

E66 - How to launch a membership offer.

Welcome to The Empowered Edupreneur Podcast. My name is Michelle Smit, and I am an ex-teacher turned online business coach for edupreneurs, the owner of Digiteach and a six-figure entrepreneur. I am in love with empowering educators, just like you to create freedom filled online businesses and lives they love.

If you are looking to uplevel your skills, your finances, your mindset, and change the trajectory of your life as an educator. Then you are in the right place. Think of this podcast as your weekly dose of business and mindset development to help unlock the infinite potential within you to play bigger with your life and go after your dreams.

We are going to have so much fun together. So thank you so much for pushing play today. Now let's dive in.

Hello, wonderful human, welcome back. I'm happy to be chatting with you again today. I hope you're having a fabulous day. I have just finished a gym session. I'm feeling good. I've got energy and I'm amped to be. Chatting to you as always. So what am I going to bring you be bringing you today? At the moment I've got memberships on my mind, and I've had a couple of DBA students of mine ask stuff around memberships.

And so I thought, let me make an episode on membership offers in your business. In this episode, I'm going to talk about what the difference is between a course and a membership offer. I'm going to talk about when to choose whether you want to be focusing on a course in your business or a membership offer.

And I'm going to mention how you would launch a membership. Alright, so we're all about memberships. Okay, so if you don't know what a membership is, it's basically like a subscription offer. It's a recurring income offer. So if you think of Netflix, that's a membership type of offer. It's a recurring subscription.

Every month you pay X amount, and you will get whatever you get with that subscription. So memberships are recurring revenue kind of models, and

they're amazing. So what is the difference between a course and a membership? So I call a course in a business structure a core offer, right?

So it's like a signature program. It's a flagship program. A core offer is like a moneymaker, typically it's a thing that brings you in a fair amount of upfront revenue with a core offer. And this isn't always the case. Like, obviously you can have short courses and mini courses and small things like that.

But let's look at what the difference is between a course and a membership. So a course is something that starts and ends. So you start the program with someone, they then go through the program and then it ends. And there is a certain payment they pay for that experience. Could be a four-week program, a six-week program, an eight-week program.

Typically, it will have a beginning and an end. If you're running it live, it will be a live program. You run it live and there's a beginning and an end. And they pay for that program once, and they might be able to pay for that program over payment plans which is recurring income, but also, it's just one price ultimately that they're paying, and once that's paid, it's done.

And obviously you have courses that aren't live, and that's when someone just buys a course, and then they get access to your course, and that's it. There's nothing else coming. The course is what they get, and they pay once, or they pay with the payment plan. So that's it. And then a membership offer is different in the sense that it's a recurring thing.

So it just keeps going. There's no end to it. So once you join a membership, you are going to pay an amount per month to get whatever it is you're getting in that membership. And it's never ending, typically. And what that means is that whatever you're delivering is ongoing, so there is no end to it. As soon as there is an ongoing payment that you pay per month, that you get access to certain things that is a membership offer.

So the structure is a little bit different. A course has a beginning and end date. A membership is ongoing. It's a payment you pay to get access to whatever it is within that membership, right? And so a core offer or a course is great for upfront revenue. A membership offer is great for recurring revenue and recurring revenue is essentially really great for business stability.

So ultimately, I'm a fan of both of them and I think they're both great. I think they're both great in different ways and whether you choose to do a course or a membership or both is really up to you and what you want to create in your business and how you want your business to look and things like that, because they serve different purposes.

For me, a course or a core offer is a signature program that brings up front revenue into the business, which is really healthy for a business. It's typically higher ticket, and that's why it's like you get better cash flow when you have that, but you also have membership offers. And they are great for building out business revenue stability.

So getting that recurring income in monthly, knowing every month I'm going to get X amount of money in recurring income from my membership that creates business stability. And so ultimately, I think the best business model to kind of go with is to have a core offer and a membership offer. I mean, you're hitting all of the things, right?

Whether you want to do that is another story. And sometimes you don't feel aligned with a core offer. And sometimes you don't feel aligned with a membership because they require different things from you. For me, a core offer and a signature program has been the thing that I've loved.

And I've leaned into more so than a membership because the idea of me. Continuing to create content and deliver something has been off putting in the past. So I've always leaned into having a core offer and a signature program. I think that's one of the most, I think ultimately in a business that should be the first offer you create, personally.

Because it is a cash maker, it's a moneymaker, it injects. Cashflow into your business. And that's what you need in the early stages of a business. You need money. So for me, a core offer, a signature program, a higher price program is the thing to focus on in my opinion, rather than something lower ticket and memberships are typically lower ticket, but you're starting to see a lot of higher ticket memberships as well. They exist as well.

So I'm kind of shifting towards more membership styles as well. But yeah, it is just about a personal preference. So let me talk to you about when to choose whether you want to focus on a course or membership offer.

Now obviously, as I said, I think it's great to have both. I think if you can have a core offer on the front, a signature program on the front, and then let those people go through that program. And then at the end of that program, you can say, hey, I've got this membership. It's a way for you to continue working with me.

You're going to get X, Y, Z. It's this amount per month. And then you move them into that sort of membership model. For me, that is the dream. I think that's like the ultimate. Whether you want to do it or not is another story. So let's see when to choose whether you want to focus on a course, or a membership offer. I think it really boils down to what is in alignment with what you want to create.

Because they're quite different. Different in the way that offers run and what's expected with a course, there's a start date and an end date. And so there is no expectation to continue delivering value ongoing. There is a beginning date and an end date. And once that end date is done, you know, it's done.

Whereas with a membership offer, when someone joins a membership offer, there is an expectation that it is ongoing, meaning that they are going to get something from you every month, whether that is content. Whether that's training calls, Voxer support, whatever that looks like. Whatever your structured membership is. But it means that you are now going to do it every month.

So that's a commitment, okay? So this is whether you want to commit to that or not, and that's when you have to gut test and just feel into your body of whether you feel dread around that or whether you feel like that sounds great. Because for me in the past I didn't like the feeling of that I didn't feel I like to clear start date and end dates and I liked it to be like that and then I could work with people in other ways after that. But it's up to you, right?

So that's one thing. Do you want to continue creating content in that membership and delivering new stuff in that membership, whether it's calls training or whatever. If that feels good to you, then a membership offer may be a great option. It also depends on the niche you're in.

Like some topics, I would say memberships are great than others. For example, a content creation course is cool. It's good, but a content creation done for you. Content creation membership, I feel is more effective. And I recently

joined one and the reason I say that is because content is like a never-ending machine.

It's like just never-ending thing that just, you can just keep creating content, right. And this lady has created a membership where she basically creates content for you, and she delivers you a content plan every month with your content strategy and all sorts of stuff every month. So every month you get a new content plan.

And do you see how that works for a membership? So she's delivering a new content plan with new content every single month, and you pay a subscription amount to that membership and there's other stuff you get in as well. So that is an example of a topic that it suits a membership. It suits it because it is ongoing.

It's really like an ongoing process and a lot of things are ongoing. Learning a language is an ongoing thing. And so core offers for courses and stuff for languages are great, but having a membership or a continuity offer that allows you to consistently work with those people in some capacity over a longer period of time.

It may suit better. It may suit better for the students to get the results in the language, and it may just make more sense, right? So you have to think about your niche, your audience and what's really going to make more sense. Sometimes memberships just make more sense and other times it doesn't.

Other times it's like, cool, there's a result I'm going to help you achieve and I can help you achieve it in four weeks. Done. And that's when a course makes more sense. So it really depends. Do you have to keep creating content or does it serve your audience or your Ideal Student Avatar to keep creating some sort of content or even calls or something?

Is that in service of them? And does that feel good to you? Because it is a commitment. A membership is a commitment. And it is something that once you start, you do want to keep spending time on it to grow it, right? I'm a big fan of deciding the offer. And focusing on it to grow it for a period of time.

The other thing you want to consider is price points. So as I mentioned with courses. It's typically a higher price point at one point. If you're doing flagship signature offers, you're looking at a higher price point. And so there is a bit

more upfront revenue in the business when you're selling that, which leads to cashflow, which is great.

With membership offers, normally you're looking at lower tickets and that's like under a hundred dollars or euros a month, which means you need volume. So, you're not going to have business stability from like three people in your membership. So if your memberships like 27 or whatever, if you've got three people in that, you know, 70 is great, but that's not going to help you build your business.

That's not enough cashflow. So when you're looking at membership offers, you have to keep in mind that because it's often low ticket, it requires volume and quantity. And what that means is you're going to have to have bigger audiences, often bigger lists, a much stronger marketing game plan on the front to get the people in and the eyes in on your stuff.

So that is a big thing to consider. It's easier to sell in the beginning. If you don't have a big audience and email list and things like that, it's easier to sell in my opinion, a higher ticket program of some sort, whether it's a one-on-one group coaching core offer signature program. It's easier to sell because you need less volume.

You only need like a couple of sales say a month to hit your 5k month goal, or you need a certain number of people in that launch to hit whatever you need to hit. But it's easier because you don't need such a massive audience. You don't need such volume. You can just have. You know, a couple of people work with you a month and it would work.

So if you are starting out, it's worth looking at, do I have an audience and an email list and things like that? If not, I would say going with a course core offer is great at the beginning. To give you that cashflow that you need in order to stay in business. If you have an audience and you have access to an audience, and you've got an email list and you've got strong organic marketing.

You've got people following you. You've got people who you know are keen to work with you. All of that. And you know, you can get volume in, then I would say membership is great. Then go with a membership if it's aligned, right? So price point is important.

Where you're at in your business journey is important. Always gut check. Always check your intuition, feel into it. And I often do this if I'm struggling to make a decision. I often think about. Okay, what does this trajectory look like? And I imagine myself creating the offer and delivering the offer for the next one to two years.

And I feel in my body how that feels. And I look at that and I think about how that looks in my business and how it feels. And then I do the other trajectory. So first I'll think about what if I create this course and I'm choosing to create a course. What does that look like? How does that feel for the next one to two years?

I'm focusing on getting the signature program churning and making cash money. How does that feel in my body? And then you look at it like, the other trajectory is I'm turning this into a membership. I'm choosing to create a membership offer. It's going to be lower price point, higher volume. It's an ongoing thing.

I'm going to have to do this, do this, do this. What does that look like? And how does that feel in my body for the next one to two years? And you can sort of intuition check, gut check on which one feels lighter. And which one has a bit more dread and stickiness to it. That's how I do it. Honestly, I just check with my body, and I feel into it because that's how I make most of my business decisions.

I think it's important to use your intuition because. Both of them are great. Both of them are great options. Both of them make complete business sense. But which one do you want? Which one's going to be aligned with the business you want to create? Everyone's business looks different. And the way they want to run their business, and the things they want to do in their business, everything looks different.

So, there's a couple of things that I want you to think about there. And then the next thing is like, how would you launch a membership? I get this question a lot. Like, I want to do a membership. It's a recurring income thing. It's not a course. How am I going to launch it and really the great news is that you launch a membership the same way you launch a course.

There is really no difference to the way in which you launch the offer. That's the beauty about launching and the way that I teach it in DBA in Digiteachers

Biz Academy is the strategy can be applied to pretty much any group course, offer digital product membership, anything. It's not for a one-on-one model.

The thing that I teach because I'm not a fan of one-on-one. And you can't scale with one-on-one. I wouldn't say do it for like a one-on-one teaching package. It needs to be some sort of group program or course or membership. But any kind of digital product like that, you would launch it the same way.

So it is essentially the same method that I teach in DBA to launch a course would be applied to launch a membership would be applied to launch a scalable offer. And so what that would look like is the same phases that I always teach on. And the method is basically building up hype and anticipation for that offer. Letting people know it's coming. Then getting into the connection phase, which is all about talking to the people, finding out what they want, collaborating, letting them help you create the name and all sorts of stuff, connecting with them, surveying them.

So connecting with your people. And then moving into education, which is hosting some sort of event launch event where you do certain things in that launch event, show yourself as an authority, social proof your story all of that stuff, educate, give value. And then at the end of that event, you move into open cart, which is selling your program.

So you would do that for a course, and you do that for a membership. There's no difference. The difference in the membership is often memberships aren't open and closed enrollment, meaning that they stay open. And that's the difference. A lot of live launching with courses, you have an open date and a closed date, meaning my course is open. For the next seven days, you can join it for that time.

And then it closes. And there's that real life urgency because of that with a membership, often memberships haven't got a closed date. They stay open. And so the difference is, is that your urgency or your scarcity would change. So instead of having an open and closed date for your scarcity, you could have a pricing urgency, or you could have bonuses, urgency and scarcity.

So when you're launching a membership, you can say, okay, for the next seven days, it's going to be this price. And then the price is going up. And so something has to happen in the next five to seven days in that open car period,

the price one needs to go up. Or some sort of bonuses and special thing has to disappear.

And that is what creates urgency. And that's creates that that urgency and scarcity that you need to have an effective launch ultimately to get people making decisions and joining your program. That is one of those key things that you want to build in a launch without some sort of urgency and scarcity isn't going to be as effective.

That is just the way it is. And it has to be an integrity and an honesty. It's not manipulation. It is just good marketing. It's just smart marketing. When you have a special offer that will expire after a certain couple of days. So that's it. If you would launch a membership, the same way you'd launch a course in the way that I teach in DBA, you just look at changing the offer.

And essentially instead of it closing for enrollment, you would just have something changing like bonuses going away or pricing going up or something like that. And that's it really. And memberships at the moment are becoming quite common. Five years ago, I wouldn't have seen as many memberships, but now I see a lot of people moving to a membership model and that's quite an interesting time in business because memberships are great because it creates community, you build strong communities and memberships, and community is really valuable in online business.

Community is essential. If you can build a community, you are going to be sorted in your business. And I think the shift to memberships is there such a strong community aspect and you're consistently building relationships over time in those memberships, which is what you want.

And even if you have a lower ticket membership on the front, you could then easily have a big pool of people who would want to work with you further in a more higher ticket way. And so it is a smart business move. And a lot of people are moving to memberships. I'm seeing big business owners who've been selling flagship programs and signature programs and all sorts of stuff. High tickets, \$10,000 investments are moving to lower ticket and memberships.

And that is something to pay attention to. And it's just a change in the way people are doing things. Now just because other people are doing it. And it's maybe a bit more of a trend at the moment. Doesn't mean that is what you

have to do. Don't just follow trends in your business, like really make a decision on what kind of business you want.

Do you want that higher volume kind of recurring offer model? Or do you want to focus on more of a less volume, higher price point, fewer people kind of model. Where it's like higher ticket, group coaching or core offers. Feel what feels best to you. But whatever you choose, commit to it.

And commit to it for a long enough time to give your offer the time to get off the ground, because whether you go with a membership or a course, you have to commit to them fully to lift them off the ground. They're not going to happen by half arsing it. And don't try do both at the same time, choose one, commit to it. And then you can always do the other later.

So start off with a core offer if that, if you don't have a big audience. You don't have a big email list, start off with something which will bring more upfront revenue in. And then later down the line, create a membership offer. Just choose one and commit to it. Or start with a membership offer if that feels more aligned.

And then later you can always do a group coaching program, higher ticket. Whatever feels good to you, honestly. But I'm definitely looking at more membership stuff personally. And I think this year for me might be the year of memberships and I'm excited about it. It's something I haven't really done.

I've been mostly focused on core offers, higher ticket type stuff. But I'm feeling into memberships at the moment. So keep your eyes peeled because things are going to happen this year that maybe haven't happened before and you new stuff's coming, especially for my DBA humans.

So I am actually in the midst of launching a new offer just for my DBA people. So if you're in DBA, you're going to get a special offer that no one else can get and it's a membership. And it involves ongoing coaching support without the one-o-one price tag. And really the goal is to just help you make money.

In the fastest way possible, but also in the most aligned and joyful way possible. So in a way that is customized to how you want to do it in business. It's not cookie cutter stuff. It's basically like one-on-one coaching without the one-on-one price tag. And I think it's really valuable to have a coach to help

you with the overall strategy of your business and help you with accountability and just focusing on the right things.

But I think business coaching is out of reach for a lot of people in the price points. And I mean, I've spent so many thousands of dollars on business coaches, and it is just typically higher ticket. If you're going to have a business coach, it is going to just cost more. And so not everyone can do it.

And so a membership model is just giving more people, the opportunity to get that business support. And that is what I am wanting to provide for my DBA humans. And why am I not opening this app to others? Because I think that in order to have the best results, you need to have business training. And Digiteachers Biz Academy is the business training to really get you to a foundation point that I think is important for us to be able to continue working together.

I don't really coach people who haven't done a business course, either on launching, selling, whatever it is. They need to have business knowledge and understand the fundamentals of online business and they need to understand just those core things. Otherwise it's just not going to work out.

And so, those who are in DBA have got the curriculum, they've got all the training, they've got everything they need. And then I can just help them implement. So keep your eyes peeled. If you are in DBA, that is coming, soon, soon, soon, soon. I'm so fricking excited for it. I think this is really going to help a lot of people.

So I hope you enjoyed this episode, and I will chat to you again very soon.

Bye.

Thanks so much for listening to today's episode. If you are a teaching business owner, freelance teacher or online teacher, and you are interested in creating a digital course or group program to scale your income and impact without teaching more hours, then I have just the thing for you.

Grab my free scalable digital course roadmap, and it will walk you through the six steps to turning your one on one classes into a scalable offer that frees you from the teacher burnout trap, creating scalable courses and programs have allowed me to 10 X my hourly rates hit six figures in my business and impact

hundreds and hundreds of people around the world without having to be actively teaching all day. If this is what you desire. Grab my guide in the show notes and let me help you.

I appreciate you so much and I can't wait to connect with you in the next episode. In the meantime, go create a business and life you love.