

COURSE CREATION BEST PRACTICES



Digital Courses: Course Creation Best Practices and Must Haves

Digital courses, for online learning, are reaching new levels. The convenience of being able to learn anytime and anywhere, with lower costs are some of the reasons online learning is so popular.

It's the perfect opportunity to teach students your course. Before you begin creating your course, you should consider the best way build the online course and what should be included.

In order to engage your students, you want to create and present your course in a way that is right for your audience. The content should also help you move your students through becoming a satisfied, lifelong, customers.

Course Creation Best Practices

Use these best practices to create a course that is well received and informative.

1. Know your audience before you begin to design your lessons. Identify who they are and Understand who they are and how they learn. Cookie cutter courses are often to impersonal and don't meet the needs of particular students.

What are their goals and interests?

What skills or knowledge should your target already have before taking your course?

What do you want your student to be able to do by the end of the course?

What do you want them to do after the course ends?

2. Use different styles of content. People learn in different ways. Some students may learn better with bite-size pieces. Others may prefer interactive tools and group activities. Others yet may prefer videos or written content delivered in a lecture formatted course.

It also will depend on the subject of your course on the type of tools you will be using. Step-by-step courses that cover how to do something such as play the guitar would work best with video. If you're teaching something like bookkeeping, you'll need to present the material in a screenshare format with worksheets.

3. Create well-organized courses or trainings. It's helpful to break each section into smaller, "micro" bits of information that helps students from being overwhelmed or feeling bogged down by too much information. This also allows students to work on the course when they can fit it into their own busy schedules.

For example, the first module can be a sort of breakdown of the course which tells them what they can expect. The subsequent modules can build on that info. Each one should have a well-defined objective and keep the student focused. Keep them engaged with dynamic activities throughout the course to keep them engaged.

4. Speaking of dynamic content, make the lessons interactive whenever possible. You want to keep your students engaged and ready to continue with the next lesson. You can use any number of interactive tools in your course. Audio clips and videos will keep their interest. Use visual content such as images that help tell your story. Incorporate live quizzes to encourage participation. Encourage group discussions. Use interactive worksheets, templates, or slideshows to liven up your online course.
5. Personalize it whenever possible. How can you incorporate personalized learning in your course? You could make personal recommendations for specific profiles or personalize the content based on their profiles such as beginner, intermediate or advanced.
6. Know how much it will cost to develop your course. It will depend on many factors, including content development, research, and marketing. You'll want to include the cost of video equipment if you're using video, outsourcing work and software.
7. Do your research on the platform you will be using. There are different types of online course platforms that you can use to host your course. They include
 - Self-Hosted WordPress LMS plugin online course platforms provide you with the tools and infrastructure to sell your course from your website. These offer unlimited flexibility. The downside is you will have to take care of maintenance and security of the software. Example: LearnDash plugin
 - Platforms hosted by third parties offer a combination of easy to set up and ability to share your course all in one place. You can build your course website without a lot of different plugins or worrying about the techy stuff. Example: Teachable
 - Online Independent course platforms present your course via an e-commerce market along with many other courses. The platform manages most of the process including sales and marketing with some restrictive conditions Example: Udemy
8. Choose the right subject for your online course. It's not as simple as choosing your favorite topic and writing a blog post. Instead, you need to choose your course topic based on what problem your target audience face on a regular basis and help them solve it. Don't try to sell your audience a course on fixing your car

when your audience is all about building websites. Instead, if they are asking you for tips on the best design for a website, your course should be about that.

9. You don't have to start from scratch. Use content you've already created. You most likely chose a topic that you've already talked about so the content will be relevant for your course. Don't just duplicate the content they can already get free on your blog. Instead, use them as starting points for videos, workbooks or just expand on the existing content.
10. Use the best equipment you have available to you to create your videos and other content. This includes
 - Microphones for audio that is easy for your students to hear you and understand you with. A USB microphone is a good choice.
 - Headphones are also good idea during the editing process of your video. A good set of noise-canceling ones are handy for conducting interviews and recording others.
 - If you are sharing information from your software or computer program to the class, you need good screen-recording software, such as Camtasia.
 - Your recording equipment can be as simple as your smart phone or a webcam or use a professional DSLR Camcorder.
 - Audio and video editing software
 - Lighting and accessories to ensure you aren't sitting in the dark.
11. Proofread and edit before you send out your course for sale. Make sure your videos are edited for clarity and can be heard easily.
12. Create valuable content that helps your students. The content needs to be condensed into shorter sentences that are easily read.
13. Focus on specific focal point and not go off-topic. It should stick to what you promise in your sales page.
14. Differentiate your courses unique value proposition from the beginning. What sets your course apart from the rest?
15. Keep control over your brand. Set your pricing and policies. Use your logo and branding colors. Build your students experience with your business consistent. If you are developing your brand, you will be the face of your course. You should showcase your personality into the class design.

16. Test your idea completely before designing it. Research your topic on the internet to find out if there are courses already available. Is the niche popular? How much and how strong is the competition?
17. Create an outline that is organized. A comprehensive outline makes it easier to arrange your content chronologically. This way your course goes from easiest to advanced or natural progression from beginning to end.
18. Use your outline to create content, lessons, quizzes or video scripts. Cover the most important topics as well as content that helps the student learn the topic.
19. Presell your course before you create the content. Preselling helps you see if there is any interest in the course before you waste time and resources creating it.
20. Get beta students to test the course before you release it to the public. This helps you gather insight on what needs improvement, added or taken out. It helps you gather testimonials you can use on your sales page as well.
21. Set up a landing page to gather subscribers interested in the topic. Begin building a relationship with them through email marketing. When you're ready to launch your course, send them an offer to get in on the class at a reduced rate.
22. Create your sales page. Include images, videos, benefits, a compelling headline, your author bio, testimonials, and your call-to-action.
23. Use a good authoring tool that lets you design, edit, and share online courses to different platforms.
24. Collaborate with others to create and design the course materials. Outsource the copy, graphics, or anything that you aren't willing to do. Use a project collaboration tool to keep track of every aspect of the project.
25. Make your course easy to navigate. Students should be able to find where to go next.
26. Improve on getting engagements by allowing group discussions with moderators or by building a social media community to continue discussions.

27. Apply push notifications as a part of your marketing and engagement. Send push notifications about new courses, discounts, or offers you have on the course or questions asked about the course.

What To Do Next

You have a great idea for a course and have decided to create that course. But before you jump in with both feet and arms, make sure you use the best practices tips for creating course.

Before the first word is written, get input on the topic and the targeted audience's pain points. This helps you create a course that your audience actually wants to take.

Create an outline and a summary of the course so you can keep it organized when you begin creating content.

Determine how and what platform you will use to host your course. Is it compatible with your other marketing platforms like your email provider or your payment gateways? Decide if you want it self-hosted or hosted on your own website.

Use quality equipment when creating your videos and voice content. You need a microphone, camera and lighting for good videos. Finally, the easily digestible content teaches them what it is you promised in your sales page.