

Tiny Course Empire Podcast Episode 23: Marketing Without Social Media

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You're listening to the Tiny Course Empire Podcast with Cindy Bidar. This is episode number 23, and today we're talking all about how to market your business without social media, if you've been struggling to build an audience, I have 21 ideas you can use starting right now, stick around for all the details.

Welcome to the Tiny Course Empire Podcast, a weekly show dedicated to helping you launch and grow your digital core business, even if you don't have a big team or a six-figure ads budget. We'll help you design smart systems, take consistent action, and achieve massive success on your own terms. Now, here's your host, Cindy Bidar.

Welcome back to the Tiny Course Empire Podcast. I am your host, Cindy Bidar. You will find show notes and recommended resources for this episode at TinyCourseEmpire.com/23, and I've created a checklist with all of these audience building ideas as well, and you'll find that on the show notes page too, so don't worry about taking notes, just settle in with a cup of your favorite beverage and listen along, and if you're a new listener to the show or an old friend, welcome, I'm thrilled to have you here. Be sure to click the subscribe or the follow button, so you never miss an episode. Coming up next week, I'm going to give you my best tips for becoming a better writer, because like it or not, online business owners write stuff, they write a lot of stuff, and if you keep telling yourself how bad you are at it, you're just going to continue to resist it.

So that's next week's show, but this week, we're talking marketing and all of the ways that you can grow your business without spending all of your time on social media. I picked this topic because I have so many people who come to me and say, How do you promote your business? Because I know you're not on social media, and that's true, I'm not. I never really have been, or at least not for business, and recently, I made the decision to abandon almost all social media completely. I deleted my Instagram account, I closed my Twitter. I haven't logged into LinkedIn in years, so I don't even count that one as social. All that left was Facebook, which was always my social app of choice, and at first I left that completely too, but then I found out that I really missed the family photos and my Facebook memories, so instead of leaving completely, I've un-friended everyone that I do not personally know. Basically, if I can't call you up in the middle of the night to bail me out of jail, I unfriended you on Facebook, and I don't want you to think that's a bad thing, I didn't unfriend you because I don't like you, I unfriended you because I'm changing the way that I'm using Facebook.

I left every group I was in, I unliked every single page. Now, you might be asking yourself, why did you bother to do that? This took me a couple of hours to do over this past weekend. Why I did it is because Facebook was stressing me out. It was taking up too much of my time. I think last week on the show, I talked about how I was spending up to three hours a day on social media, and that is just a ridiculous amount of time, so it was taking up too much of my time, it was causing me too much anxiety, honestly, the last offer, this was the day that I found myself, this was several months ago, but I found myself scrolling through Facebook and what I was doing was I wasn't appreciating the family photos, I wasn't appreciating the memories, I wasn't appreciating the funny memes, I was looking for people to unfollow because I didn't like what they were posting and that is just not a good use of my time. It's not good for my mental energy, it's just not good, this is not a good thing, so that was kind of the last straw for me, but also I'm not okay with them selling my time and attention to the highest bidder and listen, I'm a business owner too and I get it, and I am not here to rant on the evils of social media, I'm going to leave that to other people, but for me, it's just not working.

So I've made the decision to get out, but I know for a lot of people, you might feel like you have to be there because that's the way that you're getting in front of your customers. You might think you don't have any other options. And that's what we're going to talk about today. We're going to talk about the options that you do have to market your business outside of social media, and there are a lot of them, and they're actually a lot more sustainable than social media ever was.

So let's dig in, these are in no particular order, except the first one, don't do anything else until you have done this, and that first one is to build your email list, your email list is an asset that you own, social media depends on an algorithm that is continually changing your email list is yours, and you have within reason total control over how often and what messages your list sees that never, ever happens in social media, you have no control over what people see, even if you're paying them, and certainly not if you're going after organic traffic, zero control over that. The other reason to build your email list is because email has a much higher read rate, I'm getting 25 and sometimes 30% open rates on my email list, and yes, this is after the famous iPhone update where they're not tracking opens anymore. So I'm still getting 25% or 30% open rates, that's a much better percentage of people who are actually seeing my messages are seeing my emails, and then people who would ever see a social update.

And email has a high return on investment. The number that's often thrown around is that you earn 43 for every 1 that you spend on email, the way that I like to look at that though, is just that I am earning back much, much more than I am ever going to put into email. I can't actually quantify it, I can't tell you whether I'm

earning 43 for every dollar I spend, I don't even know how to count how many dollars I'm spending on email marketing, but I know that it is paying off for me in a big way, the majority of my income comes to me through email directly, so it's got a much better return on investment than social media will ever have for you, so that is number one, build your email list, do that first before you do any of these other things.

Tip number two is to optimize your blog for SEO. The reason I love SEO is because unlike social traffic, search traffic continues to grow over time, social traffic as soon as you quit posting, as soon as you stop updating your Facebook page, as soon as you stop posting on Twitter, the traffic drives up those postings, those links that traffic building is temporary. It doesn't last. SEO does last, it doesn't drop off just as soon as you stop updating your blog, it continues over time. Now, consistency does matter here, you do have to post regularly, I know a lot of people will say it doesn't matter so much anymore, if you're posting every week or if you just drop a bunch of articles on to your blog all at one time, this is what I'm hearing from people who know better than I do about SEO, but I do know that you can't just post 11 articles on your blog and call it good and never update it again, that's not going to work, so you do have to continue to post at least on a semi-regular basis, you do have to do good keyword research, you have to know what terms people are using to search for, that you can potentially rank for, and you have to create content around those terms. I am not an SEO expert, I have a couple of resources for you that I will post in the show notes though, one of them is a course that I took called Stupid Simple SEO, which is absolutely... Absolutely, fantastic, and I've got a couple of resources from a friend of mine as well, Debbie Gartner, who is much more knowledgeable on SEO than I am, so I will link to those in the show notes, so if you are not already optimizing your blog for SEO, if you don't already have a blog, maybe now is a really good time to start.

Tip number three is to start a podcast. Similar to SEO, you've got Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, and all of those other podcast apps or listening devices, they do a great job of recommending related content, so the podcast listeners in your audience will find you if you are regularly and consistently podcasting... And again, there's that word consistent, right? You do have to do this consistently. And look, I get it's a commitment. When I started this podcast, I committed to posting every week on Thursday, and some weeks, I'm going to tell you it is a struggle, I don't want to do it, I don't know what to talk about, I don't want to fire up the microphone, I just I'm not feeling it, but if you are going to commit to this type of content format, you do need to be consistent with it, it will help you grow that much faster, not saying you can't be successful with an inconsistent format, you just are going to take that much longer to get to where you want to go. So that's tip number three, start a podcast.

Tip number four start a YouTube channel. YouTube is and continues to be the second most popular search engine on the planet, right behind Google. So if you don't have a YouTube channel and you enjoy video, go for it, that is going to be my probably my number one tip for getting traffic to your site, if you really enjoy video and really have the desire to do that, I think that would be a really good choice for you.

Tip number five is to syndicate your content. Content syndication is when you take content that you have created, maybe a blog post that you've written and you publish it on other channels, so this is on sites like Medium. There are others, but Medium is probably the one you've heard of. LinkedIn Pulse, I think it's called, is LinkedIn article publishing arm, where you can also syndicate your content, and what a lot of people think of when they think of syndicating their content is they worry about duplicate content. This was a term that was thrown around several years ago, Google famously came out and said that they were against duplicate content, but the syndication is not what Google is talking about, Google is smart enough to know that this post that you are syndicating to Medium has appeared on your blog first, they're smart enough to know that it's your content and that you authorized it to be published on Medium. What duplicate content is about is when you post the same content multiple times on your own site in an attempt to gamify the Google search rankings, that's what Google is talking about when they talk about duplicate content, they're not talking about syndicating your content. So why would you want to syndicate your content, why would you want to take content that you've published on your blog and re-publish it on Medium or LinkedIn, Pulse or any of these other syndication platforms? Well, the benefit is that you are getting in front of a built-in audience, medium has a built-in audience, and they're pretty good about recommending articles as well that people might want to read based on what they've already read, so that's one big reason why you would want to syndicate your content, if your blog has a small following and you're not really up there with SEO, you're not really ranking for a bunch of really good keywords yet, then syndicating your content is a good way to get in front of a new audience.

Another way to get in front of a new audience is tip number six, and that is to guest post on other blogs, This is when you go out to another blog owner who maybe has a bigger audience than you, but who has a similar audience or an audience that is interested in similar topics and you offer to write content for them, guest posting on other blogs, does the same thing as syndicating your content, it gets you in front of a larger, different audience where you might not have the opportunity to be in front of those people, with a little bit of help from the other blogger, you can find guest posting opportunities by reaching out to your

network, you probably know other people in your industry or in your niche who are always looking for content for their blogs.

You can do Google searches on your keywords, see who is regularly publishing content similar to what you write, and reach out to them with a simple email offering to write an article for them, make sure in that email, if you are going to do a cold outreach, make it clear that you have read their blog in the past, that you know what their blog is about, that you know what their audience is about and what their audience needs, and offer something that they haven't already covered 100 times recently, a lot of times guest blog pitches are so generic sounding that they just get thrown right in the trash, so you want to make your guest blog pitch stand out by making it clear that you've actually read the blog, that you actually pay attention, that you know the audience and that you have something unique to offer them.

Tip number seven for marketing off of social media is to start an affiliate program, one of the best things that I ever did for my business was to launch an affiliate program, and that means that I invite other people to promote my courses and my products in exchange for a percent of the revenue, so I pay my affiliates 50% of the cost of the product, so they earn a 50% commission on everything that they sell, and I attribute a lot of my success to my affiliates. In fact, the very first product that I ever sold that saw great success was because of an affiliate, because they stepped in and said, Hey, this is really good, can we promote this to our audience? And I had said, Hey, go for it. And they brought me hundreds of buyers very, very quickly, so an affiliate program can really boost your revenue a lot if you are reaching out to and you're reaching affiliates who have a similar audience to you.

Tip number eight, if you don't have affiliates or I guess even if you do, you can use paid ads, and I'm not just talking about paid ads on social media, I'm talking about paid ads on Google or paid ads inside niche newsletters, there are all kinds of places that you can advertise that don't require you to spend your time and your money on social media, so take a look at some opportunities to pay to get placement in various websites, in various newsletters, in magazines, even depending on what your niche is, what your market is, there are lots of places that you can pay to advertise, and it's not always, terribly expensive.

Tip number nine is to get quoted on high traffic sites, and the best way that I know to do this is to register at HelpAReporter.com, Help A Reporter shorten to hero, you might hear it referred to as that is a service that sends out email three times a day, Monday through Friday, with a list of publications that are looking for quotes, they're looking for quotes from industry experts, they're looking for articles, they're looking for interview subjects, in short, they're looking for people like you to offer

your advice and your expertise on their websites or in the articles that they're creating, all you have to do is go to HelpAReporter.com and create a free account, you're going to create an account as an expert, not a publisher, and then you can choose which niche list you want to receive notifications about. They have several to choose from. Whichever one is the closest fit for your business is the one that you're going to want to choose, and you'll get, like I said, three emails a day, Monday through Friday, one in the morning, one in the afternoon, one in the evening. And there will be a list of people, reporters and publishers and journalists and whoever, all looking for experts in that particular niche, respond to them, do it quickly though, because usually they have a very short turnaround, so they want to make sure or you want to make sure that if you are responding to those hero requests, that you are responding within a day or less, review them, respond to the ones that are a fit for you, and you will start getting quoted on some of those high traffic sites as well.

Tip number 10 is to get interviewed on podcasts, this is probably one of my favorite methods, I love to be interviewed on podcast. Shout out, if you have a podcast and you're looking for interview guests in the business world, hit me up, I would love to appear on your show, but there are other ways that you can get interviewed on podcasts as well, there are services that you can hire who will pitch you to podcasts, there are sites that you can register at, who match up podcast owners, podcast host with potential guests. PodMatch.com is one that you might want to check out. They have quite a rigorous application process, so be prepared for that, but they have some really high-quality podcasters in there who are looking for guests in lots of different niches, so getting interviewed on podcasts is a really good way to market your business outside of social media.

Tip number 11, participate in tele-summits. Remember those where you get interviewed and there's a bunch of different people in a particular field, all being interviewed and all giving your expertise for free, that's a really good way to get your brand in front of a new audience as well.

You can also speak at live events, that's tip number 12. I've done this a few times where I've actually gotten up on stage and given a talk in front of a live audience, remember live audiences back when we had those. You can do the same thing now, maybe it's virtually. Maybe it's live, we're starting to see those come up again, but if you are comfortable getting up on stage and speaking in front of a live audience, that is a really good way to get your brand noticed and to get your face out there and your content out there. And if you're not comfortable speaking at a live event, maybe you want to sponsor one, sponsorships for conferences and other events come in all different shapes and sizes, whether you have a 1000 budget or a 10000 budget or a no-dollar budget, you can sponsor an event by

paying for the coffee that they serve in the back of the room, you can sponsor an event by paying for the flyer publication or the flyer printing or the agenda printing, you can sponsor an event by offering a small gift to put in the swag bag. You can sponsor an event by offering a digital product that costs you nothing to put in a virtual swag bag for a virtual event, there are lots of different ways to do that, and anyone who is hosting an event of any size, I can almost guarantee you they are looking for sponsors, so reach out to those people and see what exactly they're looking for. You can also network in real life, we like social media because it feels like networking, but what if you actually go out and network with real people in your hometown.

Here where I live in West Michigan, we have a group called Women Who. That is all women business owners, what a perfect place to actually get to know people in real life, and I guarantee you've got groups like that where you live as well, even if you just go to meet up and see who is meeting around topics that you are talking about that your business is based on who's meeting in your niche, where are they meeting, show up to those meetings and get to know people and network in person, you can also write a book. It is easier than ever to get a book published. Anybody can get a book published on Kindle, it doesn't cost anything, it doesn't require any special knowledge or any special skills to do, there's a little bit of technical work, but anybody can do this, Amazon makes it super easy to do. And you're already creating content, I know you are as a business owner, especially if you paid attention earlier in this episode, when I was talking about blogging or podcasting or starting a YouTube channel, all of that content can easily be repurposed into a book. So take some time, take half an hour every day and start working on a book, a book gives you an incredible amount of credibility, and it helps to get your brand and your voice out there if you're not into writing a book.

Tip number 16 might work for you, and that is to get published in niche publications. Now, I'll talk to a couple of coaching clients and not too long ago about this very thing, these two people are in a primarily offline niche, and one of the things that I suggested to each of them was to reach out to industry publications, industries typically have magazines that go out to industry leaders, when I worked in a factory, we used to get a dozen of them in the mail every single month, all about the industry that we were in, the niche that we were in, and those publications are always looking for content to fill their pages, so if you are in a niche or a market that has an offline base, you might want to look at getting published in niche publications, it's also possible to get published on big websites, Inc, Entrepreneur and other places like that are always looking for content if you know how to pitch them, so don't be afraid to reach out to those publications with your ideas as well, when you are reaching out about guest blogging on other people's blogs.

Tip number 17 is to promote word of mouth sharing of your content. This is one of those things that doesn't scale, and we're going to talk more about that in a minute, but it's a really good way to kickstart your traffic, to really get new eyes on your traffic, and all it requires a view is to ask people to share your content, like I do at the end of every episode. Hey, if you like what you hear on this episode, I would appreciate it if you would share it with a friend who needs to hear it as well, that's all it takes, and those one-person shares. They really add up. It feels like it's not going to make any difference, it feels like Well, yeah, but if I'm on Facebook or I'm on Instagram, I'm reaching thousands of people all at one time, but I want to say that one person share, that one person outreach is so much more valuable than just a blast that you're doing to maybe 1000 people, maybe 2000 maybe even 3000 people on Instagram or Facebook or whatever your platform of choice is, that kind of blasting out of information is not nearly as valuable as one person saying to a personal friend, Hey, I think you should listen to this, or, Hey, I think you should read this or, Hey, I think you need to know this person. I think this person can really help you to promote that word-of-mouth sharing, ask people to share, ask people to share your content, ask people to share your resources, ask people to. Introduce you to other people who you can help.

Tip number 18 is to host a viral contest. There are tools that you can use to do this. A viral is the one that comes to mind, and I'll put a link to that in the show notes. But a viral contest is simply asking people to share in order to earn points towards a prize, so maybe you've got blog posts that you particularly want to share or a free opt-in that you want to get a lot of eyes on what you would do is you would set up an up viral test, ask people to share it by email, shared on social media, share it with their friends and family, however you want to set it up, and every time they share, they earn a point, and I'm saying that with air quotes, but they earn a point, and then at the end of the contest period, you have a drawing and you pick a random winner to win something, whether it's a course that you've created or some consulting time with you, or a book that you're going to send them, whatever you decide the prize is but that's how that viral contest works and that can really drive a lot of traffic as well, and again, I'll post a link to a viral in the show notes with more information about how to do that.

Tip number 19 is to be the best at what you do. This is really the very best way to market anything is just to be, as Steve Martin said, so good they can't ignore you. Be the best at what you do, do your best every single day, do everything that you can to put good content out there to create good, valuable resources to be a source of inspiration, to be the expert in your niche, and you will gain a following, it doesn't matter if you're not on social media, it doesn't matter if you're not posting to your blog every day, it doesn't matter if you're not emailing every day, when you

are the best at what you do. People will find you.

Tip number 20 is to participate in a giveaway or in a bundle. I've done this in the past, I talked about this on episode number eight, where I talked about all of the ways that I grew my email list in 2021, and one of the best ways is participating in giveaways and bundles. That's a really good way to get in front of an entirely new audience, especially if you are choosy with the giveaways and bundles that you participate in, you don't want to be in the same bundle with 30 other people who were in the same bundle that you were in, three months ago, because that's just the same audience over and over and over again, but when you can get into giveaways and bundles that are outside of your existing audience, that's going to really help you grow your business.

And finally, tip number 21 is to do things that don't scale. So often what we hear about in business, what I talk about when I talk to business owners, is that you want to scale what you do, you want to reach more people, you want to sell more things, you want to grow your email list, you want to be emailing more people, but sometimes the best way to get there is to do things that don't scale, so what do I mean when I'm talking about things that don't scale, I'm talking about answering your own email, responding to your own customers instead of relying on a support desk if somebody emails me, I'm the one who responds, yes, I have a help desk, but I also have an email address that people email me too, and I respond to those emails, and a lot of people might look at that and say, Why are you offering tips or advice in email, why are you spending your time doing that because it does take up quite a bit of my time, but I do it because it's a really good way to grow my reputation, to be seen as a helpful person in this online business world, to be seen as somebody that other people can turn to, it helps to grow my brand, another thing that I do that doesn't really scale is to greet all of my new Six-Figure Systems members with a personalized video. That doesn't scale. That's not something I could do if I was getting 10 or 15 or 20 people a day joining the membership, and maybe someday I'll have to stop doing that, but for right now, it's a good use of my time, so what are those things out there that you can do that, don't necessarily scale, but that can turn into something bigger down the road, look for those and be doing those things, don't get so caught up in being productive and efficient that you forget to do the things that really matter.

So that's it. 21 ways that you can promote your business, that you can market your business that don't require you to be on social media. And again, listen, I'm not telling you that you shouldn't be on social media, it's not for me, and I have made the decision to leave Social Media despite really, really trying hard. In fact, I spent the last few weeks, I didn't talk about this in the intro, but I did spend the last few weeks really looking at social media and thinking, maybe I should really add this to

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my marketing plan, maybe I should be working on building up that Instagram account, maybe I should be working on building up my Facebook page, maybe I should create a Facebook group and be marketing there, and then the more I looked at it, the more I thought, This is just something more that I need to learn, that I need to focus on that's going to take up more of my time and based on my experience with social media in the past, it's just not a good use of my time, so if you're feeling like social media is not a good use of your time, or if you want to spend less time there. Or it just stresses you out. Like it stressed me out. Then I want to invite you to try some of these 21 ideas for promoting your business instead.

Now I'd like to hear from you. Head over to TinyCourseEmpire.com/23 to find the show notes and all of the resources we mentioned, and also that checklist download I promised you, and while you're there, be sure to leave me a comment. I'd really like to know what you're doing to promote your business off of social media, or if social media is working for you, tell me that too, I'd love to hear about it. And finally, if you're enjoying the show, would you do me a favor and leave a rating and review over at Apple Podcast. That helps other people find us, and it tells Apple that our show is worth listening to, and it helps them to promote it to other people who listen to podcasts as well.

And of course, like I said, if you have a friend or a colleague who would love to hear this episode, go ahead and send them the direct link to TinyCourseEmpire.com/23. Have a terrific day, everyone, and I will talk to you again next week.

If you like what you hear on the Tiny Course Empire Podcast, you're going to love all of the courses you'll find inside my Six-Figure Systems Membership, that's my monthly membership, where we dig into online marketing for regular people like you and me. We don't do big launches or have the big headaches and the big expenses that come with them, instead we focus on creating repeatable, sustainable systems that continue to grow over time and that don't suck up all of our energy or require a 10-person team to manage. You can come see what we're all about at SixFigureSystems.com, and I'll see you on the inside.