A Checklist to Creating Your First Online Course

Want to help others by sharing your expertise and skills through an educational online course? Use the checklist below to get started!

❏ **Set a goal(s) for your online course.** *20 minutes*
Establishing goals for your course from the beginning will give you a clear understanding of its purpose. It'll also help guide the content you choose to include, as well as the design. Some questions to ask yourself as you set your goals include: *How many subscribers are you aiming for? How many people do you want to convert to customers? What should course attendees be able to do by the end of the course?*

❏ **Research a topic by discovering your popular email or blog content.**
10 minutes
What content are you already writing about that already aligns with your audience's needs? To discover your most popular blog content, check out the analytics. (If you use Google Analytics, for example, [head there](#)!)

❏ **Get feedback from your audience.** *10 minutes*
Survey your audience by asking for feedback via email or your social channels. Or, create a survey using [Google Forms](#) or a platform like [SurveyGizmo](#), which allows you to analyze and view your results in a number of ways.

❏ **Check out what's currently trending.** *10 minutes*
Browse through publications and news outlets related to your industry to discover what's hot right now. Is there a way you can leverage this interest and connect it to your course?

❏ **Consider what *you* want your audience to learn.** *5 minutes*
As you look around at what your audience wants to learn, consider what you think they should know more about. You're the expert in your craft, so you might have better insight into what topics they should learn now to help prep them for the future.

❏ **Finalize your topic.** *10 minutes*
Taking all of your research into consideration, it's time to pick your course topic!

❏ **Research courses you like.** *10 minutes*

To help you get an idea of what your course should look like, check out courses that you like. What makes it so effective? Keep this in mind as you go about creating your course.

❏ **Choose how you want to deliver your course content.** *5 minutes*
Will the course be live or pre-recorded so people can sign up and take it whenever they want? Also, think about the medium you plan to use to present your course. Will you set up an automated email series? Or maybe you want to go with an educational platform, like Teachable, Thinkific, or Skillshare? Identifying the medium will have big implications for how you create your course, so take time to consider what's best for you and your audience. Also consider the amount of time and effort required for each. For example, an automated email course might take less time to create than a video course on Teachable.

❏ **Outline your course content.** *45 minutes*
Create a storyboard or content map to identify the journey that your attendees will need to take in order to achieve the final goal of your course. Be sure to also include an introduction to your brand and the course, as well as a congratulatory conclusion! (Here are some additional guidelines for creating your course outline.) After you outline your course, you'll be ready to translate it to slides.

❏ **Determine how you want to convey your course information.** *5 minutes*
Once you've identified the medium for delivering your course, consider the ways you want to present your course content. There are a number of ways to present your course content. You can use videos, blog posts, emails, and more – you can also include a little bit of everything!

❏ **Create and edit course content.** *However long you need!*
As you create your course content (writing, filming, editing), be sure to also include calls to action throughout. At the end of the course, you'll want to congratulate attendees on their success and thank them – this is also a good time to ask for feedback. Feel free to use some of the survey methods mentioned earlier in this checklist, such as sending out an email asking for feedback or creating a survey using a tool like SurveyGizmo or Google Forms.

❏ **Set up tracking.** *15 minutes*
Set UTM parameters to track links and calls to action throughout your course. This will help you track the performance of your course, as well as progress made towards your goals. To become a tracking expert (if you aren't already), click here.

❏ **If using an educational platform, upload your content and set it up.**
30 minutes

- ❏ **If using automated emails, build your course in your email marketing provider.** *30 minutes*

   As you set up your automated emails, consider when you want your emails to be delivered to your course attendees, and at what cadence. *Should it be once a week or daily? Do you want everyone to receive each lesson at 8 a.m. in the morning, or at any random time during the day?* For more on creating an automated email course, [here's another great resource](#).

- ❏ **Create a landing page.** *20 minutes*

   If your course requires people to opt-in by submitting their email address, you'll want to create a landing page that includes a form to sign up. Be sure to convey details of the course, as well as its purpose and overall benefits to attendees. For more on what to include in your landing page, [click here](#).

- ❏ **Test the user experience before going live.** *10 minutes*

   Test links and your videos/emails to ensure everything works.

- ❏ **Create a promotion plan.** *15 minutes*

   Identify the ways in which you want to promote your course. Will you send out an email announcement? Post a live video on Facebook? Host a webinar? Now's the time to write out a formal, strategic plan. For ideas to get your started, [check out this blog post](#).

- ❏ **Launch and promote your course!**