



RAINMAKER PLATFORM

Rainmaker Webinars

Build a Business Around Paid Courses and Membership Sites

Chris Garrett & Jerod Morris



TRANSCRIPT



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Chris Garrett and Jerod Morris

Jerod: Today's session is called Build a Business Around Paid Courses and Membership Sites. If you have been following along with us on this webinar journey that we've been going on over the past couple of months, this is the natural progression of where we've been going. You can get all of the old webinars at RainmakerPlatform.com/Webinar.

You'll see the first one was about building an email list that builds your business. Then we went on to talk about a podcast strategy that attracts attention and builds your content arsenal. In our last one, we talked about creating a website experience that converts with free downloads, courses, and member areas.

Today, we're taking that to the next step, and now we're talking about paid courses and membership sites. Today's presentation is really an overview of this entire process of how you build a business around paid courses and membership sites. Every slide could probably be its own presentation.



What we want to do is give you the big picture, as well as some of our specific advice that we've learned creating our own courses like *The Showrunner*, like what we're doing with Digital Commerce Institute so that you can then go out and set about doing this on your own.

Overview

Jerod: As we go here, this would kind of be the overview of where we're going to take you today. We're going to talk about designing your courses. We're then going to talk about business models because obviously having a business model with your paid courses is very important.

Then we'll talk about the importance of testing with an MVP, why this is not just a suggestion but also a necessity. Then we'll talk about the process of developing content. Finally, the actual launching and marketing process that you go through when you have a course, and now it's time to get it out there and get it to folks. Mr. Garrett, are you ready to proceed?

Chris: Yep, let's go.

The Showrunner as an example

Jerod: All right. Let's do it. I do want to mention real quick that I will be using [The Showrunner Course](#) as an example as we go, and I see some Showrunner



course members in here as attendees. Obviously, that's the course that we launched several months back. When we originally planned this presentation, too, it was before we had launched Digital Commerce Institute. Now that we've launched Digital Commerce Institute, we'll be using that as an example too as we go through.

1. Designing your course

Jerod: Let's start out by talking about designing your course. This is really about some of the most vital preliminary work that you're going to do as an online education entrepreneur. Obviously, the goal is you have to create a course that people actually want to spend money on. Sometimes we think that we have a hunch of what that will be, but we don't know whether that hunch is right or not. We just have a hypothesis.

I know sometimes when I will start a new project, I want to just jump right into it, start creating content, start doing all this stuff. But it's really important to take a step back and really go through a very methodical process for planning your subject matter, your content, who this is going to be for, making sure that you have a good plan in place from the beginning so that you set yourself up for success with your course before going down a road that ends up leading you to nowhere.



Chris, any initial thoughts on the process of designing your course, before we start jumping in here to the specific elements of design?

Chris: Yeah. This shouldn't be overlooked. A lot of people want to skip past this part because it's not the sexy exciting part, and it's not the part where you directly make money. But it's the foundations for everything you do. The amount of research you do will actually impact your customer experience—which is really the whole point.

Okay, you might be in business because you want to pay the mortgage. That aside, it's all about the outcome that you develop for your students, for your customers. If they get a good experience, then they're going to tell other people, and they're going to become your best sales people.

Obviously, plans change when reality hits. But if you're prepared, then it will be less stressful, and it will work better.

Choose in-demand subject

Jerod: Yep. All right. Let's talk about the elements of designing your course. The first is to choose an in-demand subject. It's important to remember that we can't force people to learn what we think they should learn. We have to teach people what they want to learn because, ultimately, they don't have to.



That's the big difference between when we're back in school and we just have to learn whatever the teacher has planned for us, and now where we're talking about actually developing adult education, we are developing courses that people are going to choose to spend money on, invest their time in.

Our choice of subject is extremely important because, again, this has to be something that people want to learn or maybe that they need to learn based on whatever transformation they're looking to have. So it's very important that, when we enter this process of choosing a subject, that we don't just say, "Okay, I have a subject to teach. Let me develop a course around it."

It's really got to go the other way and you've got to match this with, "Okay, what are people out there showing that they want to learn, what do people need to learn, and how can what I know, what I understand, what my experiences are fit into this and help me choose a subject that will fit into that?"

Chris: Yeah. There has to be a market for what you're wanting to develop and sell. It has to be a market of people who know that they want what you have. The biggest problem we see with our customers' courses or membership sites is, as you say Jerod, they develop something and then try to sell it.

Instead, find an eager market of people that you can satisfy. When their needs and their goals overlap with something you can teach, that's when you've got something good. But you also need to find a subject, out of all the many that



you could teach, that people are willing to pay for because, otherwise, you're not in business.

It could be fun. There are lots of things that I do and teach just for fun. I volunteer at the local makerspace to teach the laser cutter. I don't make any money out of laser cutting. I'm a nerd, but not a nerd with good enough skills to make money out of that. So you can teach things for free.

But if you want to build a business, it has to be a market of people with a desire to invest in this education. You can test it—and we're going to talk about MVPs—but also you can look at magazine stands. You can look at Amazon. If there are books and magazines and they're selling about this topic, then that's a good indication. If there's advertising, if you go into Google and there's Google AdWords all over the page when you put in keywords, that's probably a good indication that there's some money in it. You can do surveys.

You need to find that in-demand subject, something that people feel compelled to learn. If there's some urgency, if there's some scarcity, then it's going to be even easier. Later when it comes to selling and it comes to launching it, you don't want crickets. You don't want silence when you put this messaging out. You want people to say, "Yes, where can I get it? How can I get it? How soon can I get it? How much is it?"—instead of, "Yeah, that sounds nice."



Jerod: Yeah. Sometimes it can be frustrating because you can get stuck here, but that is okay. I look at two examples from my own experience. Like with The Showrunner, teaching a course about podcasting that is clearly on demand. There's a huge market for it out there. That was a simple, "Okay, we know we're going to teach this course. We know this is on demand. Now we're moving on to the next steps that we're about to show you."

But sometimes, you have a topic or you have a site and you want to have a course, but you don't have a clear idea yet of what that in-demand subject is. I'm going through that right now with my site [Primility](#)—where I've got an idea, I'm building an audience, but I don't yet know what the in-demand subject is that I can actually turn into a course, which is part of the reason why I haven't yet.

Again, it can be a little frustrating. You want to go out there. You want to get a course. You want to teach. But it really requires going through this process that we're showing you right now to make sure that you're not going down a road that ends up wasting time, but that it's actually taking you somewhere that leads to an audience that needs the course, that wants the course, will pay for the course—and that they'll also have a good enough experience and transform in a good enough way, a relevant enough way, or a meaningful enough way that they'll share that with others, and it'll start to spread.



Chris: Yeah. And we've spent some on this because a lot of people do rush through it. Then they waste all their time creating a course, building all this technology, spending money, and then they find nobody wants to buy it. We just wanted to drive home how important it is to pick well at the start.

Uniquely position your offer

Jerod: Yep. Okay, so we've chosen a subject. We've got this in-demand subject, but now, ostensibly, if it's in demand, there are probably other courses out there. In fact, that's one way that you can tell that you have an in-demand subject is that there are other paid courses out there about this subject. It shows you that people are willing to pay for this.

Now, it's very important to uniquely position your offer. It's critical to differentiate yourself with unique positioning—again, if someone else is teaching the same thing, that's okay. In fact, it's a good thing. But you've got to stand apart. You've got to resonate with people in a way that's stronger than what your competition does. I'll use *The Showrunner* as an example here.

When we launched *The Showrunner*, we knew, "All right, there are five, six, seven other podcasting courses out there right now. How are we going to uniquely position ourselves? What is it going to be that we do that is different than what other people do?"



We decided that one way that we would uniquely position ourselves is to focus less on the technology side of podcasting, where a lot of other courses focus, and really focus more on the mindset and on the audience-building strategies and on the experience because that's what we want our ideal person, that's what they were going to be focused on.

"How do I create a better experience? How do I put myself in this mindset of a showrunner to then create an audience that then maybe you can build a business out of it, maybe you can do whatever?" We wanted to get people to that point to where they had the audience that they could make some important decisions about where they wanted to go next without focusing so much on the technology part. That was our unique positioning. That's why we were able to cut through some of the noise and end up finding our niche.

Chris: Yeah. So you have to do some research in your market. You have to find where you're different. But it's different with an advantage. What is the positive impact on your customers' outcome based on that advantage? It's not enough to just be different. You have to be different with an advantage. You have to be different in a way that gives them some sort of experience advantage or some outcome advantage.

What's your difference that makes a difference? The example I always use is Sonia. Sonia has pink hair, but that's not her differentiation. That's not her positioning. She is the marketer for people who don't like sales and marketing.



The pink hair is one of the symptoms of her differentiation. It's not her differentiation. She's not different because she's got pink hair. She's different because she's the marketer for people who don't like marketing.

Identify learner benefits

Jerod: Yep, which leads us into our next slide—create a learner or a buyer profile. Who are the people that you're targeting with your course? What problem or pain exists? What are their learning styles? You're never going to be able to get people to buy a course if you don't know how you are trying to reach them and how you're trying to teach them.

This really comes from stepping inside the shoes of who your person is, and perhaps this is because you are coming from the market that you are now going to teach.

A great example of this is Belinda Weaver. We're actually going to use her site in the demo that comes a little bit later. She teaches a course on copywriting. For her to be able to do that, she came from the world of copywriting. She obviously understood what were the pain points, what are the problems because she came from that world. That can be such a great place to start when it comes to understanding who you're teaching is if you come from that world yourself.



Obviously, it's very important to really understand, be able to empathize with what are those problems, what are those pain points that you can help people move past with your course.

Chris: Yeah. And getting to know your learner, getting to know your buyer is super important for their customer experience and their on-boarding process. It's not just your ability to sell something that people want. It's an ability for people to feel like they made the right choice, so they stick around—and they really take action on your content. You need to know how they like to process information, the kind of work you can do so that they put in the actions so they get results. It's about getting into their heads in a way so that you have a complete solution for them.

Jerod: Yeah. When we do that, when we understand who the people are, now we can really identify the benefits that they're going to get from this course. What are the ultimate emotional benefits that they're trying to achieve by taking your training? There's got to be a match there. Otherwise, people will walk away disappointed. They won't be getting out of this what they want.

Adult learners are obsessed with that. What's in it for them? "We're choosing to take this course. We're choosing to invest our time. What's in for us?" On our part, as the people that are organizing, developing this course, we've got to identify the real-world benefits that people are seeking, the burning emotional desires that are driving their desire to learn.



Adult learners, busy adult learners that we're targeting, aren't just going to pay because they're trying to satisfy a burning desire to learn. They are trying to do something more than that. We've got to understand what that is and make sure we deliver it with our course.

Chris: Yeah. They want to achieve something or solve something. We have 'away from' people, trying to get away from pain, get away from what they fear, move ahead with their life, or people who are working toward something, that have their goals. They want to achieve something. They want to get a better career. They want to get a promotion. They want to change how they live their life.

You need to understand, is it coming from a fear place or a goal place? You need to understand the outcome and the transformation. That's what people are actually buying. They're not buying a course. If you could write the answer in a sentence on the back of a postcard, they would buy that instead.

There's going to be a small number of people who are taking your course, or reading your ebook even, out of pleasure. Most people are task oriented, project oriented when they buy this kind of education, especially if they pay a lot for it. Of course, you could be selling knitting patterns. That's completely fine, but if you are selling a fitness class, if you are selling anything to do with a job role or a skill or anything vocational, they absolutely have an end goal, an outcome in mind—that's what you're selling.



The learner benefits have to translate to that and have to speak to that. If you can both promise the right things and deliver on them, then that's how you're going to grow a scalable business. Again, you're going to get the testimonials, the case studies. You're going to get that word of mouth.

Develop learning objectives

Jerod: Yep. We understand the benefits. Now, we break those up into specific learning objectives with the goal, of course, being to end up with the big benefit that is being sought. This is where really understanding those real-world benefits allows us to design in our training content so that we can satisfy those specific concrete objectives.

These objectives are what really need to remain firmly at the front of our minds as we're developing training content. This will guide us toward what we need to develop. Then, as we continue to move forward in the course and maybe add to the course, what needs to go next, or what gaps exist now that maybe people aren't getting to the benefit as quickly or efficiently or whatever.

What gaps are there? Really understanding these objectives allows us to build it as good as possible in the beginning, but then also properly use the feedback that we get to fill in any gaps that may be there.



Chris: Yeah. Each module of your course, each lesson of your course should have its own objective, and they should all combine to work towards that big outcome or transformation that you were promising. That keeps you on track. It tells people in the marketing, and actually within the course, what they're going to get and what they're going to get out of it. It motivates people to actually go through it because they're working towards their objective.

2. Business models

Jerod: Yep. Okay, let's move on now to the second section, which is talking about business models. This is so important because, ultimately, we have to be able to generate revenue, either directly or indirectly, from our course to make it sustainable. And, clearly, we can do this with a free course. Those can be great for lead generation, for trust building and all of that, and to lead people to a paid course.

But for a paid course to work, you've got to have a smart business around it, or you're going to end up underselling your value and your efforts, perhaps to the point where the course isn't sustainable. That's not helping anyone, least of all you and your business, of course.

The thing is, some people are really great at teaching, writing, and creating, but business isn't really their strong suit. On the other hand, you've got hardcore entrepreneurs who aren't good at instructional design, aren't



good at creating engaging content. Do they understand how each business operates at the optimal level for the type of content being created? So I'll walk through here a little bit how to determine the right business model for your course because it's going to be so important to its success and to you getting out of it what you need to get out of it.

Chris: Yeah. There's the obvious business model of you're selling the education, but then, as Jerod says, you could do free education to attract prospects and build your list.

You could also do a business, which as Jerod says, some people want to stay away from the business and technology side, they just want to educate. If you think about book authors, a lot of book authors are disappointed with how much money they make directly from the book, and they need 'a backend,' some sort of backend offer. You could do consulting for these people and partner with them to build a membership site or a course that is on the back of their book publicity and teaches them how to implement what's taught in the book.

There are lots of business models, but you need to tie it to those objectives we talked about, that audience that we talked about, and your own particular situation and skills.



Tie objectives to business model

Jerod: Yeah. And that's the next slide, tying these learning objectives that we just talked about in the last section to our business model. As an example with The Showrunner, obviously, we knew that that course was going to be a paid course. People would pay a certain amount. They would get access.

But there's different ways to set up a course. You can set up one specific course that's just there. That's it. People get it, and it's the self-contained course. But what about adding a community? What about adding ongoing education?

For us, when we went back and as we were thinking about the learning objectives for what someone who is going to become a showrunner, what would they need? Well, part of what they're going to need, frankly, is encouragement and is community support. Part of creating a podcast, creating a show that succeeds over the long-term, there are ups and downs, and it can be very helpful to have that kind of support. So we knew we needed a community.

We also knew that part of creating a successful audience experience is understanding what to do with new technologies and how to approach new things that come out. Being able to have ongoing education—where not only could we educate people on new developments since we developed the original curriculum, but also let people ask specific questions—that was an important objective that we wanted to fulfill in the course.



Now our business model has to be tied to that because we've got to make the price reflect the extra effort, the extra work that it will take to create ongoing education. If that learning objective is important enough, that has to be taken in to the business model.

There's lots of different ways we could have set up the course, but again, we tried to be very specific. It's important to do this with any course, to be specific about what objectives you're trying to fulfill and make sure that you then tie those to the business model so that you're helping your audience achieve what they need, but you're achieving what you need to as well from a business perspective.

3. Test with an MVP

Chris: Yeah. And that leads us really nicely into the minimum viable product. At some point, you need to test all of these assumptions with an MVP, a minimum viable product. A lot of people take that to mean low quality. We don't mean something that's rushed out and low quality. What we mean is, you take a slice of those objectives, those needs, and you do the best job you can knowing that you need to improve it over time.

Usually, as part of the deal, as part of this minimum viable product, you give people the best possible price. You have a pilot group or a beta group who



go through it. Part of the deal, they get the best price, but they have to give you feedback.

We've used this repeatedly in this business and in our own side stuff, and it works very well. Those people have skin in the game. They actually get a really good deal because—as well as financially they get a great deal—they get to steer the ship a little bit. They get to help you course correct. You actually develop something that's ideal for them. They get a bigger say because they're the first group. It's a fantastic experience for them. You get great feedback, and you get to launch it with low risk because you could actually have it bought and paid for before you've even finished creating the course.

Jerod: Yeah. Again, for The Showrunner, obviously, we released the podcast, so we had 10, 15 episodes of the podcasts that we put out there, kind of putting our ideas out there.

This big picture for The Showrunner, what it is, what it means. That allowed us to get feedback from the audience that we were targeting for some of these really bigger, overarching ideas to help us learn what our people were, what the learning objectives were going to be.

Then coming out with the pilot launch of the course then was our minimum viable product and, again, gave people an incredible value at the beginning. Have gotten a lot of great feedback about the course in the community, ways that we can make it better.



Eventually, when we relaunch this in 2016, whenever that will be when we open it back up, now we've been able to take this minimum viable product, prove that people are going to buy it because they have, and then get that feedback that, again, allows us to update the course, make it better, tailor it—all of those different things to continually improve it, to continually make it better. Testing with a minimum viable product before you just go all the way with something or invest way too many resources in it is not just a smart thing to do, it's a necessary thing to do.

Chris: Absolutely.

4. Developing content

Jerod: All right. Chris, let's talk about developing content. It's funny, we think about launching a course, and a lot of times, that's where our mind first goes to is this idea of developing content. But we've already shown that there is a lot that you need to think about, a big process to go through before you even get here.

You don't want to dive right in to creating content. It could end up being something that nobody wants, or it could be just a little bit off the mark. Part of this, one of the ways that Brian explained this when he went through in the first lesson of his Digital Commerce Academy course talking about that was the importance of recognizing how learning happens in the real world.



When teachers are teaching, they're able to get this feedback. They're able to see the looks on people's faces, see the confusion, see where things really hit. That's so important to remember—we need feedback. We need feedback from the people we're trying to teach to really make sure that we are zeroing in and really helping them achieve the learning objectives.

That's the overview statement of this for developing content. Then we'll get into now talking about some of the real specific things that you can do to develop content, like your research source material.

Research source material

Jerod: Where is the content of your training program going to come from? There's a lot of different ways that you could do this, places you can go from. You can go from your experience, which is obviously a great place to start. Are you going to research and synthesize material? Do you perhaps need a partner, a credentialed expert?

Let's say that I had never run a podcast before, but I want to teach a course about podcasting. It's going to be really hard for me to do it just from what I've researched. That's something where you really need a firsthand perspective that has experience doing it. If that were the case, then we would have had to get some credentialed expert to come in.



Do you need that? Maybe you understand the topic that you want to teach and the audience, but you're going to bring in someone else to partner with you to create the education. It's important to have your game plan to understand where your material is going to come from.

Chris: Yeah. We're not talking about plagiarism, absolutely not talking about ripping anybody else's material off. But there's a lot of things that you're not going to have a completely fully formed idea about that you might need to train yourself on a little bit, so you can explain it better. I think it was Einstein or somebody famous that said, "If you can't explain it simply, you don't know it well enough."

Very often, as teachers, we learn more by teaching it to somebody else. This research material should give you a lot of material that fills in your gaps, explains things to you in a different way, takes things from being abstract into being able to implement.

The more practical experience and the more knowledge you can gain, the better teacher you're going to be and the better questions you're going to be able to answer. Don't look at this as being, "Who can I copy?" More as, "Where are my holes? Where are my gaps? What do I need to research in order to be the best teacher I can be?"



Identify potential activities

Jerod: Yeah. And once you have that, and once you have the information that you are going to teach—this is very important and oft overlooked—identifying potential activities and exercises.

You want to make the training come alive. You want to have tools that make the lessons concrete and applicable to the real world that make it more tangible. Or you want to provide a real world roadmap that shows people how to apply the topics to achieve their goals.

Like with the lesson that this presentation is based on inside of Digital Commerce Institute, there's a roadmap attached to that, that kind of walks people through and shows them how this becomes applicable to the real world. When we were developing The Showrunner Course, one of the lessons is "The Audience of One." Who is your audience of one? Who's that one specific person that you're talking to that represents your market?

Instead of just having that be abstract and asking people to think about it, we put together like a three- or four-page PDF where people can actually fill it out—"What's the person's name? Where are they from? What are their pain points?" Everything to make it real.

It's the same thing with the launch lesson that we did. Jonny Nastor had his 15-point checklist for a launch. Instead of just having a video where he



explains it, there is a worksheet with those 15 points and places where he says, “You should make a list of people that you can request reviews from.” Spots, lines for people to write those out.

So you take the information, take the concepts, but then you make it tangible. You give people actual activities to do that not only solidifies the information and the concepts in their mind, but hopefully, it’s an activity that actually helps them take the next step and—again, going back to those objectives—helps them move toward one of those specific concrete objectives that we’re looking to fulfill that eventually leads to the benefits.

Chris: Yeah. For people to actually get results from your course, they need to do things. So you need to identify what those doing things are. What are the projects they need to implement? What are the tasks they need to do? What are the checklists they need to tick off? If you don’t give people things to do, then it is a theoretical exercise. They’re not going to achieve anything necessarily, and you’re not going to get those testimonials and case studies.

Identify course topic areas

Jerod: Yep. All right. Let’s talk about identifying course topic areas. Now we need to get into actually organizing our course. A lot of times people get this backward. We kind of mentioned this before. They start with the topics



that they think people need to be taught instead of considering the end result first and then working toward that.

The topic area really needs to be a function of what the end result should be. On this next slide, just to show you an example—again, we had gone through all of the initial process of understanding the learning objectives, understanding the benefits—this is actually just an image of the [Trello](#) board that Jonny and I used when we were developing the topic areas. Some of these lessons ended up not in there. We ended up redoing some of the organization, but this is how we started to put together the step-by-step process that we wanted to walk people through. Not only the main modules, but then what lessons would be in modules.

It's very hard to just figure this out the first time. Even when you launch with this idea of the MVP, you may not get it right the first time, but doing it in a way, something like this where it's almost dragable and droppable, and you can mix and match and move things around, really helped us in terms of not just coming up with the topic areas in the beginning, but then understanding what specific lessons would need to come from that, and then being able to organize it in a way that really made sense.

Chris: Yeah. It's not about necessarily teaching what you think should be taught. It's about what will help them progress towards that goal and solve



their problem. Where are people going to have difficulty? Where are they going to get stuck? What are the foundational concepts that you need to build on?

Develop curriculum

Jerod: Yep. That slide leads into this next topic, too, which is now developing the curriculum. We've got the topics identified, and now, we need to weave it into a curriculum. For this to really work or go next level, if you can develop a dominant theme or tell a story that leads to understanding, that will help people take action. It will help them understand where they're going, help them understand the transformation that you're helping them to do.

For us, that big idea is this idea of the showrunner, becoming the showrunner, creating an audience experience, almost viewing yourself like the showrunners on television for what you're creating through your media with your audience. That's the goal is to take people on this journey to where they end up having this mindset and really believing that.

That's such an important part of this idea of developing the curriculum—not just the lessons, the modules, but how they all fit together into a story that can really help people continue to move forward and progress forward.



Chris: You're really crafting a narrative. Part of that is repetition. You'll have heard already in this webinar, just this webinar, that there's some things repeating. There's some repetition. We're trying to reinforce the learning and the key concepts, and that's what your curriculum needs to do.

When we talk about driving towards an outcome, when we talk about putting things in context and driving towards deliverables that match the objectives and the learner profile, those are themes. You need to have themes in your curriculum because it is a story. It's a narrative.

They need to go through the beginning, middle, and end. They need to get that outcome that they've been promised at the start. They need to stay engaged. They need to not just have that short-term memory, but it needs to go in deep. It needs to be processed, and action needs to be taken on it so that they get those results.

Multimedia

Jerod: Yeah. So if that's the big picture, then your multimedia content is how you deliver this and how you walk people through this journey, one lesson or one piece of media at a time.

It's important really to not just have one type, really to mix your media, but to understand what the learning style of your audience is. You may attract a



dominant learning style, and you can adapt to that as you go. You can tweak your strategy and focus a little bit more in one area based on who you're attracting and how they like to learn.

But the best approach is always going to be providing content in multiple modalities. Just learning psychology demonstrates that people benefit from a blend of different media formats. Really, you want to use the format that best suits the content. Then, a lot of times, there are ways to complement that with other formats.

Like we just talked about, maybe you have a video, and you want to provide the video in audio form for the people who would rather do it in the audio. But then you also have a PDF. Maybe it's a transcript, and in addition to that, you have a worksheet. You've got some different media elements that are allowing people to interact with the content in a couple of different ways—that will help them learn, help them grasp the concepts, and take the actions necessary to move forward in a better way.

Chris: So Merle asks, "How can you do a pilot without developing content?" Well, one of the ways you can do it is, you can create the content that you think is going to match, and you say, "This is my first attempt. I want lots of feedback. Therefore, you're getting a crazy great deal."



Develop introductory content

Chris: One way that I like to do it though is through webinars. Webinars are visual. They're auditory. They're interactive, so people can ask questions like you're doing now. Anytime something's not clear, you get stuck, or you have an idea that you want to bounce off the teacher, a webinar is a great way of doing that.

Your introductory content can be both a test and it can also be your best first draft. That means use the modalities that comes natural to you if that sounds like a daunting task. It could be that you create it as a framework, and then you fill in the gaps. But that introductory content can be your MVP.

Jerod: Yeah. Again, hopefully you're well-prepared for the introductory content because you've done all of the preparation work that we've been talking about all the way back to the first section of this presentation that will put your introductory content further along to being good and useful for your audience than if you just jump right into it.

Once you have that, this right here is just an example of how, for The Showrunner, this is what we ended up settling on. When we launched the course—we have 10 modules, but I couldn't fit them all on the screen here—this is what we ended up settling on. If you to just the main Showrunner page, this is how they're displayed using Rainmaker.



Again, we'd gone through this entire process, figured this out. Now when we do it again, we'll probably rearrange this, and we'll be adding some things and maybe merging a couple lessons into one because they don't need to be their own thing. We've gotten a lot of different feedback for this. But our introductory content has been very successful and has been a successful paid course on its own, in large part, because of all the work that we did even before we got to the MVP part of it.

Build your site

Jerod: Then the next step is simply building your site. No matter what your business model is, you've got to have a website that goes with it. It's very important to have a publically accessible front end because people need to go and be able to get information. You've got to be able to attract an audience, build an interest list, and allow people to start to know you, like you, and trust you—especially as you interact with people for the first time.

But then you also want that members-only back-end. There's got to be a place, then, that is roped off that separates your free content from your paid content. Obviously, Rainmaker is a great platform to do this with, but it's extremely important.

I've got a couple of good examples of this in the demo that we're going to go through. You've got to really balance what's that content that's out there for



people to interact with and start to gain value from you so that they're ready when you take them by the hand and take them to the next step to the paid content.

Chris: Just don't use this phase as a reason for analysis paralysis and procrastination. Don't let the technology daunt you and take over. You can actually create a really good education program simply as long as you focus on those learning objectives, as long as you focus on your student or customer. Don't let the technology be the thing that holds you back.

5. Launching & Marketing

Jerod: Yep. Okay, let's move on now to the fifth element of this—launching and marketing, which is obviously huge. You've got this course, but there's got to be a way to launch it and market it to get the people who are really going to be able to benefit from it, who are going to experience those benefits that your learning objectives are set up to help them experience.

Let's start with launch strategy. What is your launch strategy? What is your offer? This is the point in time where, really, the offer is almost more important than anything else—more important than fancy copywriting, more important than having the right affiliates, or whatever else you're going to use.



How does that offer describe ... again, we go back to the work that we've already done and understanding what the transformation is, understanding what the big emotional benefits are that we are trying to help people achieve. That is going to help us create an offer that is truly compelling. Now that allows us to help figure out how we're going to introduce this new training site to the world.

Chris: Yeah. And the critical things in your offer are how it speaks to the benefit or the outcome that the audience wants. You get their attention—"Here's what I've got."—But then you explain how it works for their problem or goal. So, "Here's what I've got, and here's what it will do for you."

Now the next piece a lot of people miss out, which is why you're the person to deliver that. Why you and not somebody else? You don't want it to be a commodity. You don't want it to be chosen based on price because that's a race to the bottom. That's where your positioning and your advantage comes in. Don't overlook the 'here's what to do next,' the call to action. So, "Here's what I've got for you. Here's what it will do for you. Here's why I'm the person to deliver it. Here's what to do next." In terms of launch, we always say that people buy with their minds before they buy with a credit card. This is super important. You can't just decide one day to put your product out there because people aren't ready. They're not prepared. There's no anticipation.

With Digital Commerce Institute, we actually had a waiting list. We had an interest list so that people could join so that we didn't just deliver a sales



letter on day one. Now, obviously, some people will have missed some of the communication beforehand. But enough people need to know about the course that's coming up, and they need to have an interest and a desire for it so that they're more willing to take action.

So your launch has to have some sort of presale. It could be a blog post. It could be emails. It could be a waiting list. And tell people it's coming. Then you tell people it is open, but then you tell people it's closing. You tell people, "That pilot is over on Friday at 6 p.m.," or that pilot's over when you get 100 people maybe, so there's some urgency and scarcity so that people actually want to take action—so it's coming. It's open. It's closing. It's closed.

Then you go back to the waiting list.

Jerod: Yeah. And we did that with The Showrunner, too. On the episodes of the podcast as that audience grew, we talked about the development of the course, what we were going through, and let people know when to expect it. That was our call to action on the show to get people on the list, was to basically say, "Hey, when we launch this for the first time, we're only launching it to the email list. Get on the list so that you get the information for the pilot launch." That helped us get a really, really responsive and interested interest list of folks that helped that initial launch be successful.

Then, in addition to that, you know, as it started to get closer and closer to launch, following that up with posts on Copyblogger and going on other



shows on Rainmaker.FM to talk about it, and get more people onto that interest list.

Prospect marketing system

Jerod: Eventually, what you want to do is create this prospect marketing system, basically create a marketing machine. You want to develop an educational content marketing strategy that a) attracts new prospects, and then b) builds a relationship with them over time.

Again, for The Showrunner, that's [The Showrunner podcast](#). With Digital Commerce Institute, that's going to be with a podcast that we're eventually going to start there and other content that is going to come. That allows you to generate and nurture leads with content. You want to give people the information they need in order to learn more from you in a paid context. And I know, Chris, as an example, you and I were talking about this yesterday like with [The Mainframe](#).

You guys do a lot of the what, and the why, but not necessarily the how. The how is the paid part, but you're generating leads, people are learning to trust your information and to want more because you're giving them the what and the why, but then the how is what they pay for.



Chris: Yeah. You give people enough of the how so that you're not leaving people hanging. But you can't go into detail. Like our Mainframe podcasts are 20-30 minutes. There's only so much how you can go into. Also, you can't do that handholding and that interactive part which allows people to really achieve what you're setting out.

But you can get people inspired and motivated. They can either go away and research for themselves or they can buy from you. Nobody is being forced into that. You need to develop that trust and that rapport, and you need to give them quick wins and some actionable information.

Jerod: Yeah. You made a great point there. Sometimes what people are paying for is that access, for you to be able to take the time to give them a tailored answer. I can talk in generalities on The Showrunner podcast about ways to get past that seven- to 10-episode hump, but I can't tailor that advice to everybody with their own personal situation. For people who are in the course, I can take the time to learn about their specific situation and give them advice that will truly help them.

Or, when it comes to technical stuff, you can talk about a mic here and there, but for people who have a specific setup and they're struggling to get their H6, that little handy recorder, so it goes in with XLR. Maybe they're struggling with that setup. We can give that tailored kind of information. That's what a lot of times, people will pay for.



Joint ventures for launch

Jerod: And let's talk about joint ventures for launch as well. This can be a good strategy for launching if you don't have an established audience yet. If you don't have your own audience, in fact, something like this is critical. If you have something to sell but you don't have an audience, if you're smart about it, you can borrow someone else's audience for a successful launch.

Part of understanding who the people would be for this kind of joint venture will come from the research that you did at the beginning of understanding the market, understanding who the big players are out there. Understand that, even if you don't make a dime off of your first launch, you have an audience of buyers, not prospects. It's the most valuable thing that you can have.

These aren't just people who have said, "I'm going to consume your free content." These are people who you've put a product out there, put a price tag on it, and they have paid for it. It's a next level of trust that they've shown in you. Obviously, as you look to develop more products, those are going to be the people that are most likely to follow you along on those additional products as well.

Chris: Yeah. It goes back to what we were saying about the need to be willing to invest in this education. I had a \$17 product, which was 100% commission. Any affiliate that recommended it, would get 100% of the fee. They would get



\$17. I actually lost money on that direct sale because I had to pay the PayPal fees and all the rest of it.

But in the long-term, I made money because they were sending me customers. They were spending money. The affiliates were sending people who were willing to invest in their education. Enough of those people bought my courses and my more expensive programs that I came out with a lot better lifetime value.

Joint ventures can work out really well—even if you don't make money or if you lose on the initial sale—as long as they're people that want to stick with you, and you do a good job of keeping them around.

Community development

Jerod: This is an essential idea here when it comes to creating a successful course, which is community development. We've talked about these benefits, the real-world benefits that we're trying to help our adult learners experience with these courses that we're putting out there. That is why people will join.

But a lot of times, community is the reason why people stay. In fact, Brian said that this is probably one of the most valuable lessons that he has learned—this idea that people are going to join because of these benefits that you describe and establishing yourself as the person who can help them get them,



help them guide them there, but community is why people stay if this is going to be an ongoing membership site. If you want this education, this site or this program, this subscription to be recurring, that's why people stay.

We don't want to downplay the value of community as the reason why you retain people. Now, obviously, having an ongoing education component can help. For instance, with The Showrunner, we do Huddles and Q&As every other week. That helps, but so many people that I talk to at Podcast Movement and when I'm just interacting with people that are in the course, talk about the community that we have as the most valuable part of the course to them.

They can ask a question, and they can get 20 different responses. Yeah, they look to me and Jonny as the authorities on podcasting, but being able to get the community involvement, the support from their peers, the advice from their peers, and just to have greater numbers.

With podcasting specifically, ideas on show artwork or on interview subjects, and to be able to share contacts and experience, it multiplies the value of what people are learning, the enjoyment that they get out of it, and how necessary the course and the membership feels to their life and to their progression in whatever it is they're trying to progress in.

Chris: That community is also part of your ongoing marketing because they become your advocates. They become your referrals.



Ongoing marketing

Jerod: And that's the next slide—ongoing marketing, which is the final phase of this. Any membership-based program can be launched over and over. I know someone had a question in there about they've done their pilot—is it time to relaunch? This is going to back to your business model and figuring out what makes the most sense for you.

But the thing is, you can even release parts of the course itself as part of your attraction strategy. On Digital Commerce Institute, you'll start to see some of that. As we accumulate more and more case studies and more of these webinars that we're doing, we will probably use some of those as part of the audience traction strategy down the road.

We're doing it right here with the Rainmaker Platform webinars. Obviously, those aren't attached to a specific course, but it's the same concept of using webinars. We'll have these webinars out there, and it will be part of the ongoing marketing. It would be the same way if these were done inside of a course.

If your membership site is constantly adding new content, then it's constantly getting more valuable. It's up to you, really, to find ways to leverage this value and to use it, not just to make it more valuable for the people in the course, but also for you in your ongoing marketing efforts to attract more and more people with this additional content that you have.



Chris: Yeah. As Jerod says, you have to attract more and more people. That's how you know if you're ready to go from the pilot to relaunching. Have you got a lot of people being added to your interest list? Do you have fresh blood coming in? Is your list growing? Are you reaching more and more people?

Very often, it's like that second album, that difficult second album with a rock band. The first album gets all the attention. The second album doesn't do so well because, while they were creating their first album, they were constantly touring, doing publicity. The second album, they were in a studio, and then they put it out there on the market.

It's the same with relaunching your course or your membership site. You need to be building up that interest list, that list of prospects. You need to be working on your funnel so that you've constantly got prospects coming in the open end of the funnel and then working through your autoresponder, working through your funnel content so that they are ready to buy at the end of it. At the very least, you need to be doing your attraction strategy, and you need to be building that interest list.

Digital Commerce Institute: Smarter ways to create and sell profitable digital products and services

Jerod: And to let people know, you know, Digital Commerce Institute is now launched. It's interesting. When we put this presentation together, it was pre-



launch, and so we were going to tell you to go get on that interest list because we were building an interest list for Digital Commerce Institute. But now you can go to DigitalCommerce.com and check it out.

What we've been talking about today has essentially been the introduction to Brian's course that he's putting together inside of Digital Commerce Institute called Build Your Online Training Business the Smarter Way. We've given the overview and shared some of these examples, and he really goes into detail. Basically each one of these sections is an entire module of that course where he really dives into it and goes into even more depth. And, Chris, you have a course that you're developing inside of Digital Commerce Institute as well.

Chris: Yeah, about automated marketing funnels. That last piece about ongoing marketing, that's very tied into what Tony and I are teaching as well.

Jerod: Yep. So obviously you're here, you're interested in this idea of building a business around paid courses, so I would just encourage you to go check out DigitalCommerce.com. Check out everything that's included in Digital Commerce Academy, and see if it is the right fit for you right now.

Rainmaker Platform demo

Jerod: With that said, let's talk a little bit about the Rainmaker Platform. What I want to do is, I want to show you some examples. Real quick, I want to show



you one element of the platform that we haven't gotten to yet in some of these past demos that we've done.

I want to show it to you just for how it allows you to set your course up. Then we're going to show you some sites that are using the Rainmaker Platform to do this and how they are using paid courses, membership sites to build a business. Let me take the slides off, and we'll go to the web browser. Right here, I'm in the back-end of Rainmaker.FM, which is obviously built on the Rainmaker Platform.

Product screens

Jerod: I want to show you the product screen. When you're getting ready to establish a course or a membership area, this is where you're going to go, here to the product screen. Obviously, you're going to have a name for your product. You're going to have a description for your product. I'll show you, to give you an example of this, with The Showrunner. We had a product for The Showrunner pilot, and we have a product for The Showrunner Course itself. You have your name. You have your description, all of that, in there. You can also create or dictate which member groups get this, so now you can actually dictate access.

Now when you're creating a new one, you have the choice. You can create a product, which is a one-time product, meaning people are going to pay once,



and that's it. Or you can have a limited-time product where people get access to it for a specific period of time.

Let's say we want to do a limited time product that people have access to for a year. Then we could say 'limited time product.' We can dictate the duration. We could make it free if we click here, or we can add a price to it. Let's say that we want our fictitious product here to be \$495. Now people are going to make their payment. They get this product for \$365. And there are a few other options that I'll show you in a second.

But you could also do it as a subscription. For a subscription now, obviously, if we say that our duration is 365 days, it's a one-year subscription. Now people are going to be paying \$495 per year. This would be for a recurring product. You could set the number of payments that there are, and you can also offer a trial period. Let's say that you want to give people 14 days to try it like we have on the Rainmaker Platform. You can make it 14 days. If you want to make that a free trial, then you could put a zero right here.

I show you all this so that you can see just here from the product page how many different options you have for setting up either a product, a limited-time product, or a subscription. Then, obviously, as you go down now, you have some different options as you do with any product for setting up your email receipt, for the message that you send to people when you're done, for what email you're going to integrate with this to put them on a specific list because, obviously, when they grab this product, you want them on a list.



This menu right here is extremely important, but also allows you to do it in a very simple and straightforward way. Mr. Garrett, did you want to add anything to the product description here before we show some sites?

Chris: No. Unless anybody's got any questions, go ahead.

Jerod: Okay. Well, let me know. We can come back to this screen if you do have any questions about this specific screen. So I've got four sites. Originally, it was three. But now Digital Commerce Institute is out, so we can show you that site, too, because it is built on Rainmaker.

Site example #1: Freelance to Win

Jerod: Here's the first site that I want to show you. This is [Freelance to Win](#). This is Danny Margulies' site, and he has a course on here. Basically, this site is all about teaching people—"Learn what it really means to be successful in the hyper-competitive world of online freelancing." He'd got a course that basically teaches people how to use [Elance](#). He's made, I think the numbers have probably gone up, but when I talked to him last a couple of weeks ago, he had made \$60,000 selling this course.

If you look at his site, he has actually only got three blog posts on here, but they all rank really well and drive him a ton of traffic. So he gets a lot of traffic. Obviously, he has got his very simple call to action. It's the only thing in his



sidebar, and he actually had a pretty expansive guest-posting strategy that he was using to drive traffic. Obviously, everybody's going to have a different audience attraction strategy.

But he takes them to this course. This course was developed with Rainmaker, and it's very simple in terms of design and setup. The brilliance here of what Danny's done is he really understood the benefits that people were going to get, understood the objectives that they needed to get there because he was this person. He was the person who went on Elance, learned how to make, as he says on his email signup box, "learn how to make \$100,000 from Elance." Now he shows people how to do it.

He's got this course set up, and you go to 'Start here.' He's got his "welcome to the program." He's got videos, and he does most of his with video. But he's also got a transcript. He's got audio. You can download the video here as well.

Then, using the basic Rainmaker short codes, let's say that you, well, you might not favorite the welcome, but let's say that you are really interested in designing a high-end freelance business. You can favorite this. You can mark it as complete so that you know that you've already done it. Then as you go on to your next lesson here, it helps you keep everything organized. Now you've got the star for the favorite. You know that you've already done this, so you can just continue moving on.



You can see his course. It's all set up there in the sidebar, set up in a very intuitive, very simple way. He's got some bonus material, and he's got a private forum as well—all of this just done using Rainmaker. It's brought him about \$60,000 in revenue just in the last year. And I've gone in and set up similar courses to this. Did it for The Showrunner. Did it on some side projects. It's extremely simple to set up and organize exactly as he has done. That's Freelance to Win.

Site example #2: Copywrite Matters

Jerod: The next one that I want to show is Belinda Weaver's [Copywrite Matters](#). I think I might have seen Belinda in the chat earlier. So if you're here, Belinda, hello.

Belinda also participated in a case study in Digital Commerce Institute, which is excellent.

In that case study, basically, we walk through this really smart strategy that Belinda has had for really what we've talked about in these last four Rainmaker Platform webinars. Starting with audience attraction content, like her podcast, the [Hot Copy podcast](#), her [blog](#). Then that goes into free courses. So there's a free course that you can sign up for. She gets you on the email list with the cheat sheet. There's then a free course. Then that takes you into her paid course.



We'll go in here, the [Copywriting Master Class](#). We talked about this marketing machine earlier, and she's set it up in a real smart way. I would encourage you, if you want a good example of that, to go to Belinda's site and sign up and follow through the process she takes you to get you to the paid course.

So we go here. This is going to be the sales page for the course. Let me go back because I want to actually take you inside the course and show you. That's going to be in here I believe. So we've got downloads. This is all member area stuff right here. We talked earlier about how you have your frontend of your site, and then you've got your back-end where you have to log in, the membership area, and that's where we are right now.

So I have access to this Top Tips Cheat Sheet. Then I can head to the Master Class course, so I would go there again. The site is all done using Rainmaker. You can see the similarities in structure between what Belinda has here and then what Danny has on his site. Obviously, she's using a different theme, has it styled a little bit differently. You have lots of options that you can do there.

But it makes it real simple to organize your lessons. You've got courses. You've got modules. So this is the module, and she's got it set up in four different modules—Writing for the Right Audience, Offers in Action, SEO Copywriting, and the Writing Process—and then Individual Lessons.

Again, it's the same idea where you've got the lesson, you're able to organize your multimedia content in a very intuitive and simple way—all using a



Lesson Creation screen that looks very similar to a Post Creation screen or a Page Creation screen. It makes it simple. It keeps you in the same mind frame that you are when you're creating any other page. Then, again, you can mark it as complete. You can favorite it, continue to move on.

Belinda actually adds coaching calls to hers, so that's another element of this and then, again, a forum. She's got her forum topics here on the sidebar, but she's got a nice thriving forum that's going on. We talk about the importance of community, so it's very important to have this community that's there that can all interact.

Site example #3: Youpreneur (ChrisDucker.com)

Jerod: Next example, this is [Youpreneur](#). This is Chris Ducker's new membership site, again, done on Rainmaker. You can, again, see the similarity in structure but some of the differences that you have and how you want to organize it, how you want to style it, how you want to design it.

This is Chris' member dashboard where he pulls out some very important links that he wants to highlight. He includes a video right here and then some different links. Same thing, you can go to the monthly mastermind calls. He's got it set up a little bit differently here with the sidebar, but you've got these



different options for how you want to do this again based on what your model is, based on what the content of your course is. You can set that up however you need to do it.

Site example #4: Digital Commerce Academy

Jerod: Then we've got [Digital Commerce Academy](#). This is actually a little sneak peek into the back-end of Digital Commerce Academy designed by Rafal Tomal in Rainmaker. This is the Welcome page. Then we've got courses, case studies, our cutting-edge case studies, plus a community.

For Digital Commerce Institute, we're doing something a little bit different with community where we're not going out the door with the community, but we use the forum feature of Rainmaker to basically allow people to give us some feedback. We want to know what people want in the community so that we can tailor it a little bit to what the people want. I'm sure we'll get some good ideas, and that will help us create the community.

That's where, when you go out the door with your MVP and with your pilot offer, you charge this lower price, and not everything has to be in there. People understand that. So with the community, the people who were in on the pilot launch know that they're actually part of the development, so they're paying a little bit less. Not everything is there right off the bat, but they're going to



actually have some input in how it develops. They're eventually going to get everything, they just got a lower price for getting in at the beginning.

We go over here and look at the courses. We talked about Brian's course about Build Your Online Training Business the Smart Way, Chris and Tony's course about automated marketing funnels. It's the same thing here. You go in here, not everything is there. And that's okay. That's this MVP process we're talking about.

The overview of Brian's course, this is basically some of the content that we walked you through today. Then you can get in there, and you've got the Five Key Concepts of Online Entrepreneurs. Then you can see the other modules, but the content isn't available yet. Again, totally fine. Once it is ready, then, we can actually do different drips and time the drips.

Maybe you have the content ready, but you don't want people to have access to it right away. You can actually pretty simply with Rainmaker set up a drip. Maybe you don't want people to just be able to rush in and do everything right off the bat. You want it spaced out. That's actually how we have our [New Rainmaker free training course](#) set up on Rainmaker.FM where it is set up like that. So that's a basic overview.



Rainmaker Platform themes

Chris: Let me just jump in. A couple of people have been asking about the themes. We have Rafal, so we have custom themes. That's not to say that the built-in themes are bad or anything. But Rafal had a very specific design in mind, so he created custom designs. All of the things that are built in to Rainmaker, they are developed to work with the Learning Management System, and we will be having more themes coming out. The Learning Management System and the membership features will be kept in mind as the other themes are developed.

Jerod: Yep. Absolutely. Well that's everything that I had for the demo. I'd be happy to show people anything else specific. I haven't had a chance to look at any of the questions while I was going through this. Anything else that you wanted to add or that you wanted to show folks, Chris?

Chris: I think we're ready to go into the Q&A if anybody's still sticking around and wants some answers. We've got some already in the list.

Jerod: Yeah, let's do it.

Is there LMS progress tracking in Rainmaker?

Chris: So Daniel has asked, "LMS progress tracking in Rainmaker?" We're actually developing a feature called the Gradebook. Sorry, that word



completely missed my brain for a second. You'll be able to track student progress, and it will be connected with the marketing automation. What that will mean is, as well as being able to observe progress through your courses and where people get to, which lesson they get stuck on, you'll also be able to give people tags and achievements based on that.

For example, if somebody finishes module one, you'll be able to give them extra access, so they'll be able to be given an extra list, for example, an extra autoresponder, a bonus piece of content if they achieve certain things.

So, yes, you will have progress tracking, but actually we're going to develop it with marketing automation in mind. Now for courses, that's really good for engagement and for student success, but we're also thinking in terms of free content libraries, free courses used for promotion and marketing where you might use it to qualify people or develop a more engaged list. We're always thinking both in terms of paid content delivery and also prospecting and marketing content delivery, if that makes sense.

Do you need to back up content in Rainmaker?

Jerod: Yeah. Jean-Christie asked, "Is there a need to back up one's content in Rainmaker? How secure is the content?" It is very, very secure. Is there a need to back up your content? No, because our backup team does a great job.



But here's what I'll say having worked in hosting support for a while. I would never, ever discourage anyone from ever backing up their own content either on your computer or even just on a separate drive that maybe doesn't even sit on your computer, especially your multimedia content. That's not because the backups on Rainmaker or anywhere else that you might be aren't really good and really secure. But for me, there is just an extra level of peace of mind of having my own backups.

I would never discourage you from doing that, but I would not classify it as a need. I was involved in when we were designing our backup process, and it's outstanding. It's reliable. But if you want to backup, I would never discourage you from doing so.

How do you know when you're ready to launch, and how do you price it?

Chris: Yeah. A lot of people are asking how to know when they're ready to launch, when they're ready to launch their MVP. And also combined with that, pricing. What I would suggest is your lowest ever pricing should be your first people, the first people you get through.

If you know somebody personally, that would be a good fit. You might want to offer them a crazy low price. I have not had good experience with giving people free access. Some people felt like it was condescending or it was



charity. And the people who weren't mean about it still didn't take action. It seems like people need to pay at least a little amount. Now, one thing that I have heard and never did I try is to invoice people, but put 'paid' and put 'zero,' and put that it was a subsidized fee.

Now how do you price it? Look at what they're already spending money on. Keep in mind that you want to give the first people a good deal. Look at how much value they're getting out of the outcome. Obviously, if I was going to sell something about creating a bestselling book, that's a much bigger outcome than knitting a pair of socks.

How much is that outcome worth to them? How much is that outcome worth to them right now? How much are you going to save them? How much time are you going to save them? How much is their time worth? If you're going to save them 100 hours and they get \$30 an hour, you can calculate how much you're going to save them. Then you can come into it, not necessarily match that, but you can actually position the price based against that.

Jerod: Yeah. And I will say, when we were going through setting The Showrunner price, I think a lot of times in my experience, talking with people who have gone through this process and set prices, they often will say the same thing—either I charge too little or I really underestimated what people would be willing to spend.



If you have a good course, it's valuable, and you've done some of this legwork like what you just described, Chris, to really understand what else is out there and what kind of value this will have to people, really be careful of underpricing it. Then really pay attention to the feedback that you get when you go out there with that initial price and feedback in terms of people actually buying it. Then you might adjust your future price.

Obviously, to set your pilot price, you want to have some kind of understanding of what the future price is going to be. Really use that feedback because you may think, "Hey you know, based on the feedback we're getting and how many people signed up, this is more valuable than we initially thought."

The nice part about that is, if you charge a higher price and if people are paying that price, you probably have more time, more resources that you can invest in making it even better.

So I would just caution against going too low you know because if your stuff is valuable, treat it that way.

Chris: Yeah. Zina says, "If you don't value yourself, no one else will value you." And that's a good thing to keep in mind. You can always put your prices up. Pricing is a good way of adding urgency because you just tell people, "On the first of November, the price is going to get higher, so join now and you'll never pay any extra."



What is the price of Digital Commerce Academy for Rainmaker Platform customers?

Jerod: Brent asked right now, “What is the price of Digital Commerce Academy for Rainmaker Platform customers?” It is the same as it is for everybody. Right now, the price of Digital Commerce Institute, if you go there to the pricing, it is the same. What is it? Is it \$295?

Chris: Yeah, something like that.

Jerod: Yeah, so \$295. Then there’s a bundle price if you get it with Digital Commerce Summit as well. Now, in the future, there may be a discount for Rainmaker Platform customers or for people who are in other products, that kind of thing. But going out the door with Digital Commerce Institute, this is the lowest price. This is the lowest price that there is. There are no specific discounts.

But that’s an interesting question because, if you’re not on your first product and if you have three, four, five other products, again, that’s where having people who have actually bought from you can be so valuable as you launch. Not only are those people probably going to be more likely to test out a new product of yours, but you can give a discount if you want to or do something like that. But for Digital Commerce Institute, there are no discounts.



When is DCI Summit?

Chris: Yeah. People are asking about the [DCI Summit](#). It is going to be live and in person in Denver next October (October 2016).

Jerod: Yep, at the Paramount Theatre in Denver. Let's see, what other questions do we have here?

Is there a recommended percentage point as a discount?

Chris: "Do you recommend a certain percentage point (half, 25 percent) as a discount?" You can test it, and see what reaction people have. Again, if you have access to real human beings, that's a good way of judging. There's no one-size-fits-all answer. Unfortunately, what most people do is, they over discount. But that might be vital to get your first few people through the door.

Jerod: Yeah.

Chris: I believe the Digital Commerce event instead of Authority Rainmaker, I believe (I may be wrong).

Jerod: Yes.

Chris: We have Jen and Daisy who could correct me.



Jerod: Yeah, as far as I know that it will be in place of the Authority Rainmaker event.

Clarification on Rainmaker Digital, the company

Chris: So there's a bit of confusion about our company name. Our company name is Rainmaker Digital. The Digital Commerce Institute is a membership site/course/live event under that umbrella. StudioPress is not going away. Copyblogger is not going away. Authority is not going away. DCI is something that is optional and something that you may want to join, but nothing else is going away.

Should you sell courses individually or offer all courses with a paid membership?

Jerod: Yeah. Then Alex asks, "Would you recommend selling courses individually or having a paid membership which allows access to all courses? What factors should you consider?" This is a great question. It goes back to that business model topic where we talked about it. You certainly could have one membership that gives people access to all courses or access to a certain number of courses.

Really, I just think it is going to depend on who are the people that you are attracting, and can you attract that same type of person for all of these



courses? How different is it going to be? Depending on what the differences in the courses are, does that mean that you need to be attracting really different audiences? That can complicate it if it's just one site, one payment, that kind of thing. You just want to make sure that you have that in mind.

And will it make more sense to separate these? Like for us, there's a very clear distinction between the type of person who is right for Digital Commerce Institute and where they are, what they need to learn, what they are going through, and why they would need the education as opposed to someone like Authority. It didn't make sense to make those two things the same. It makes much more sense to separate them because they're targeting such different people.

What's the difference between Rainmaker and other platforms?

Chris: Yeah. And a couple of people asked about the difference between Rainmaker and other platforms, such as Kajabi and Infusionsoft. Rainmaker has payment processing through Stripe, PayPal, and Authorize.net, so you can take money, as Jerod's showed on the screen. We do have some marketing automation, which will be added, too. Tagging is coming.

We have a built-in email system that's coming. The first thing will be coming very soon is to test the broadcast emails. If those broadcast emails get to



your recipient inboxes okay without being marked as spam, then we'll move forward with autoresponder functionality after that.

In terms of the Learning Management System versus Kajabi and Udemy, I'm not fully aware of how those systems work. I will tell you that the integrated nature of Rainmaker makes it a bit of a better customer experience, in my opinion, because they go to one site. They sign up for that site, and they can be given access to various pieces of content that you want to provide.

The embedding of videos and PDFs and everything is easy. On the same site, you can have your podcast, you can have a membership site, you can have a forum, you can do split testing, you can have affiliates, and all of the other things that come with it. That would be, from my point of view, the main advantage of going with Rainmaker over something else.

Jerod: And theoretically, Rainmaker could handle as many courses as you want to create, right? There's no hard limit on the number of courses.

Chris: Yeah. And we're not even limiting people to the amount of disk space that they take up right now. We're trying to get a good grasp on the average that people use, so we're not even limiting that. And the thing is—because Rainmaker sites versus some others, it's under your own domain name—if for any reason you don't like Rainmaker or if you find that it's not for you, then you've not really lost anything.



You can make sure you export all your content. You've got your domain name. You've not had one of those strange URLs, or you've not had people sign up for somebody else's site to get your content. It is software as a service. It is something that you pay for, but it's under your domain name. You are building your own equity and your own assets.

Jerod: Yeah. Donna had a good follow-up to the question that was asked earlier. She said that she's got an annual membership that gives access to everybody, and then she has separate courses that people can buy on-off. And annual subscribers then pay less than everyone else. So she kind of has a nice combination of being able to do that. Daniel says, "Yes it's not sharecropping." Exactly, because it is yours.

Chris: Yeah. We take care of the gnarly, complicated, anxiety-building stuff for you, but you can take your stuff with you. You're building your assets, your reputation, and your brand. That's something to keep in mind. You're not sending people to somebody else's brand and building their brand.

What are the previous Rainmaker webinars?

Jerod: Merle has asked, "Mention other webinars that came before this?" Yes, you may have missed them. If you did, go to RainmakerPlatform.com/Webinar. Obviously, we've got the replay of this one up there, but you will see the other three already in there, as well as the schedule for the two that are to come.



How do you integrate Rainmaker with a WordPress site?

Jerod: And Jay asked, “Can you talk a little bit about how to integrate Rainmaker with a WordPress site, is there an API?”

Your Rainmaker Platform site would be in place of your WordPress site, and that’s one of the big benefits of Rainmaker. Instead of having a WordPress site where you need to grab a whole bunch of plugins and add a whole bunch of stuff to make it secure, to make it usable, to give you the functions that you need, Rainmaker comes with all of that. You get your Rainmaker site, and you’re ready to start, to design it the way that you want it to look with one of the existing themes, and then start putting your content out there. So it wouldn’t work with it. It would be in place of it.

What about Rainmaker’s built-in email system? (Coming soon!)

Chris: Yeah. And a couple of people have asked about Rainmaker having a built-in email system. The first test of that will be coming very soon, and it will be a test of the broadcast email, the adding people to lists, unsubscribing people from lists, and the marketing automation performs all that kind of thing.



We want to know if the emails get to your recipients. If they don't get marked as spam and you're happy with the way the emails go out, then we'll be delivering next the autoresponder sequences. Look for an announcement about that, hopefully, very, very soon.

It will be a Labs feature if anybody is familiar with that. We don't want you to put your whole business on it to start off with. We want you to test it out, and we want you to give us feedback. It's an MVP. It will be something for you to try out, give us feedback, and then we'll roll out the other features once we know that it's stable and it's working.

If you buy Rainmaker, are there video tutorials to help you set it up?

Jerod: Yep. And Donna asked, "If you buy Rainmaker, are there video tutorials to help you set it up?" There absolutely are. There are great video tutorials.

In addition to that, there are walk-throughs where, when you log in to your Rainmaker site, there's a little green button that says, "How can I help?" You click on that, and if you want to set up a podcast or set up a product like I was showing you earlier, create a course, whatever it is, it will literally take your cursor by the hand and say, "Click here. Click here. Click here," and walk you through the basic steps for how to do it, in addition to the knowledge base—



which has very detailed examples, including screenshots, for pretty much everything that you could possibly do.

Our documentation team is phenomenal. They've done a great job, and they continue to update it to make it even easier to do anything that you want to do in Rainmaker.

Chris: Yeah. Unfortunately, we can't recommend a webinar platform because, as no doubt you experienced last time, the horrors of the last attempt at this webinar and even some glitches today, none of them are perfect. It's a very, very difficult thing to build, which is why we're not building our own webinar system.

The last thing we want to do is try and compete with Google. So our next attempt will probably be trying Google Hangouts and seeing if they are any better. But I think they all have their pluses and minuses, and at some point, you have to work around the glitches and the limitations. I don't think there will ever be a perfect system.

What's the webinar integration like with Rainmaker and publishing recordings?

Jerod: No. And Ahmad did ask, "What's the webinar integration like with Rainmaker and publishing recordings?" The only integration there would be



is if you use something like Google Hangouts that allows you to embed a live webinar on your site. I do that on [The Assembly Call](#).

Chris: Now, we're working on [GoToWebinar](#) integration. So if anybody has seen the one-click registration button on Authority, that's a very early version of our GoToWebinar one-click registration button, which will work with the marketing automation. So we'll be able to say if they're registered for this webinar, if they attended this webinar. Also, it's nice to give people a one-click registration button where they don't have to fill a form out.

But in terms of the actual video and the published recordings, we embed the video. We, as a company, use [Vimeo](#), but you can just upload the video as well.

Jerod: Yes, yes. All right. Let's see.

What about dripping content?

Chris: "What are your thoughts on dripping content?" Our thoughts on dripping content is that dripping content tends to be a good thing to ensure that people actually consume your content and take action on it, don't get overwhelmed. It's part of the on-boarding process. You want to prevent people getting overwhelmed and confused and having the thought that they're getting left behind. You want people to feel like they're keeping pace.



Now, you will always have people who say, “I want to download everything and consume it this weekend because I’m a fast learner.” A percentage of those people will actually want to download everything, ask for a refund, and then you’ve given them the content, they’ve not paid any money, and they’ll probably put it on a pirate site. Some of those people are honest.

It could be your support team (even if your support team is you) cuts some sort of a deal with them. But I am in favor of dripping content just because of that overwhelm thing and making sure that people actually consume and take action on it.

Is there a single Rainmaker user guide that you can print/view on a device?

Jerod: Yeah and Michael asked, said that he purchased Rainmaker—he’s old school—“Is there a single user guide that you can print/view on a device?” Yes, there is. You have the Quick Start guide when you first get in there, and then there are a number of other user guides that you can download and that will walk you through the specific steps.

Chris: Yeah. And infographics, and flowcharts and all of that good stuff.



How to know if you're ready for Digital Commerce Institute

Jerod: And Merle asked, "I'm new to Rainmaker Authority, so I'm thinking I'm not ready for Digital Commerce Institute." I don't know. That's going to totally depend on your situation. To know if you're right for Digital Commerce Institute, it really depends on if you are in a position where you are looking to create digital products—whether that's an ebook, whether that's a theme, a course, even something like a SaaS app and then build a business around it, which are very specific activities.

Authority is much more about learning how to use content to market any type of business, not just a digital business. But to know if you're right for Digital Commerce Institute, if you're looking to create and sell digital goods, then Digital Commerce Institute could absolutely be right for you. If you're not looking to do those specific things, then it may not be right for you right now, but we'll be here when it is right for you.

Is there information available to learn about demographics and marketing to estimate your audience potential?

Chris: And Sheryl asks about information about learning the demographics and marketing, estimating the audience potential. I believe that is something



that Brian's going to go into his course when he looks at analyzing the market for your digital product. His DCI course will go into that.

On a general level, one of the ways of looking is what I said before about seeing if anybody is advertising and how often they're advertising. If you put in some keyword searches into Google and the same ads keep coming up and you look at the bid prices, you can see how much people are willing to pay to reach that audience. That can give you an indication without actually spending any money.

Do you recommend a specific start date for the course so everyone's doing it at the same time, or set it up so people can join at any time?

Jerod: Yep. And Emma asked, "Do you recommend a specific start date for the course where everyone's doing it at the same time, or set it up so people can join at any time?"

That will depend. It will go back to your business model and go back to the learning objectives that you're hoping to do. And it will depend on how the course is set up. Some courses, as an example, we looked at Danny's course on Freelance to Win, I don't really think there is much of a need for him to have specific start dates and then have different launches for that because that's



one where it is very action specific, action-oriented. People want to get it. They want to learn, and they want to go do their Elance projects.

For The Showrunner, it's interesting. We're still figuring out what we want to do with that. But the community part of it is so important in that initial part. For instance, for beginning podcasters, we would definitely want to do that because the community part, the shared experience would be such a big part of the learning and the community that there would be so much extra value gained by having people start at the same time. It's really just going to depend on your course, how it's set up, and what you're setting it up for people to get out of it.

Chris: Yep. And so we've had a question about having specific start dates. If you are doing webinars and Q&As and if the whole group goes through together, then that can add some stickiness for that group because they interact with each other. They're all at the same place, and it can add some interaction. And it can add some urgency. You don't have to do it that way.

I used to run my courses when they were live as live webinars. That's how I would run my course. I would open the shopping cart, and I would say, "Starting on Monday the (something) of November." Everybody would start at that date and time, or they would catch up with the replays. But as a home study, you can make it self-paced or you can drip it. Both work. It depends on your business model.



Rainmaker webinar replays

Jerod: Yep. And Mike asked if the whole webinar is going to be Q&A. Mike may have joined us late. We actually had the entire webinar presentation that was about an hour and then we had a demo, so we've been doing Q&A now. But you can watch that replay, RainmakerPlatform.com/Webinar, and we will email this list as well just one time when the webinar is ready so that you'll know. If you missed any of it, if you need to catch up, you'll know when it's live.

Chris: Yeah. There was a little bit of time zone confusion just because we didn't have a rough enough experience last week. We couldn't have it go perfect this week as well.

Should you have a unique domain name for each course or multiple courses under the same URL?

Jerod: Yep. I'm going to take a couple final questions here. Niklas asked, "Would you always suggest a unique domain name for each course if you have more than one, or would you suggest developing multiple courses under the same Rainmaker site URL?" Well, you could do both of those.

You can develop all of the courses under your Rainmaker site, but you can create a specific domain name for use and marketing to get people there. Again, this will totally be dependent on your goals, how you want to structure



everything. For instance, let's say we've got the New Rainmaker training course. We could have [NewRainmakerTrainingCourse.com](#) that leads you to that, but it's still all underneath that one Rainmaker site or one Rainmaker URL.

It's the same thing for Showrunner. We bought the domain [ShowrunnerCourse.com](#) for the launch that would take people right to that page simply so that it was easier for us to say on podcasts, put on a business card, and that kind of thing for marketing. But it's all under one Rainmaker URL. For the most part, for efficiency's sake, both work efficiency and cost efficiency, having one Rainmaker site that powers your courses—because it's set up to do that—in a lot of cases is going to make more sense than doing a separate Rainmaker site for every course.

Chris: Yeah. And if you have one site with multiple courses, then you can do polite and sensitive up and cross-sells. Instead of having to pound your list, you can just say, "Hey, we noticed you're interested in this. Well this complements it very nicely. Go check it out." If they're doing 101, then they can upgrade to 202. If they're learning about electronics, then they might want to learn about fabrication. If they're learning about knitting, they might want to do other textiles.

So it allows you to say, "People who bought this also looked at..." kind of Amazon thing, implicitly and explicitly without having to send a message to your email list to say, "Hey, this is also available."



Jerod: Yep. All right. Well, Chris, any final questions that you want to take here before we close up shop for the day? Appreciate everybody being here.

Chris: Yeah. I appreciate all the good luck and good wishes about us getting through the webinar with us still talking and being heard, so thank you.

Jerod: Yes.

Chris: And thank you for all your great questions.

Jerod: Yes, yes, yes, yes. Okay. Well, have a wonderful afternoon, everybody. We will get this replay up. It will be at RainmakerPlatform.com/Webinar. We will also have the registration for the next webinar up soon. So you can see the date right now, and the registration will be up soon.

Until then, if you do have any other questions that we weren't able to get to, you can send them. Contact Support—we'd be happy to answer them. But until the next time, we will talk to you soon on the next Rainmaker Platform webinar.