

AN ONLINE COURSE LAUNCH CASE STUDY

THE LEAN LAUNCH METHOD



HOW I GENERATED 15K IN 3 WEEKS LAUNCHING
A BRAND NEW COURSE TO A TINY LIST

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In this case study, I'm going to show you how to launch your first (or next) online course in a way that...

- Removes 80% of the decisions, variables, questions and pitfalls
- Ensures your course will sell before you invest time, energy, or resources into creating it
- Leapfrogs you from idea to first sale in as little as three weeks
- Bypasses the need to create a long sales page or execute a complex product launch
- Works even if you have a small list...and in some cases even if you have no list at all

I call this the Lean Launch Method.

The **Lean Launch Method** is a way to get to the most important results as quickly as possible in a way that minimizes the risks you take on and the time, money, and energy you invest.

But here's the caveat.

This method isn't for someone who is looking for a quick way to make money online with any course.

This method will only work for you if you...

1. Already have a pretty darn good idea of who your ideal student/customer is
2. Have already put in the time, refined your expertise, and know how to get results for those who take your course
3. Feel compelled to share your message, story, expertise, idea, method, or movement in a bigger way and...
4. Want to make an impact as much as you want to make money.

From Idea to 15k in 3 Weeks

This case study will show you how I used The Lean Launch Method to launch a brand new course that generated 15k from a small list in just three weeks.

When I say three weeks, I mean that's all the time it took to go from having the initial idea for the course to having money in my bank account.

The Online Course Design Canvas

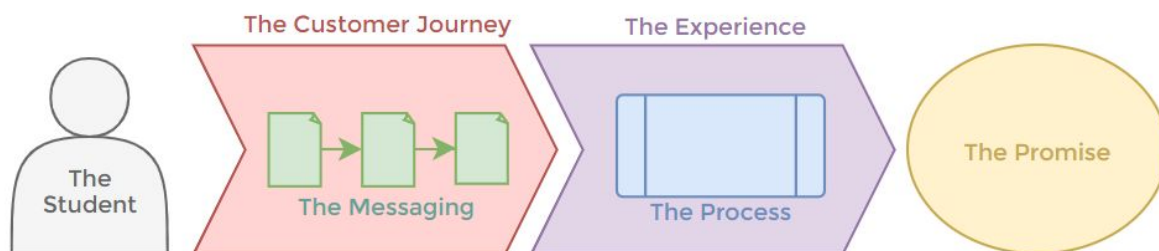
Before we dive into the case study and the steps of the Lean Launch Method, we need to take a quick look at a six-part framework I developed for designing a successful online course.

I call this framework the *Online Course Design Canvas*. The six parts of the canvas are as follows.

1. The Student
2. The Promise
3. The Process
4. The Experience
5. The Messaging
6. The Customer Journey

We'll take a closer look at these six elements later in this guide.

I mustered my copious design skills to create the following highly sophisticated diagram illustrating the six parts of the canvas and how they relate to each other.



A Framework, Not a Formula

It's important to note that the canvas is a framework, not a formula. Following a formula when launching your course is a recipe for creating something that is out of alignment with your vision and values.

On the other hand, a framework provides a scaffolding on which you can build a course based on your unique strengths, goals, and values so that you reach an outcome that is aligned with what is most important to you.

The Online Course Design Canvas Meets the Lean Launch Method

How does the Online Course Design Canvas relate to the Lean Launch Method?

Simply put, the Online Course Design Canvas is the map. The Lean Launch Method is the fastest vehicle for following the map to your destination.

The Online Course Design Canvas ensures you address all six elements that play a key role in the success of your course. It also shows you how the six elements relate to each other and helps you design them in the correct order to get the best results.

I created the Lean Launch Method by finding the simplest, fastest way to execute each of the six parts of the Online Course Design Canvas to make the process less overwhelming, time-intensive, and uncertain.

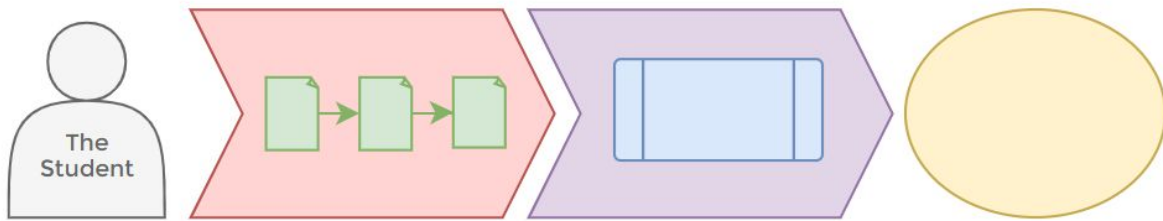
The Lean Launch Method allows you to quickly test the viability and effectiveness of any course idea and, if it proved viable, get it to market as quickly as possible. This is especially helpful when launching your first course or when launching a new course for the first time.

After all, in business, speed of implementation and innovation is vital to success and growth. When we delay taking action, the overall long-term cost is often higher because of the opportunities we lose to create income and impact had we taken action more immediately.

6 Elements of a Successful Online Course

Let's take a quick look at each of the six elements in the Online Course Design Canvas.

1) The Student



Who is the specific person you want to reach and help with your course? What are their most pressing pains and goals? What are their current circumstances? What motivates them? What's holding them back?

The answers to questions like these tell you everything you need to know to design a course that the Student will readily buy and benefit from.

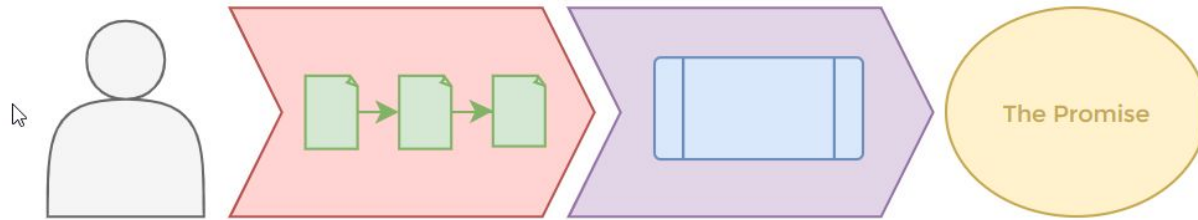
Empathy is your most important skill and tool when creating an online course. Successful online course creators rely on a thorough understanding of the inner world of the Student and what motivates their behavior when making key decisions about their course.

It's important to note that you must be very specific when defining the Student. A common mistake course creators make is to choose an intended audience that is too broad or that is made of more than one potential student.

Doing this makes it difficult to create a course that provides what the Student needs. It also makes it hard for the prospective student to quickly and easily recognize that the course is the right fit for them.

When you aren't specific enough when defining the Student, it compromises the efficacy of the curriculum and sales messaging.

2) The Promise



What is your student missing NOW? What do they want from their near, or long-term future that you can give them? What transformation, outcome, or results will you facilitate?

The purpose of an impactful online course is to guide the Student toward a future they envision. The Promise of realizing that future is the reason they will invest time, money and energy in your course.

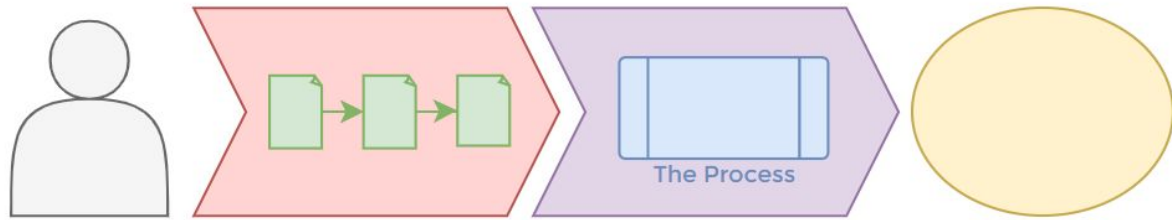
If there's one thing that can make or break the success of your course, it's how compelling the Promise is. A compelling Promise is one that fulfills the most important needs of the Student and creates clear value.

People are much more likely to invest in your course when you can clearly spell out what they will gain in terms of key needs such as...

- Time saved
- Money earned
- Energy saved
- Status gained
- Increased freedom
- Choices made available
- Stress avoided

Without the right Promise for your course, no amount of marketing or number of features and benefits will convince the Student to buy in.

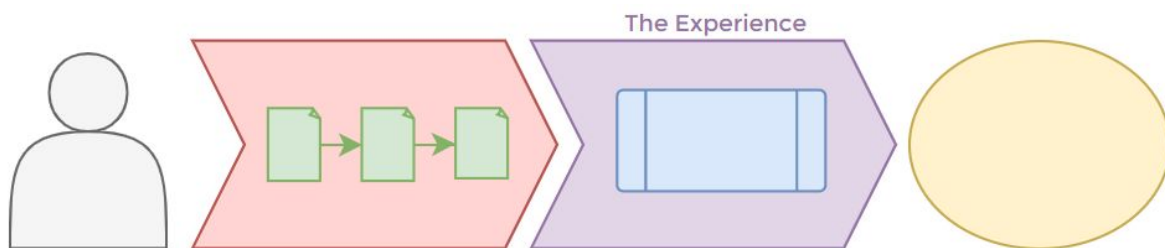
3) The Process



How do you structure your steps so that they are able to climb effortlessly from one place to another? How do you help them reach the Promise?

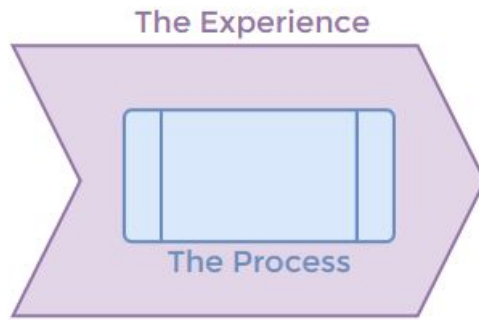
The Process is the architecture of the course. It is the action steps, milestones, and methods that will lead from A to B to C until they reach the promised results.

4) The Experience



How will you guide them through the Process? What kind of support will you provide? How will they interact with and follow the Process? How much will they have access to each other and to you?

The Experience is a wrapper around the Process. The Process consists of the steps they take. The Experiences determines how they will traverse those steps.

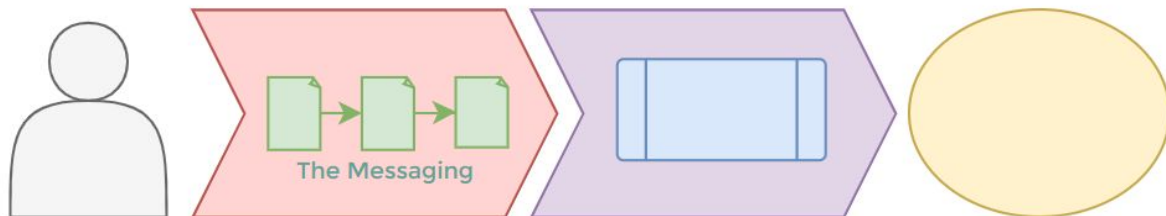


This is where you make decisions about content format, which platform will house and deliver the content, how much direct guidance the Student gets, how much they get to interact with other students, and other such features that will fashion their journey.

The Online Course Design Canvas separates the Process from the Experience in order to give you the most flexibility in how you serve your clients and customers.

If you design your Process the right way, you can easily create a variety of offers by wrapping it in different experiences (e.g. one-to-one consulting, a live workshop, group coaching programs, a do-it-yourself digital courses, and so forth) in order to provide the right Experience for each person based on their needs and preferences as well as how much money they are able to invest.

5) The Messaging

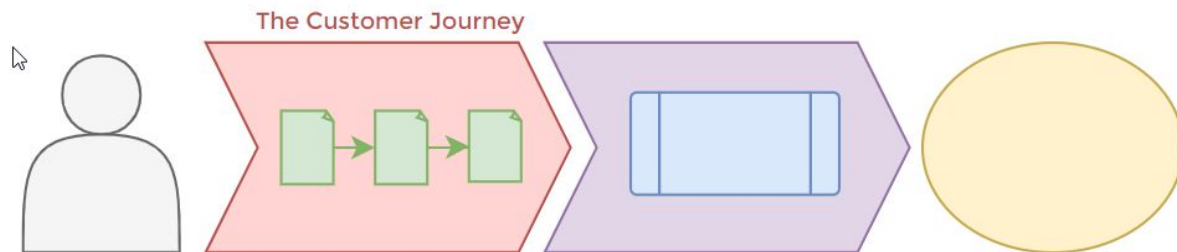


What do you need to communicate in order to get the Student to invest in your course? What do they need to believe, understand, and decide in order to say yes?

Before your course can generate profit and impact, you must gain the attention of your intended Student, earn their trust, and inspire them to invest not only money, but also the time and energy necessary to benefit from the course. This is the job of the Messaging.

The Messaging makes up the core of your marketing and sales strategy.

6) The Customer Journey



How will you communicate the Messaging to the Student? Which content channels and formats will you use? How will you guide them to the point of making a decision about investing in your course?

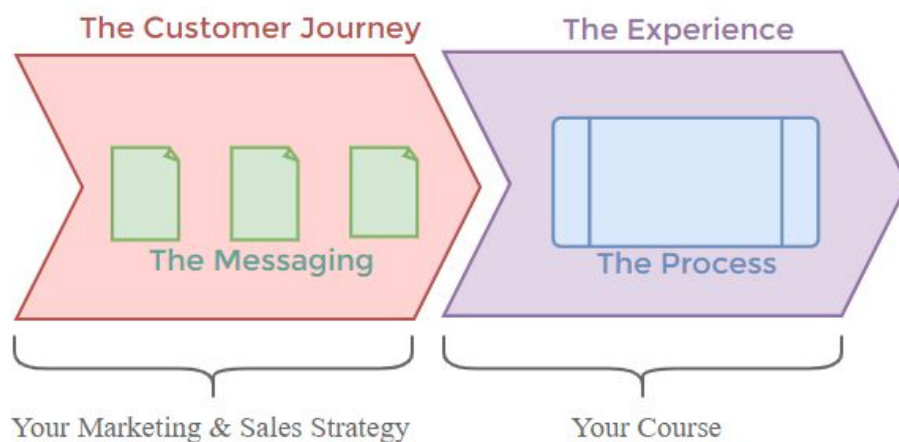
The Customer Journey consists of all the ways the prospective Student interacts with your brand and business on the way to enrolling in your course — from the first moment you gain their attention up until the call to action that leads them to buy in.

This is where you often hear people (mostly marketers) refer to things such as evergreen sales funnel, product launches, and promotional campaigns.

While these might be tools and tactics used in your Customer Journey, it's important to first focus on the fundamental human needs and interests that motivate why and how your prospective customer interacts with your brand.

When you stay tuned to the humanity of your audience, you are able to develop a relationship of trust that allows you to influence them in an authentic way. This roots your marketing and sales in empathy, keeping the best interests of your intended customer at the forefront, regardless of which tools and tactics we use. Ultimately, this grows both your income as well as your impact.

The Customer Journey wraps around the Messaging in the same way as the Experience wraps around the Process. The former two make up the marketing and sales strategy. The latter two make up the course.



The Lean Launch Method: A Case Study

Now that we've established the Online Course Design Canvas as a solid foundation, we can dive into the specifics of the Lean Launch Method with a case study.

The idea of the Lean Launch Method is to run a pilot of your new online course to prove it will sell and get results for the students. This only requires that you enroll a handful of students.

My preferred way to run a pilot is as a series of live group calls, one for each module, delivered over time. This allows you to create the course over time after you've already sold it.

To do this, you outline just enough about the course (i.e. who it's for, what they will get, what results they can expect, what the process will look like) to allow people to decide whether to invest in the course.

Once you run a successful pilot, you have everything you need (and know it's worth your time and energy) to create a scalable version of the course.

The pilot course approach offers a number of important benefits. It allows you to...

1. **Test** if people will buy the course before you invest considerable resources into creating it.
2. **Get paid** to create the course rather than hoping it will sell after you have already expended resources creating it.
3. **Get valuable input** from your pilot students so that you can refine the Promise, Process, Experience, and Messaging which will make it easier to sell the course and generate results for participants when you scale the course; in essence you co-create the course with your pilot students..
4. **Get testimonials** from your pilot students which will serve as proof of the efficacy of the course, making it easier to sell the course in the future.
5. **Generate a nice influx of cash**, even with only a handful of sales, because you can charge a premium for the pilot if you position it correctly — more on that later.

To illustrate how this all works, let's next look at the steps I took to make 15k from a pilot in three weeks.

Step 1: Uncover an Unmet Need, Pressing Pain, or Unfulfilled Desire

I was on a call with a client talking about her thought leadership goals and making a strategic plan with her when she popped this question.

"If I launch a podcast, can you show me how to really get results from it? I know too many podcasters who just complain that their shows aren't going anywhere. But I know you grew a large audience and made really good money as a podcaster for thirteen years. Can you teach me how to do it?"

It wasn't the first time I'd heard similar questions and frustrations about podcasting from clients and colleagues.

I asked her to give me a day or so to pull together some ideas. As I pondered her request, I realized a number of key things that showed me there was potential to create a successful online course to help these podcasters.

1. **Here was a problem that needed solving.** I'd heard the same frustration enough times to know there was perhaps enough demand if I created a solution. I would need to test this assumption, but the evidence was promising.
2. **I had an effective and unique solution.** I could take the frameworks I used in my thought leadership strategy workshops and consulting gigs, combine them with lessons learned from thirteen years of profitable podcasting, and create a course to help these podcasters get the results they were looking for.
3. **I had access to potential customers.** A number of podcasters dealing with this issue were already "in my orbit" as evidenced by the conversations that kept popping up related to the problem.
4. **It made good sense for my business.** This course could become a new revenue stream for my business, one that was congruent with my brand of helping thought leaders grow their reach, impact, and income. It aligned with my goals, strengths, and target audience.

Takeaways

- As a thought leader and entrepreneur, you must continually have your ear to the ground, listening for opportunities to create an in-demand course. The clues are there if you take the time to have frequent conversations with your current and prospective customers. Listen for recurring themes about their pains, desires, challenges, and needs.

Step 2: Define the Intended Student

The Student I wanted to reach and help with this new course idea was clear — podcasters who were struggling to grow their audience and see a clear ROI from their show.

When defining the intended Student for a new course, here are five questions I ask to be sure I've chosen a Student that is viable for a successful and profitable course pilot. The answer to all of these questions must be *yes* to proceed with a pilot.

5 Questions for Choosing the Right Student

- 1) Is this student **actively looking** for a solution?
- 2) Are they **ready to invest** in a solution?
- 3) Do I **have access** to prospective students in my current sphere of influence?
 - Note: This is often much easier than many course creators realize. More on how to do this later.
- 4) Have I chosen a Student that is **specific** enough that they will easily be able to see the course is a fit for them?
- 5) Can I help this student achieve clear **results**?

Takeaways

- Profitable course ideas focus on solving problems that your intended customer is 1) already aware of 2) actively looking for a solution to and 3) ready to invest time and energy to solve.
- Use the five questions above to choose your an intended Student that is viable for a successful pilot course launch.

Step 3: Define the Promise

The Promise of my course was that the Student would see increased audience growth and monetary ROI from their podcast.

This offered clear value by helping them to make more money, be seen by more people as a thought leader, waste less money on worthless podcasting strategies, have more options when it comes to the future of their show, and increase revenue produced directly or indirectly by the podcast.

To define your Promise, ask yourself the following questions.

1. Goals

- What outcome do they want to realize?
- What pains do they want to relieve?
- What gains do they want achieve?

2. Motivators

- Why are these goals important to them?

- What happened recently to make these goals a priority to focus on right now? Is this something that is a pressing pain right now or just “someday later maybe?”

3. Value

- How will your course help them save time and money?
- How will your course earn them more money?
- How will your course save them energy and remove stress?
- How will your course help them have better health?
- How will your course boost their status?
- What opportunities, freedoms, or new choices will your course offer?
- What other needs does your Student value that your course will help them fulfill?

Takeaways

- Choose a Promise for your course that has a clear payoff in terms of the value it will create for the Student.

Step 4: Outline the Process

When selling an online course, it's easy to make the assumption that the thing people pay for is the content and the information it conveys. This in turn leads to the assumption that the content needs to exist before you can sell the course and that there needs to be a lot of it in order to charge a healthy price.

However, it's important to remember the Student is not buying the content nor the information. They are investing in an outcome (the Promise).

This means all they need to know in order to decide whether to invest in the course is a clear idea of what results the course will deliver and how you will lead them to those results (the Process).

To do this, I outlined the course curriculum using the questions below to uncover the topics and milestones I needed to cover.

1. What are the common mistakes, challenges, pitfalls, and misconceptions that hinder the Student from reaching their desired goals? How can I help the Student overcome or avoid each of these?

2. What does the student need to understand and learn in order to be able to reach their goals?
3. What are the key milestones they need to reach on their way to realizing the Promise of the course?
4. What frameworks, methods, tools, etc. do I already have (perhaps that I already use with clients or in other contexts) that I can adapt and use in this Process?

Once I answered the questions above, I organized the topics and milestones into modules that made up the Process for the course. In this case it ended up being eight modules.

Takeaways

- Use the questions above to help you flesh out the Process for your course.
- You don't need to create content before you sell the course. You only need to show prospective students the high-level steps of the Process you will guide them through and the milestones they will reach along the way.
- Draw from and adapt assets and processes from other areas of your work to construct the Process for your pilot course.

Step 5: Define the Course Experience

Next, I planned a course Experience using free or low-cost tools that were easy to set up. Here's the breakdown of the Experience I designed.

Teach With Ease Via Zoom

For this course, I would do a series of weekly live calls, one for each of the eight modules using Zoom (a low monthly fee). Zoom would allow students to attend live, see visual content shared from my screen, ask questions, and chat with me and other students via instant messaging.

Google Drive: A Fast and Free Course Delivery Platform

Instead of putting time and money into creating a course platform, I simply stored the call recordings in a Google Drive folder along with any worksheets, checklists,

and other materials. I organized these into sub-folders, one for each module. This kept things simple, fast, and free.

As students enrolled in the course, I manually shared the Google Drive folder with each student. With a pre-written email template and a simple operating procedure checklist, this wouldn't prove to be much work, especially given pilot courses are typically limited to a handful of students (though, I have used this method for courses with 35 students before and it worked fine).

After running a successful pilot, the goal should be to create a more automated, full-featured version of the course platform, content delivery, and Experience so that you can serve an increasing number of students without maxing out your personal time, taxing the resources of your business, or sacrificing the results you generate for your students.

The process for doing that is beyond the purpose and scope of this guide, but if you would like to speak about how I can help you do that, contact me at jason@jasonvanorden.com to set up a free strategy call.

It's not important that you use Google Drive specifically. You could use Dropbox or any other file sharing tool you prefer. However, I like that students can easily create copies of materials in Google Docs to store, edit, and use in their own Google Drive.

This kind of live call, interactive, small group course offers a number of valuable benefits to both you and the students.

Benefit #1: Spreads Out the Process of Creating Content

This approach allows you to prepare the materials for each module on a week-by-week basis as the course unfolds. In fact, you can use any content release schedule that makes sense for you and the students. You could even decide to have calls and release modules on a monthly basis if it made sense for the Process and the student's needs.

Benefit #2: Feedback from Students Makes the Course More Effective

It allows you to easily adapt the information and action steps based on feedback and questions from the students during the calls. The end result is a course that is more effective because you are making changes in real-time.

This approach is based on methodologies such as the Lean Startup and Design Thinking used by companies like Apple to make innovative products that surpass customer expectations and become industry game-changers.

Benefit #3: Increased Value for the Student

You might not choose to run every iteration of your course as a series of live group calls. However, for those in the pilot, the access they get to you and to other students greatly increases the value.

You can (and should) let them know that you want a high degree of input from them and will even adjust the course curriculum based on their input. This level of interaction and co-creation with the students allows you to charge a premium because of the value it adds for the student.

In this way, you take what could otherwise seem like a downside to a pilot course (i.e. it's the first time running the course) and turn it into a huge benefit (i.e. this is an exclusive opportunity that only a handful of students will get this once). This in turn nets you more revenue because it justifies a higher price for the pilot.

To give you an idea, the digital version of the has since sold for \$500-\$1000 while the live pilot course sold for \$3000.

Benefit #4: You Can Record, Re-Purpose, and Resell the Recordings

By recording each call, you not only provide a way for your pilot students to review the information, you can later sell the recordings as a digital “do it yourself” version of the course. Once I finished the pilot version of the course, I offered the recordings for \$500 and pulled in another \$3000 with two emails to a list of 900 people.

Benefit #5: The Interactive Format of the Pilot Offers More Compelling Energy and Greater Value to Future Students

Students who by the digital recordings will find it valuable to hear the live questions, discussion, and feedback of the students who took part in the pilot. It also makes the content more interesting when there are more voices than just your own for them to listen to. I also find that my course content a more compelling energy to it when I record it with a “live” audience.

Takeaways

- Use free/inexpensive file sharing tools as a platform for you course to save time and money.

- You can offer a premium experience and charge a higher price when you set up the Experience of the pilot course in the right way.
- Record the live call sessions and resell them later as a digital version of your course — create it once, get paid multiple times.
- Creating your course as an interactive pilot makes it more effective because the student feedback helps you improve it on the fly.

Step 6: The Messaging

Selling a pilot course doesn't require highly-polished marketing content or sales copy because there are a number of built-in advantages and incentives that make it easier than other launches.

1. Brand new offers are **inherently compelling** which makes people more likely to pay attention and consider investing.
2. There's **authentic urgency** built in because the offer is only available for a limited time after which you close enrollment and run the course live.
3. There's **authentic scarcity** built-in because you can only accommodate a certain number of students given you're running the course live with a high level of interaction with and access to you.
4. A pilot course offers a **unique opportunity to work closely with you** without paying your usual one-to-one consulting fees.

To market the pilot course, I wrote a series of content that I could use as emails and social media posts. I typically create a series of content that follows an outline like this.

1. Empathize with the Pain

- Show you understand the outcome they desire and what it's costing them not to realize their goal. Let them know that the upcoming series of content will show them a new way to solve the problem at hand and reach their objective.

2. Offer a New Way to Look at the Problem

- Offer a new way to look at the problem. If you can, offer an explanation as to why it's been so challenging to reach their goal and show that if they can take a new approach, they can regain momentum and realize

their goal after all. Absolve them of some of the guilt and frustration of feeling stuck.

3. Present the Solution (i.e. the Process)

- Explain that you have a solution. Tell them why this is the ideal solution for them and better than other options they could choose from. Announce the course and give them a chance to enroll.

4. Share a Success Story

- This could be your own success story or one of a client with whom you used a similar process to get a similar outcome. In whatever way you can authentically can, offer proof of your Process. Include a call to action to enroll.

5. A Taste of Success

- Give them a small taste of the Process. This should be something that is easy for them to complete. Not only does this offer some proof of your process, it helps them feel confident that they are capable of following the Process and reaching the Promise. One great way to do this is to offer an assessment that helps them quickly see their greatest opportunities (and also shows why they need your course to help them take advantage of them).

6. Frequently Asked Questions

- Write a list of answers to the most common questions and objections you anticipate your prospective students having.

7. Last Chance

- Let them know when the deadline to enroll is and when the course starts. Give them a last chance to enroll before the deadline passes.

In addition to this series of content, I created a very simple course information page. In essence, this was the sales page for the course. However, it was nothing more than a Google Doc outlining who the course was for, who it wasn't meant for, what they would learn, what they would get by enrolling, what results they could expect, the price, and any other details they might need to make a decision about enrolling.

[You can see the Google Doc I used to sell the program here.](#) Feel free to make a copy to your own Google Drive if you'd like to adapt it for your own use.

Takeaways

- Pilot courses are typically easier to sell because of the built-in novelty, urgency and scarcity.
- A simple series of content and an information page in Google Docs are sufficient to find and enroll students in a pilot program.

Step 7: Set Minimum Threshold Goals

Before proceeding to sell the pilot course, I needed to define what success looks like. In other words, how would I know whether to proceed with the pilot or pull the plug?

I decided that if I could get at least six people to enroll and generate at least 10k in sales within four weeks, I would create and deliver the course. If I didn't reach those goals, I'd refund any money I'd collected and refocus my time and resources on something else.

Your minimum threshold goals will be different than mine. You should base your goals on the following factors.

1. Your current cash needs
2. Other things you have on your plate at the time
3. The potential value of other opportunities you'd have to give up or delay in order to run the pilot course
4. Your estimated time investment to run the pilot
5. The dollar amount at which you value your time

Keep in mind that generating revenue is only one of many payoffs that makes running a pilot course worthwhile (and perhaps not even the most important payoff).

Other payoffs include:

1. The content and other assets you create and can reuse
2. The testimonials you gain which will help you sell the course (and perhaps other offers) more easily in the future
3. The feedback you gain from interacting closely with students and can use to make your Process and Experience more effective in future iterations of the course
4. What growth creating this course might provide for *you*.
5. What opportunities having this course might provide in your future.

Another payoff for me (and perhaps for you) is that whenever I run a live pilot program, I derive a lot of creative energy and ideas that fuels and benefit other aspects of my business and thought leadership platform.

Takeaways

- Set minimum threshold goals by asking yourself how much money you need to make and how many people you need in the program to make it worth proceeding with running the pilot.
- Clarify all the ways you will get an ROI from the pilot program in addition to the cash it will generate for you.

Step 8: Enroll Students with a Customer Journey

At this point, the only thing that remained was to promote and sell the pilot course. When it comes to crafting a Customer Journey for a pilot launch, I'm willing to use more direct, "hands on" approaches to finding prospective customers and guiding them to enroll. The methods I choose included:

- 1. One-to-One Outreach to Prospective Students**
 - I made a list of people in my network that I thought might be interested in enrolling based on conversations from previous months
- 2. One-to-One Outreach for Referrals**
 - I sent personal emails to a dozen or so friends and colleagues to see if they knew anyone who might be interested in the course.
- 3. Sending the Messaging Series to My Email List**
 - 7 emails, one a day for a week
- 4. Posting the Messaging Series to Social Media**
 - I posted them to LinkedIn, my Facebook Profile, and Instagram.
 - This required a bit of editing to be sure the length and format fit the medium. I often hire someone to do this part for about \$500 to convert and post the entire series for me on a given schedule.
- 5. Doing One-on-One Discovery Calls**
 - Because I set the price at \$3000 for the pilot course (given the high level of interaction and access to me), I knew some people would want to have a conversation about how the pilot course would help them with their specific goals.
 - I'm by no means a sales call aficionado. If anything, sales is a weakness. I rely on asking a lot of questions, getting curious, using empathy, and coming from a stance of helping them find the best solution for them regardless of whether that's signing up for my course.

Outline of My Customer Journey Outline for the Pilot Launch

- 1. Present the offer to potential leads**

- This included one-on-one outreach, asking for referrals, sending the email sequence to my list, and publishing the content series as social media posts. The call to action here was to fill out a short application to schedule a call with me.

2. Fill out a brief application and schedule a call with me

- The application allowed me to screen potential students before getting on the phone with them. If it didn't look like the pilot course would be a good fit, I would contact them to cancel the call and suggest other resources that would better serve them.

3. Get on a discovery phone call with me

- On this call, I asked about their current podcast (or the one they planned on launching), their goals for their show, and their biggest challenges. Then I'd walk through the details in the information document and show them how the course would specifically apply to their circumstances.
- If by the end of the call they knew they wanted to enroll, I'd send them the link to pay through PayPal before ending the conversation. Otherwise, I continued to the next step in the Customer Journey.

4. Send them the info (sales) page

- I had a template email where I summarize the ROI they would achieve based on their specific circumstances along with links to the Google Doc with details about the course and a link to enroll.

5. Follow up by email to remind them of the deadline and see if they had any questions

- People get busy and forget to look over the information. This was a template email that contained nothing more than a gentle reminder that only so many spots remained and enrollment would close on a specific date.

This might seem like a lot of effort to fill a course. But keep in mind that the time investment is limited because you only need a handful of students. Also, this hands-on approach is quick to execute because it doesn't require creating a lot of marketing and sales assets or setting up a bunch of tools. Remember, the goal is to test and get the course to market as quickly as possible.

Another reason I like to use a more hands-on approach to selling a pilot course is that it's an opportunity to get a close look at the questions and concerns that come up about the offer and get insight into why prospective students ultimately decide to enroll.

Also, keep in mind that you can charge a more of a pilot course given the amount of interaction and access to you. In my case, I was charging \$3000 which made it worth investing time to get on the phone with serious prospects.

You could certainly forego doing sales calls and instead send people directly to the Google Doc with the course information and enrollment link. That said, even if I only charge a few hundred dollars for a pilot, I still often choose to do discovery calls because I learn a lot about how to attract prospects and help the right ones to decide to enroll.

After the pilot course, then I create a an automated, scalable approach to marketing and sales.

The Case Study Results

When all was said and done, here's the return on investment I got from selling and running the pilot course.

1. 5 people enrolled paying the full 3k price for 15k in revenue.
2. I invited my mastermind members and a couple of my other highest-paying clients to participate. This was a huge value add to them and brought my student total to ten people.
3. I had recordings of the pilot course training sessions that I could sell as a "do it yourself" program.
4. In fact, three weeks before the pilot was over, I sent a series of three emails to my list giving them a limited-time opportunity to purchase the recordings of the course for \$500. As a bonus, I offered to have them attend the last two live calls of the pilot course. Six people bought bringing in another \$3000.
5. I had happy customers who gave me testimonials to help sell the program to future customers.

Takeaways

- There are a number of ways to profit from a pilot course. This goes beyond the revenue or the fact that you create a digital asset you can sell future. Be creative and find other ways to gain an ROI and offer value to others with your pilot.

Scaling Your Course After the Pilot

Once you run the pilot course, you have an asset that you can turn into an ongoing stream of revenue, one that is more scalable in the way you market, sell and deliver it.

After running a successful pilot, the goal should be to create a more automated, full-featured version of the course platform, content delivery, and Experience so that you can serve an increasing number of students without maxing out your personal time, taxing the resources of your business, or sacrificing the results you generate for your students.

The process for doing that is beyond the purpose and scope of this guide, but if you would like to speak about to do that, you can contact me at jason@jasonvanorden.com.

Because you've proven the course sells and have generated results for the students, it's now worth investing time and energy into iterating and improving the course. Each time you launch the course, you can choose one or two (or even all) of the six parts the Online Course Canvas to take to the next level.

There are a number of factors to take into consideration when deciding how soon to launch again, which aspects of the course to upgrade, and how much to invest into taking things to the next level. Ultimately, it's a matter of knowing how much time, energy, and how many resources you have available, then identifying which improvements will bring the greatest boost in income and impact.

Next Actions

There you have it! In this guide, you've discovered my six-part framework for designing an online course.

Keep in mind, I've used the Online Course Design Canvas to craft pilot courses as well as highly-polished and produced product launches. The six key elements remain the same.

You've also learned the Lean Launch Method, a way to test launch your first (or next) course with a minimum of time and resource investment.

My hope is that you will use these frameworks to greatly simplify your next course launch. If you've been considering launching a course for a while, I hope the ideas and methods in this guide will help you get started right away.

Launching an online course can seem overwhelming and risky. I created this case study and the frameworks in this guide to bring clarity and confidence to the process and remove as many of the challenges and pitfalls as possible.

If there's one thing I've learned after launching dozens of my own courses and helping numerous others to do the same, it's that there are people out there waiting to receive your message, learn your methods, and benefit from your expertise. They need your guidance.

Launching an online course is a powerful way to amplify your reach and impact. It's also an amazing way to increase your income in a way that doesn't depend on a lot of time and energy.

You've spent so much time acquiring knowledge, mastering your craft, navigating difficult experiences, and developing a better way to do things. You deserve to have your work go as far and wide as possible and so do those who are waiting to receive it.

Work With Me to Launch Your Next Online Course

While I've included a lot in this guide, and you can get amazing results by following what I've shared here, there are still a number of variables and questions that can come up.

You might also be ready to launch a course that is more sophisticated and branded than the Lean Launch Method affords.

If you'd like to explore working with me to launch your next online course or to grow an existing course offering...

[Click here to book a free 30-minute breakthrough call](#)

PLEASE NOTE: While I enjoy being generous with my time as much as I am able, please only book a call if you'd like to explore engaging my help through 1:1 consulting or one of my virtual workshops in

Two more quick things...

First, I'd love to hear from you. Feel free to email me to let me know your biggest takeaway from this guide or to ask any questions.

You can reach me at jason@jasonvanorden.com

Second, if you found this free guide helpful, please pass it along to one or two colleagues who might also find it helpful.

Cheers!

-Jason Van Orden
Thought Leader Business Strategist
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