

Click here to book a your complimentary 30 minute consultation.

Who am I?

Hello, I'm Karen and I'm a Digital Course Creator and Branding Strategist. I own a successful brand agency in Kent where I work with ambitious female entrepreneurs who want to create a robust business by creating passive revenue streams through online courses, digital products or digital downloads.

Combining my skills and extensive experience in digital course creation, with a heavy dose of passion, purpose and heart, I create inspiring design, underpinned by a robust branding strategy, that will results in ideas coming to life so that businesses can not only growing but thrive.

Creating a digital course for your business will provide you with more income, more control and more freedom to create the life you aspire to have and who doesn't want that?!

If you would like to get in touch to discuss how i can support you then email me at: karen@pink-lemondesign.co.uk.

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