

E49 - The 5 key phases to a successful course launch.

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. Hello. Welcome. Back to my podcast. I'm so happy to be chatting to you today. I was thinking about what I was going to talk about today. And I realized that I haven't spoken about this topic in detail, and I think it's so important and so obvious, and it's all about the launch runway and the phases of a launch, because a lot of people think launching a course is just like creating a course and then saying: hey guys, I have this course, you should buy it.

Most people think that's what a course launches. But that's not what a course launches or a product launches. There is actually a runway that a very intentional, very strategic runway that goes into bringing your course out into the market. And actually filling it up with students and getting sales.

There is a process, think of it like a recipe. There is a recipe to it. And yes, there are various strategies with slightly different recipes, but typically the principle still remains the same within all the recipes. And so I have developed sort of my own framework and ways of teaching this launch process.

And this is how I teach it in The Digiteachers Biz Academy. Where I help educators in business or just educators who want to launch courses, I help them launch courses right in this program. And so I realized this is such a good

episode such a good topic and something that I really wanted to create this episode on.

So I'm going to be sharing with you the five key phases to a successful, powerful, call it a sold-out course launch. It can very much be a sold-out course launch. If it's not, that's fine. But if you execute well on these phases, you're going to have a good course launch or product launch.

It doesn't have to be a course. It can be anything, any kind of online product. As long as it's a core offer, meaning it's not something that's under a hundred dollars. It should be a couple of hundred dollars, a thousand dollars up to there. Even up to 2,000. If you're selling especially a higher price product, you really want to make sure that you have a strategy in place and that you are bringing this product out.

Into the market with anticipation, with hype, with excitement, with all the good stuff that is needed for a successful course launch. Okay, so I'm going to share with you the five phases. So let me just run through the five phases ahead of time now.

The five phases are lead generation or list building. That's phase number one. Then you've got the connection phase otherwise known as the pre- pre- launch phase. Then you have the excitement phase and then you have the education phase and then you have the open cart Launch phase. So the last phase is actually your launch and that's known as your open cart phase or your open cart week or whatever you want to call it.

Okay, so let me start with phase number one. So phase number one is list building and lead generation. So what is this? Okay, so this is actually one of the most important phases in a product launch in a course launch in whatever launch online. This is the marketing phase, and this is the longest phase. It takes the most time.

And the entire goal of your lead generation or list building phase, however you want to call it. Is to build an email list. That is the goal. And within your launch, you will be hosting some type of event. That is what you'll be doing. You'll have some type of launch event, whether it's a masterclass, a webinar, a workshop, a video series, a bootcamp, a challenge, however you want to do it. There is some sort of event that you will be marketing.

And it's a free event, normally. Sometimes it's a paid event. But basically. Whether it's free or paid, you need to market that event and you need to get people signed up to that event. And that is what the lead generation list building phase is all about. You want to get as many human beings signed up for that event as you can.

And not just any type of human being. You want to get your ideal students, people who are actually interested in what you have to teach. So you really want to attract the right type of lead onto your email list, who is very interested in the particular topic of your program and the solution that you're offering in your program.

You really want those kinds of people. So this is where people get it wrong. They think, oh, let me just build an email list and just get a bunch of random people on my list. Let me send it to my family and friends. Get them signed up. That's not going to work. People aren't good. Your family or friends aren't necessarily going to buy your stuff.

You really want to get quality leads that are your ideal student avatar. The people that you know would be interested in actually buying your program or your course, your membership or whatever product you're sort of launching. So this list building phase, this lead gen phase is, it varies depending on what strategy you're using to launch.

For example, a webinar, if you're hosting a webinar or masterclass, this list building phase is normally about two weeks. So it's very short and it's very much like you need to go hard for those two weeks to get as many people in. Normally you would be running ads because that's when you're going to get the most it's just easier to just run ads and get a lot of people in that way.

But if you've got organic wax, then you can just list build organically, of course. So that would be two weeks, but you're typically looking at for this phase, you're typically looking between I would say two weeks and six weeks, six weeks being on the longest, the longest. I think you can push it. Two weeks, I feel maybe 10 days, probably being the shortest.

I would recommend pushing it. You could maybe do one week, but I would recommend just giving yourself a little bit more time because you want to get, the goal is to get as many people in. So a little bit more time to allow for that to happen is going to be a lot better for you. You'll have more breathing room.

And so you need to. Figure out whatever strategy you're going to use to build your email list and there's organic marketing, which is like social media marketing creating valuable content and then directing people to sign up for your event or you can run paid advertising which is Facebook ads is the most common one.

Otherwise, you can run paid ads on pretty much all social media platforms it's just up to you and yeah, you're looking at between two weeks and six weeks, and this is the part where I see a lot of people struggle. A lot of the clients that I work with a lot of our DBA students, this is the part where people underestimate it, and they just think, oh, it's quite simple.

I just build my list, but it can sometimes be quite challenging. And for other people, it can be really simple. Like some of our DBA students have just put out a couple of things organically and suddenly they build up an email list of 500 or 800 people just from organic right in their first launch.

And so it can go one of two ways. I don't know how it's going to go for you. We don't know, especially if it's a first launch and you've never built a list before, just know that this is a new skill. It's going to take a little bit of time to figure it out. You're going to have to try, test out some things.

You're going to have to do a lot of trial and error. You're going to have to learn how to create interesting content that actually moves people into taking action. These are all skills, right? So just be a little bit aware of that and know that this is the phase that can. Be a little bit challenging.

It can take a bit of time. And normally in a first course launch you may not hit your list building goal. You might not get the number of people on your list that you'd want to. And that's just how it goes. It's all, all learning and you just need to do it and learn and then improve.

Right. So that's it. So this is the first phase. One of the most important phases in my opinion in the launch is the list building lead gen phase You really in these two to six weeks All you are doing is focusing on lead generation for your launch event. That is the goal So you're not thinking about our let me promote this thing and let me promote this thing and let me just be all over the show with my content your content's goal is to drive people into signing up for your event and that's all you're talking about.

And you're building up hype and you're building up excitement and you're telling people about this awesome thing that you're hosting and you're getting as many humans into it as possible. That's the goal. Okay. Now after that phase two to six weeks or whatever you can choose, it can be four weeks, three weeks, whatever you choose.

After that phase, you go into your connection phase. Now I call it a connection phase. That's the way I, I sort of teach it. And this is where you've now built up an email list. So you've now built up an email list of people who have signed up for your event. Now you want to email those people and you want to connect with them and you want to learn.

About what they want. You want to actually ask them questions. So in this phase, there is a very strategic survey that I recommend you send out, and this is something that I give in Digiteachers Biz Academy. I give the exact stuff, but basically you want to send out a survey to your email list, the one that you've just built up with all these human beings are interested in this event, and you want to tell them in the survey. Hey, I'm this close to finishing my program and then you want to introduce your course or your program in this survey and you want to say this is the thing that I'm doing.

It is a strategic survey. You want to foreshadow your program in the survey. You want to tell people that it's coming. You want to let them know. You don't want to hide the fact that you're launching a course. People must know that your course is coming, and you want to ask them before I finish up this product, I want to make sure that it's the best it can be.

And you want to ask them some key questions in the survey to find out some really important information that you will need that you can then take that information and build it into your launch, into your messaging, into your event, into your emails, into your whatever it is you want to build this.

Basically, you want to ask your audience what they want and then you want to give them what they want. That is the rule of thumb. So don't assume what your audience or people want. Ask them what they want. Let them say what they want. Let them become collaborators on this whole process.

This is a co creation. So you're not building this whole thing in isolation. You're actually co creating this whole thing with them. You're listening. You're really

listening to what they're saying. You're, you're listening to the words they're using and you're building out the same sort of words.

You're building it into your marketing, your messaging, your positioning, your offer. Everything. So this is the connection phase, and this phase is just one week. This is how I teach it. It can be however long you want it to be. But one week is the way that I teach it. And it's an important one. It's an important one because firstly you're foreshadowing your program.

And then you're telling people about your course. This is the first official time where you're saying, hey, I've got this amazing program coming and it's going to help you do this, this, this, this, this. So that's the most important part of that phase. But also the second is that you're actually asking them what they want and you're surveying them and you're getting valuable data that's going to inform you on how you can continue your launch.

And you can pivot based on that data. So say you getting certain words that are coming through that survey that you didn't even realize your audience. Maybe they saying the word frustrated a lot, or they're saying they want to feel confident a lot and you're starting to notice a trend that this is what your people want.

They want to feel confident. You can then take that and build it into your offer, into your positioning and give them what they want. The rule of thumb is always. Sell them what they want, give them what they need. All right, so that is one week. It consists of a couple of emails, a very strategic survey, and in that week your goal is to connect with your audiences as much as you can.

Even if you need to get on phone calls or do a bunch of surveys or however you want to do it. Try connect and get as much information out as you can in this phase. Now, after the connection phase, you move on to the excitement phase. So the purpose of the excitement phase is to build a ton of excitement and anticipation for your launch event and your course launch.

So now you're looking at the excitement phase is one week and it's just before your actual launch event, right? So it comes just before your launch event. So say you've got a video series, or you've got a bootcamp or a challenge. Your excitement phase is the week before that. And in that week before that event, you want everyone to know about your free training.

You want people to be sort of super excited about it. You want them to remember that it's coming, so that you have a higher show up rate. The other thing is show up rates and actually getting people to join your event, watch your event, all of that. If you build up adequate excitement for this event, you're going to have a much higher show up rate.

And there's various things you can do to improve show up rates, but definitely building anticipation and excitement. Is probably one of the best ways for you to actually get people to show up. If you don't do this because of how saturated the online business marketers and there's so many people hosting events. Your event will just blur out into the background.

And so you really want to show people why they need to show up. Give them incentives. Show them how the event is going to help them. Show them the benefits of what they're going to achieve from your event. Speak like you need to articulate that to them. You need to tell them why they need to be there and how it's going to be some sort of transformation for them.

And in this excitement phase, there are some strategic emails you can send out. There's a couple of cool things you can do. Countdowns, you can do pre-launch interviews, getting people super excited. Like there's a whole bunch of stuff you can do. What the goal is, is just building excitement.

I want you to think of how you take an elastic band and when you pull back on an elastic band, you start to increase the pressure and the tension and the anticipation almost, and then when you release that band, it flings forward and it goes a couple of meters ahead, like a rocket, it boosts forward.

So I want you to think about this excitement phase as pulling back on that elastic band. You're building that tension, that excitement, that anticipation, that bubbling feeling that is just one of the best, best things you can do for a course launch. Is actually that anticipation and that excitement phase.

It's so important because it's going to just bring out that momentum that you want during a launch. You want the social momentum, you want the excitement, you want people to be feeling the energy of that launch. And of the event and everything. Okay. So that is your excitement phase. That is one week.

After the excitement phase, we go into the education phase. The education phase is, I would call it a week. I'm just going to say it's a week. It might not be a week for you. It depends on what launch event you're doing. So if you're doing a webinar, it might just be a couple of webinars during that week, or you might just have one webinar in that week.

If you're doing a challenge, you might be having a five-day challenge. You might be doing a video series, a bootcamp. But I always just call this education phase a week. So let's just stick with that. It's a week for now. You can change it. It's not set in stone, but the way that I teach it in DBA, it's a week.

And the purpose of the education phase is to build a relationship with your audience, to create authority in your niche, to introduce yourself and show them why they should listen to you as well as deliver massive value on the subject or the topic that you're teaching on. And not just teach. So this is where people get it wrong, especially the educators that I work with.

They just teach, but you actually don't want to just teach. There's so many things you want to do in this education phase that is not related to just straight up teaching. There are certain triggers that you want to build into your education content. Whether it's a webinar, video series, bootcamp, that the triggers are really important.

I've created a podcast episode on that. You'll see the key mental triggers to use during a launch. You'll find that if you want to go listen to that. But the triggers are reciprocity, scarcity, social proof, urgency, community, urgency. There's a number of other triggers. So you want to build in these key triggers and in this education content you want to almost treat it as an appetizer or a sneak peek into your program.

So it's an amazing taster of what you can do for your students. The transformation that you are offering. So, the biggest part about this week is showcasing the opportunity of transformation that you are going to be taking your potential students through. Based on whatever methodology that you're teaching or unique, whatever it is that you want to be introducing. You want to show them, hey, this is how I can help you reach this desired end goal that you really want.

This is my unique way of doing it. You want them to resonate with you, to connect with you. To see you as an authority in whatever subject you're

teaching on and to really see that there is an opportunity of transformation for them. And you have the solution to help them get what it is they want. And that solution is working with you, your offer, whatever it is, you're going to help them reach whatever it is that they want.

And so that's the goal. You want to help people see that your offer is the solution. That it's amazing. And basically in this education phase, this is basically where you do all of these things, but then you actually pitch your program. And you say, hey, this is what I can do for you. And this is how I can help you.

And then you actually invite them into working with you further. whether that is a one-on-one package, a group program, a membership, a digital course, whatever your offer is, it doesn't matter. You still have this phase, you still do this free event, and then on the back of this event, you say this is what I hope you love this, and this is how I can help you further. And this is when you pivot into sort of pitching your program or your solution to them, and you should properly pitch it, you should properly position it, you should properly Pitch it in a way that is strategic.

There is a very strategic way to actually introducing the stuff. It isn't slimy. It doesn't have to be slimy. I know sales and stuff can feel very slimy, but you can do it with authenticity and integrity and all of that stuff. You can do it in a way that feels right to you. But this is a very important part because you've done all this work now.

You've done all this work in this launch. This education phase is really important to tick certain boxes and to introduce your offer in a very intentional strategic way so that it has a high perception of value. And so people are like, wow, this thing is amazing. And so this is why your offer is really important because, and this is why I teach that in my Educators Income Booster Bootcamp.

Is that when you, when you're selling something, you want that offer to be really good and it should be speaking to what it is your audience wants or your students want. So in this education phase, this is the first time they really see that full offer. What you're giving them. How you can help them and really vividly seeing that transformation that you can provide them.

Alright, so this can be a couple of days, it can be one day the way I teach it in DBA is that it is one week on average. And you do various things in it such as sending out emails, releasing whatever videos that you need to release. Making sure people are consuming the videos and you will be going live and interacting with your audience in between each video and answering questions and just really showing up. The way I treat it is that for those seven days, you are showing up fully for your audience and you're really delivering value. And yeah, you just create a powerful experience that people are like, wow, that was amazing.

That was free, but that was amazing. Imagine what the program will be like, right? Okay. So that's the education phase. Right after that, say it's a week. You then move on to your launch phase, your actual open cart. Now this is the phase that everyone knows about, like launching the course, but people often skip all the other phases. And that's why often course launches, any kind of launch, a lot of people don't do it very well or they don't get many sales and they're wondering why.

It's because you've missed out on the runway, and you see now how important that runway is and how intentional it is into getting a sold-out launch. Or having a lot of students buy. So this is the last phase, and this is the exciting phase. Obviously, they're all exciting in their own way, but this is the phase where you really start to see the return on investment on all that time, energy, and money that you've invested in the process of launching.

The purpose of the launch phase is to sell your program. That is it. Okay. That's it in a nutshell. That's the only goal of that phase is to tell people why they should join your program. Is to articulate the value of your program effectively. It is to create some urgency or scarcity, real authentic urgency and scarcity.

So this is why we always suggest a deadline to the open cart phase. So you're not just opening the course for an extended period of time or forever. You actually have a very specific open day and a very specific closed day. And by nature of just having an open day and a closed day, you're creating real life urgency.

And because of that real life urgency, one of the most powerful triggers that you can use is that it gets people moving. Urgency moves people into action. I don't know about you guys, but urgency really works on me. I feel it and I'm

like, this thing is closing, and I need to get inside, and I've got two more days to get inside, and I need to make a decision right now to get inside.

Or I've got two days or five days to make this decision and then I'm going to get inside. Now, if you didn't have the deadline, you would be like, oh, you know what? I'm just going to go do this thing. And I'm just going to go do that thing. And I'm going to go cuddle my cat. At least I would. I'm going to go do this and that.

And before you know it, you've completely forgotten about it, and you're like, you know what, I'll just do it next year, or I'll just do it next month, and I'll just procrastinate till the end of time. And before I know it, it's five years down the road, and I've still done nothing. That is what happens when there is no actual urgency, and I know people get a bit touched about urgency and they're like, oh my gosh, it's so bad to have urgency. But no, I don't think so.

I disagree with that. I think urgency is a very valuable thing. I think as humans need a bit of urgency to take action and make decisions and move us, move us into some sort of forward momentum that gets us where we want to go. Sometimes we need a little extra nudge. Many of us need that extra nudge.

Otherwise, we stay in this complacent situation where we just don't make the moves that we need to make. And I think it's in service of your people to put in some real-life urgency to be like, hey, this is available for this time. And then we're starting together as a group and we're going to go through this program as a group together.

You've got five days to make this decision and that's it. And so there are many things you want to be doing in this launch phase. I typically teach it as a five-day open cart period. Meaning your doors are open for five days. It varies. Depending on what you want. Some people do 10 days. Some people do 15 days.

Some people do four days. Seven days is very common. It totally depends on you, but I want you to bear in mind that this open cart phase requires energy, and it requires you selling every day. So every day you're taking actions in order to promote your offer and sell your offer. Whether that's going live, answering questions, sending out emails, posting on social media, you want to be doing all of the things in that week.

So the longer that week is, it means the longer you have to sustain that energy to keep showing up. For me, I don't have infinite amounts of energy. I don't like long open card periods. I find them unnecessary. I feel like if you can't make a decision in five days, then that is what it is. Yeah, five days is my sweet spot.

So I do that. Sometimes even four days, right? And that's just because I've executed really well on the previous stages or phases so that they already know about my program. And then it's just four or five days that they just need to make a decision to join. So yeah, it varies. And so, there's a lot of different things you want to be doing in this, but the goal of it is to be selling your program.

And I know a lot of people, and especially educators, I see you. When it gets to the sales part, it gets uncomfortable and people are like, ooh, I don't want to talk about my offer so much. I don't want to annoy people with my offer. La la la la la. And I get it. I felt like that. I am very guilty of feeling like that.

But the reality is here to launch your program. You're a business, you need to sell something. You can't just be in business by just creating free stuff and having people like you, that's not the goal. You have to know that, yes, I've given value.

I've done my thing. I've created this whole week of free stuff for them. I am now at the point where I need to sell my product because I'm the business and this is the only thing that's going to keep me in business. Is selling this thing. And this is how I can give people the best transformation I can give them is through a paid program.

People aren't going to get the best transformation from the free stuff because they don't take action on it. But when someone invests, they pay attention, and they take more action, and their results are better. So you selling your program is doing your students a service. And you're giving them an opportunity to achieving whatever it is that they really want to achieve in the most joyful, streamlined, fast way possible.

So think of it like that. This is an opportunity for you to scream from the rooftops about your program and don't hold back here. If you are jumping off to bungee jump, you need to jump with both feet and you just need to do it. I know it's scary, you need to just go.

Don't overthink it, don't get in your head about it, just take the leap with both feet and fly with this open cart week. I've seen people be half with one foot on the ledge and half jumping. And it's not the energy you want. You need to be invested in selling your program because the more you sell it, the more you talk about it, the more people hear about it, the better, because people need to hear things 10 times before they actually purchase or take any action.

So don't worry about repeating yourself. Repetition is actually really good in marketing. That's actually how messaging syncs in for people, is through repetition. And people hardly notice it, right? No one's going to be like, oh, I heard that exact thing three times.

All right. So that is it. Those are the phases. I'm going to recap them quickly for you. You've got phase one, lead generation or list building. Phase two, connection. Phase three, excitement. Phase four, education. And phase five, launch and open cart. They all have very particular Strategies and intentional things that you want to be doing in them.

They all have a very, very particular goal in each one of those phases. You want to be focusing on that goal at hand and really honing in on that. If you execute the phases, especially before you launch an open cart phase, if you execute all those phases beforehand, well typically, you're going to see that when you open the doors to your program, you're going to have a flood of students joining.

And it's going to go really well. So you're not going to have as many crickets and things like that as soon as you open. You do have people wanting to buy because you've created this, this whole runway leading up until the day you open the doors so that when you do open the doors, people already are like, yes, that's what I want.

And they're interested and they want to buy. And that is an amazing feeling. I cannot tell you how much of a drug feeling that is. It's the most natural high you can get. It is such an amazing feeling to have a flood of people wanting to buy your program and getting a bunch of students in and a lot of our DBA students have had insane open carts where they just open the doors, and all these human beings join, and it feels amazing.

And that is what I want for you. That is what is possible for you. And that is what can happen when you just execute on the strategy. And you do it like a recipe, like making a cake. Okay. You use the same amount of eggs. You do everything. You follow the recipe. You can have a much better cake at the end of it.

All right. So I hope this was helpful for you and you learned a bunch of stuff. And yeah, if you did enjoy it, please let me know on Instagram, email, however you want to reach out to me. If you've been loving my podcast, then don't forget to go and give me a review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify or wherever.

I so appreciate it, it allows me to get this podcast out into the world and into more people's ears. And I hope you have an amazing rest of your day, and I will chat to you again next week.

Thank you so much for listening to today's episode. If you had some big aha moments from this episode or anything that really, really spoke to you, then please share it with me via email at michelle@digiteach.biz. Or on Instagram [@_digiteach_](https://www.instagram.com/_digiteach_). It makes my day when I hear back from you regarding these podcast episodes.

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.