

PLEASE NOTE: This is a machine transcription. Some punctuation and spelling weirdness are to be expected.

You're listening to the Tiny Course Empire Podcast with Cindy Bidar. This is Episode Number 31, and today we're talking about what is probably the most asked question I get about online business, it definitely ranks in the top three at least, so stick around and find out how you can drive more traffic to your website.

Welcome to the Tiny Course Empire Podcast, a weekly show dedicated to helping you launch and grow your digital course 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.

If you're new to the show, welcome, I'm so glad to have you here. Remember to hit the Subscribe button so you never miss an episode. Next week, we're going to be chatting about sales and how you can increase your numbers, so you're not going to want to miss that episode for sure. But that's next week. This week is all about traffic. Now, when I was a freelancer, if you know me, you know I started out as a freelancer as a virtual assistant, and I did that for several years, and I've got to tell you, I didn't pay a lot of attention to traffic. Most of my clients came to me through referrals, so more traffic to my website just didn't matter to me. Now that was a big mistake, but what the heck did I know I was brand new and I had enough clients, so it just didn't seem important at the time. I wish now that I had spent more time building up those traffic sources though, because it would have helped me out when I made the switch to a course creator and membership site owner, I would have already had a steady stream of traffic and leads, but I didn't.

Now, I was working with a business coach and shout out to the amazing Nicole Dean, who is brilliant. So anyway, I asked Nicole about traffic, and she said to me, what might have been the most frustrating thing ever. She told me there are a thousand ways to drive traffic, just pick one. Get started. That was not the answer I was looking for. I somehow expected her to tell me some secret traffic source that only successful business owners know about, some door I could open and usher in a flood of new visitors to my site. Now, of course, you know that didn't happen, right? So if you came here looking for the same thing, I'm really sorry, there is no secret traffic button. There are a thousand ways to drive traffic to your site though, and it's your job as the business owner to figure out which ones are going to work for you. So in this episode, I'm going to give you the steps that you need to take before you start driving traffic because it really doesn't make any sense to send a lot of traffic to a page or a site that's not ready for it. I'm going to give you three basic strategies for traffic generation, every source of traffic falls into one of these

categories, and smart business owners make good use of all three, and we're going to talk about some real-world examples of traffic sources that you can tap into no matter what niche or market, you're in. So let's go ahead and get started.

Now, before we get to the traffic sources or even the strategies behind them, you do need to make sure that your site is optimized to receive that traffic. It's a waste of time to send traffic for traffic sake. There's no upside to that. All you're doing is creating a bigger number in your Google Analytics, but it's not going to do anything for you. It's not going to grow your mailing list, it's not going to make more sales, it's just a number. It's meaningless. So first things first, you need to know what pages you're going to be driving traffic to. Now, you've lots of different pages on your site, lots of different assets where you can send traffic, you can send traffic to your blog posts, you can send traffic to your podcast episodes, you can send traffic to an opt-in page or directly to a sales page. It doesn't matter what page you are sending that traffic to, as long as you have a reason for sending them. Each page needs to have a clearly defined purpose, it needs to have a reason for being. And it needs to have a reason to receive that traffic.

So for sales and opt-in pages, for example, it's pretty obvious what the purpose of those pages is and what you want people to do when they get there, you want them to make a purchase or you want them to join your mailing list. So those are pretty easy, but what about your blog post, what if you're driving traffic to a blog post, what do you want them to do, what do you want those people to do once they get there? Now, keep in mind that it costs money and time to drive traffic, it might be a real cost, like a paid ad, but it can also be an effort cost in that it's taking up your time or your energy, or it might be an opportunity cost. Remember that you have a finite number of opportunities to drive traffic, you can only send so many emails in a day, you can only post so many times on Instagram or LinkedIn, those are your opportunities, so make sure that you're spending them wisely. Now, for most pages, it's enough to just give your visitor something to do next, some action to take, maybe you want them to buy a product, like I said, or you want them to opt in for your lead magnet, or you want them to subscribe to your podcast or maybe you just want them to leave a comment. The point is make sure that any page that you're sending traffic to has a goal, you have to know why you're sending traffic to that page. What do you want people to do? The next thing to think about is who needs to see the page at all. Knowing exactly who needs to visit that page right now is going to help you determine the best source for that specific page.

I heard Jeff Herring say one time that traffic is really easy, all you have to do is find a crowd and get your pages in front of it. And while that sounds really overly simplified, it's true, find your traffic and get your pages in front of it, that's what

we're doing. So a simple example of that, if the intended audience for a page is, for example, stay-at-home moms who are homeschooling their kids, you're probably not going to share that page on LinkedIn. That's probably not where your intended audience is, your traffic is not likely to be hang out on LinkedIn. Find out where those stay-at-home moms who are homeschooling their kids are hanging out though and put your page there in front of them. That's the whole goal of identifying your intended audience. So if you've identified a few pages that you want to send traffic to and you've made sure that those pages have a clearly defined purpose, they've got some kind of call to action, and you know who most needs to see those pages, what's next?

Well, now we can talk about some traffic strategies. Somewhere along the line, I heard this called the three Bs of website traffic. I wish I knew where that came from, so I could give them credit. If you know, if anybody knows where that expression came from, hit me up in the comments at TinyCourseEmpire.com/31, because I would love to know where that expression came from. Anyway, the three Bs of website traffic are build, borrow, and buy. Those are the three basic ways that you can drive traffic, each one has its pros and cons, and they each have a place in every business. Creating a mix of those three strategies is going to give you a sustainable traffic plan that continues to increase over time. So let's talk about each strategy, when to use it and how to get started.

First up, you can build traffic, this method of traffic generation is probably going to be the most sustainable building your traffic allows you to build almost like a snowball that grows over time, and it gains its own momentum, and it becomes easier and easier to do over time. And eventually, you kind of don't have to do anything but give it a little push now and then just to keep it rolling. Building traffic is useful when you have more time than money you've got as a new blogger maybe, or a new podcaster. You've got lots of time to put into creating new content, for example, and that just makes sense to be building that traffic up rather than trying to strong up money so that you can run paid ads or whatever, so you're going to build traffic when you are brand new, typically. And when you have more time than money. Now, that's not always the case.

A lot of professional bloggers also continue to build traffic because it's such a great traffic source, but this is especially true when you're just starting out. Building traffic is content-based, the more content you create, the more traffic you will have. It's a very simple equation. Typically, when we think about building traffic, we think about SEO or search engine optimized traffic, that means creating content based on what your target audience is searching for on Google or in other search engines. When you get this right, you're going to be building a long-term traffic strategy that like I said, just continues to grow and expand over time. The best

resource I know for creating this type of traffic plan is Stupid Simple, so it's a great course, I took it a couple of years ago. Absolutely fantastic resource. Very well thought out. And always kept up-to date. I have a lot of respect for Mike Judea who runs Stupid Simple SEO. And I'm going to link to that in the show notes. He's got some free training that is well worth your time. So I'll put a link in the show notes to that.

Podcasting is another content channel, you might want to explore. It's very similar to doing blogging for SEO, but it also has the power of the search for Apple Podcasts and Spotify and those other channels, it's got that behind it as well.

And YouTube, again, very similar to optimizing for SEO. But YouTube has its own quirks and its own kind of algorithm that it relies on for making those recommendations and for showing people the videos that they are most likely to engage in and watch. So if you're interested in starting a YouTube channel, spend some time studying how YouTube works so that you can make sure that you get the most amount of traffic to the videos that you are putting out.

And then the fourth way that you can build traffic is through social media, this is a form of building traffic assets, but you have to be careful with this one, because unlike SEO, these algorithms can have just dramatic changes that will kill your traffic and yes, that can happen with SEO, too.

We've seen the Google Penguin update and whatever, that caused a big drop in traffic to some websites, but it's much more likely to happen when you are relying exclusively on SEO. So this is not one that I would want you to put all of your eggs in this content basket. I would much prefer you to be building content on an asset that you own rather than relying exclusively on social media.

So building traffic then is very much dependent creating original content and optimizing it for the platform that you're publishing on. You're optimizing your blog posts for search, your podcast for search on Apple Podcasts or your YouTube channel for their search and recommendation engine, building traffic through content is the foundation piece. Every business should be doing this, choose your preferred channel, either blogging, podcasting or video, and commit to publishing one new piece of content every single week, that is your most important traffic piece right there, so don't skip this step. And like I said, don't make the mistake of thinking you can do all of this on social media, that's one piece, but it's not the most stable one. Instead, publish on a more stable platform like your own website.

Next, let's talk about borrowing traffic. Borrowing traffic means to get in front of somebody else's already established audience, so that might mean posting a

guest article or a guest post on someone else's blog or getting interviewed on someone else's podcast or in front of someone else's Facebook group on a Facebook Live. Or maybe it means speaking at an industry event, or it might mean syndicating your content on Medium or LinkedIn or Slide Share. It might also mean making use of social bookmarking sites like Biz Sugar or Reddit or Pinterest.

Self-promotion in somebody else's group or forum is another option where that's allowed. It's still social, not particularly useful over the long term, but it can send a handful of people to your site. So what borrowing traffic does is it lends the credibility of the audience owner to you, it says, Hey, this person, I trust this person to post on my website, or I trust this person to interview them on my podcast, and I think you should trust them too. So you're borrowing the credibility. You're borrowing the audience that someone else has taken the time and made the effort to build up for long-term traffic. Guest posting is probably your best option as long as you choose the right blogs to write for. They have to have a match to your audience, they have to be similar to your audience, and they have to be established and have their own traffic, like I said. What you're doing is basically siphoning off some of that existing traffic, so if they don't have any traffic to share, it's not going to do you a whole lot of good. So again, when you're looking for blogs to publish on our podcast to appear on as a guest, you want to look for sites that are already established and hosts that are already established and who already have an audience that they can share with you.

And finally, you can buy traffic. Now, buying traffic, buying ads is going to be the fastest way to drive traffic to your website, absolutely, you can turn on the traffic tap as quickly as you can get an add-up. It's also the easiest way to target new traffic. Most ad networks give you the ability to really, finally target who you want to see your ads, you can really pinpoint a specific user. And that can be based on a lot of different things, a lot of different demographics, whether it is their location or their interests or their age or their job or whatever it is that makes them a part of your ideal audience, you can really target them very closely with paid ads. That's why it's the fastest and the easiest to drive traffic, there's no additional work on your part other than creating your advertising creatives. You don't have to write blog posts to record podcasts or schedule interviews or make videos or any of that stuff. It's a lot quicker.

But before you start using paid advertising, there are some things that you need to have in place. You need to have a solid goal for your campaign, otherwise, you're just throwing money away, you need to know what your goal is. What do you want people who see your ad to ultimately do, and do you have a clearly defined path for them to get there? You need to have a proven funnel, you need to know that whatever it is you are driving traffic to, if you're driving them into a blog post, and

from a blog post to an opt-in form, and from an opt-in form to a sales page, you need to know that that funnel converts, otherwise you're just throwing money away. You don't have any way of knowing if you're going to spend money and drive a bunch of traffic to this funnel, to this platform, that they're even going to convert, that they're even going to earn back what you've spent in your advertising. So, you need to have that proven funnel, you need to have a budget as well. You need to have a number in mind, a dollar figure in mind, and know exactly how much you are willing to spend before you start seeing a return on your investment, especially when you are getting started with advertising, there is very much a trial-and-error period, and you are going to likely spend a lot of money before you start to see your ads converting.

Now, there are exceptions to this. Of course, I have seen people who go out and spend \$100 on some advertising and it's their first time out and they earn back \$1,000. I'm not going to say that doesn't happen. I'm saying it's the exception. You will be much less disappointed in your ads if you have a set dollar figure that you are willing to spend before you start seeing the return on your investment, so have a budget in mind before you get started. You also need to know where your audience is most likely to be, there's no sense in advertising on Facebook if your audience is all on Pinterest, so you need to know who your audience is and where they are most likely to be. Among all of your advertising choices, I know a lot of people like to think they're just going to outsource this advertising, they're just going to hire an agency to do it for them, or they're going to let their VA do it for them. You can outsource advertising, but like all outsourcing, I highly recommend you get good at it yourself before you turn it over to somebody else, and here's why.

Number one, if you hire an agency to do your advertising, they're going to essentially double your advertising costs, it's going to cost you as much to pay the agency as you are spending on ads, so that can get really expensive really fast. And I also firmly believe that the most successful business owners know how to run their own business, they don't need the outsourcing team that they have put together, they can do it all themselves in a pinch, and that includes running advertising. In fact, the most successful coaches and business owners that I've worked with in the past who were running Facebook ads, who were using any kind of advertising at all, whether it's Facebook or Instagram or Pinterest, whatever ad network they chose, the most successful ones were all managing their own ads. They did not have agencies doing it for them, so before you jump to outsource that, consider learning to do it yourself. There's a ton of courses out there that you can take on running Facebook ads or YouTube ads or Google ads or whatever the platform is that you are going to advertise on, take a course, learn to do it yourself before you ever think about outsourcing it.

And there are lots of places that you can advertise your business. There are Facebook ads, that tends to be the one that people jump to first because it's super easy, Facebook and Instagram, really, really easy to get started with. Pinterest is another one that's really easy to get started with. YouTube is another one that is really easy to get started with. You can also advertise on Google, this one used to be really much more confusing, a much higher barrier of entry, but I think they have really made it easier to get started with Google advertising now, especially if you are in a local market. So if you are advertising to your local people, Google is where I would start.

You can also advertise in emails, you can contact people who have email lists and by what's called solo emails from them, where you pay them to send an email on your behalf. You can also buy advertising in certain email newsletters. I subscribe to several email newsletters that feature advertisements within them, and those are paid ad spots, you can also sponsor podcast if you are a podcast listener, of course. You're a podcast listener, you're hearing this, so you have heard ads on podcasts, that might be a really good way to drive traffic to your site if your intended audience, your ideal audience is listening to podcasts.

You can also sponsor events. Think about the last conference you went to. There was probably a swag bag with little gifts in it and little business cards. You can include something in the swag bag, maybe you want to spring for coffee at breakfast, or maybe you want to pay to have a table at the conference. There's lots of different ways that you can do that, and if it's not a live conference, you can also sponsor online conferences, you can sponsor online tele summits, you can buy advertising space on the Thank You page, you can offer a free downloadable gift to attendees. There's lots of different ways that you can leverage events to get your name, your brand, your website, in front of your ideal audience.

Now, my favorite traffic source, this is my personal favorite traffic source is affiliate traffic. Affiliate partners are a kind of a hybrid source, I guess I would say. With affiliates, I'm borrowing their audience, but I'm also paying them for results, so it's both borrowed and bought traffic. The advantage of this kind of paid traffic is that I don't pay unless they get results with Facebook or Google or whatever kind of advertising you're buying, you're paying per click or per impression. That means that the cost per conversion is variable, and it can sometimes even cost more than the product sales for which is not good for your bottom line. With affiliates, you only pay when a sale is made, so that makes it much easier to budget for the cost for those affiliates is fixed. It's always the same. So you can build that cost of advertising right into the price of your product. Now, if you want to get started with an affiliate program, I have a course that teaches you how to set up your own

program and attract top affiliates. And I'm going to link to that in the show notes, too if you want to check that out.

Okay, so let's wrap it up. I have a little homework assignment for you today, First, I want you to choose two or three pages on your site to focus on, these are the ones that you want to drive traffic to. They can be opt-in pages, sales pages, or just really great content that shows up your smarts. In fact, I would recommend you pick one of each, so pick an opt-in page to grow your list, a sales page to grow your revenue and a blog post or another piece of content to grow your brand. You're going to make sure that each of those pages is optimized for traffic, your opt-in page and your sales page should already have that covered, both of those are going to have a clear goal kind of built in, either subscribe or make a purchase for the content page. All you have to do is make sure that you have a call to action, either you want them to join your list or read another post or visit a sales page, or maybe just leave a comment even. Just make sure that the last thing they see on that page is your call to action.

Then once you have those three pages in mind and go ahead and write them down somewhere. So while you just start thinking about who needs to see those pages and where that person is already hanging out, remember that your job is to find your audience and get your pages in front of it. That's exactly what you're doing here, identifying the person who most needs to see your page and finding them. Are they on Pinterest, do they read somebody else's blog on a regular basis, are they listening to a podcast that you can pitch an interview to figure out where your audience is. And then all that's left is to get in front them. So the final step is to figure out how to do that. Will you email the podcast host and pitch an interview, will you email the blog owner and offer a guest post, will you buy ads on their favorite social channel? Will you share the page to Pinterest or LinkedIn or syndicated on Medium. Choose the right option and take action. That's what driving traffic is all about, make good choices about potential traffic sources, and then take action.

And listen, this is not a one-and done thing. You can't just get interviewed one time or write one guest post and all your traffic problems are solved. This is an ongoing part of your business growth, as with everything else we talk about here on the Tiny Course Empire Podcast, consistency matters far more than being brilliant. Take consistent action to drive traffic, and you will be rewarded with increased traffic numbers over time. Start with one page and one traffic source, and build from there.

Now, I want to hear from you, head over to TinyCourseEmpire.com/31 to find the show notes for this episode, as well as all the resources we mentioned, and while

you're there, leave me a comment. I would love to know about your favorite traffic sources, what's working for you right now, what are you looking forward to trying? Leave me a comment and let me know. And finally, if you're enjoying the show, would you do me a favor and leave me a rating and review over at Apple podcast. That helps others find us. And of course, if you have a friend or a colleague who would use this episode, this specific advice about driving traffic, go ahead and send them the direct link, TinyCourseEmpire.com/31. Have a terrific day, everyone, and I will talk to you all again next week.

If you like what you hear on the Tiny Course Empire Podcast, you're going to love all of the courses and workshops and support you'll find inside Six-Figure Systems, that's my monthly program where we dig into online marketing for regular people like you and me. We don't do big launches, we don't have the big headaches and we don't have 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.