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

When I tell people that I sell digital courses, everybody kind of has a different picture in mind of what that means exactly. Some people see a huge launch event with lots and lots of fanfare, like B School. Other people imagine a few emails or what used to be called an E course. When I decided to create my first course, I was leaning more towards B school style that's what I had in mind, but the truth is there's plenty of things in between you don't have to be creating an E course or creating AB school style event.

There's lots of other things that you can do that land somewhere in the middle. Now that I've been at this for a few years, I've been creating courses now for more than six years. I have my own ideas about what a course looks like, as you can tell from the title of this show. I also have a pretty clear picture of which course types are best suited for which businesses and for which creator, based on their personality and their experience.

This is the Tiny Course Empire Podcast episode number one hundred and twenty and today I want to walk you through six different types of online courses that you might encounter or that you might want to create. I'll give you the pros and cons of each type, who's best suited to create them, and all of the pitfalls you need to watch out for.

Hey, it's Cindy, and before we dive into today's topic, I want to let you know that we're shaking things up here at Tiny Course Empire Podcast Headquarters. Instead of just an audio show, I've decided to turn this podcast into a mini workshop style. You can still listen in your favorite podcast a but you'll also be able to catch us on YouTube to watch the video version where you'll enjoy my amazing PowerPoint skills.

I'll be kicking that off next week with a deep dive into how courses stack up against coaching and whether you should choose one over another or maybe even do both. Like I said, that's coming up next week, so stay tuned for that. In the meantime, let's take a look at six different types of courses that you might want to create, what's good and not so good about each of them, and how to know which one's right for you.

You'll find the show notes for this episode at TinyCourseEmpire.com/120 and while you're there, remember to hit the subscribe button. New episodes drop every Monday morning. I want to begin this episode with the easiest, least challenging

courses to create and then we're going to work our way up to the big reduction numbers. So the first one I want to start with is an E course. An E course is typically delivered via email, which is obviously text only or maybe some graphics thrown in there.

E courses are most often you will find them that as free offers they're typically an opt in offer in fact, I have an E course that you can get on my site about the Clear framework it's a series of emails that teaches you about that framework and how to use it to build a business you'll find it on the show notes page. But that doesn't mean that all E courses are free. They can be paid. I would say that they are best as a low cost offer because they have a lower perceived value. Now the big benefit of creating an E course is that there's no need for any additional software if you already have a program or a tool like [Convertkit](#) or Mailer light or active campaign, then you have everything you need to create an E course because all it is is a series of emails that go out on a schedule.

So you can think of it like an autoresponder sequence so whoever purchases your Ecorse would get an email every day, or every three days, or whatever the frequency is that you've decided. It doesn't have to be limited to just email either it could also include short videos or worksheets or other resources that you link to in the emails so you would need a place for those resources to live and we'll kind of talk more about that in a minute. But you could include that in an E course. I think an E course is a really good place to get started if you're brand new with course creation and I'll tell you why number one because you're not going to get hung up in the technology piece, right you're not going to be worried about how to deliver the product because it's just email we all have an email platform that we can use and hopefully you're pretty well versed in how it works so it should be easy enough for you to Create an email sequence and deliver it at the same time.

It's going to give you the experience with laying out a course, how to take people by the hand, take your students by the hand and teach them in a step by step manner and in fact, an E course, now that I'm thinking about it, might even do this better than other styles of courses because you need to break that content down into tiny little chunks. You don't want to be sending people a 3000 word email.

So it's going to be broken down into tiny little chunks and it gives you the opportunity to think about that, to think about how you are teaching a particular thing and in what order so that your students can most easily learn the skills or achieve the goal that they have set out to achieve. So an E course gives you a really good opportunity to learn how to lay out a course effectively without having to struggle with all of the technology and all of the other things that go into creating a bigger maybe a video course or an audio course.

The next style of course that I want to talk about might you might not even call this a course and that's a guide or an ebook. Now I'm including these here because if your guide or your ebook is designed to teach someone a skill or help them achieve a goal, then I would argue that it's a course. You could even think about it as the ecourse just compiled into a single document OA guide or an ebook is typically delivered in PDF format. And again, that's a big pro of this type of course, because it's really easy to create you can create this using Word or Google Docs or even Canva if you want to lay it out all nice and pretty with images and different elements like that you could do it in Canva and then just export it as APDF.

Link to it in an email for delivery. Super easy to do, Super super not overwhelming i know that's a terrible, terrible grammar on my part, but that's, you know, that's one of the benefits of creating a course like this or a guide or an E book it's a little bit more difficult to maybe wrap your mind around than an E course because it's not chunked down as neatly as an E course would be that you're delivering by email.

But if you have your course creation, your course planning skills all worked out and you are able to easily create an E course, then turning that into an E book or a guide is really easy to do. One of the downsides of an ebook or a guide is that it does have a lower perceived value than something that includes printables or worksheets or templates or maybe video or audio content so there's a little bit lower perceived value there's kind of a cap of pricing of what people expect from an ebook or a guide.

In other words, you would be hard pressed to create an ebook and put a 500$ price tag on it. People are going to look at you sideways if you do that. But you could easily create an ebook in a weekend and put a 25$ product price point on it really easily and that's really easy to sell at that price point so a little bit lower perceived

value, but much easier to create and deliver.

The next style, of course, that I want to talk to you about is a live workshop. So a live workshop is one where you fire up your Zoom account or other webinar platform you invite people to come join you, and you teach them something. I do this inside 6 Figure systems every month. Sometimes I invite people who aren't members to come join us on these workshops i charge for those, but Six Figure Systems members get our workshops every single month and they are really easy to set up and deliver.

One of the biggest benefits of this type of course is that you get better participation than you might get in a self study or a downloadable program so something that people can come in at any time and they can watch your videos, or they can download your resources or they can read your guide. As you know, because we are all human and we are all easily distracted, it's really difficult for people to get people to follow through on things that are strictly self studied the follow through rate on those courses is unfortunately pretty low, but the follow through rate on a live workshop can be much, much higher.

People get excited about showing up live and those who show up live are much more likely to actually take action and implement what they are learning. So that's a big benefit of running a live workshop. Another benefit is you have the opportunity to get feedback from your participants, so that allows you to improve your workshop for the next iteration, for the next time you run it. There's also a higher perceived value of something that happens live because your students get to interact with you they get to ask you questions, they get to run ideas past you, they get to interact with other students, they get to, you know, hang out in the chat.

And that offers a much higher perceived value than something that is an ebook or guide or an E course. Now, there are some cons to running live workshops of course, one big con is that it can be difficult to find a good time for the call. I'm based here in the United States, so it's pretty easy for me to pick a time that works for most of my audience most of my audience is in the US or Canada. I do have though quite a few people in Europe, so timing can be an issue for them. And if I am creating something and I want to invite people from Australia, that is a huge

struggle.

I rarely get people from Australia or India or Asia on a live call because the time zone is just such a stretch for them. So finding a time that works for the majority of your students can be difficult depending on where you're based an where they are based. The other downside to running a live workshop is you definitely want to offer replays to people who sign up. So you still have all the work to do of setting up a replay page and sending out the replay emails and making sure that people have access who paid for it and that people who didn't pay for it don't have access so there's all of that technology thing happening with a live workshop that you don't have with something like a guide or an ebook or an E course so that is one downside to consider.

Another one I actually just thought of is you need to make sure you have a really good Internet because Zoom calls or webinar calls will require you to have, you know, decent upload and download speeds or you're not going to you're not going to be very clear. It's going to be difficult for your for your attendees to maybe hear you or see you deending on what you're sharing on the workshop so that's a consideration too if you live in a place with kind of sketchy Internet, then live workshos might not be the best choice for you.

The next type of course I want to talk about is a challenge. A challenge is something where you invite a group of people to all work towards a common goal in a very short period of time with very distinct action items that they need to do in that time period so a challenge might be a list building challenge or a decluttering challenge or a dog training challenge or something like that where you're working on a very specific thing for a specific period of time using a series of preplanned actions.

The good thing about a challenge like this is you get very active participation there's a high level of excitement happening. It's really, really good for building a community it's really good for getting your students all together, supporting one another, cheering one another on, and because of that it can often times give you a much higher level of participation and a much higher completion rate than something that they are studying on their own or even a workshop where they watch the training and then go off on their own to complete the tasks.

They may or may not complete them, but with a challenge where there is daily interaction for a week or 10 days or even a month, then there's more incentive for them to actually continue working on their working towards their goals and doing the things that you've set set out for them to do. Some downsides of challenges is in the name itself. Number one, a lot of challenges are free so pricing can be an issue that you need to overcome in your marketing messaging. There's lots of activity to manage there's live streams, there's downloads, there's resources to provide, there's probably a community to interact with so there's lots of things going on during a challenge that's going to take a lot of your time and may require you to get help to manage maybe you need to have a community manager to help you stay on top of comments or to answer questions, things like that so there's just a lot going on during a challenge that can make it, let's say, challenging for you to manage the last con and this is particular particularly true of me if you are not a natural community builder, it can really fall flat a challenge really does well when the community is super engaged and there's a lot of activity and a lot of interaction between your participants.

That's when a challenge really thrives. I have taken for several years now Kelly Mccawsey's Stretch Yourself challenge and Kelly has retired from business, from business coaching, and she's now doing strictly mindset work so she is no longer doing the Stretch Yourself challenge. She has turned over the reins to someone else who is going to run it and I can't wait to see. That's Jennifer i can't wait to see what she does with it but Kelly, I always admired her because she has this ability to really get a group of people fired up she is an amazing community builder, and that is a skill that I just don't feel like I have.

I feel like it's a skill I could build, but it's not something that comes naturally to me so if that's not something that comes natural to you, you may not want to start out with a challenge because it does require you to be the biggest cheerleader of your group and to keep everyone engaged. The next type of course I want to talk about is self study courses. These are what I typically create for six figure systems members it's if you've bought any courses from me, these are typically self study courses.

They're usually video or audio content and there are usually some downloadable assets, worksheets, templates, checklist, those sorts of things that go along with the

video so you have a video that teaches one aspect or one element or one point of the course and then there are downloadable assets that go along with that to help reinforce what your students are learning or to help them better work through what it is you are teaching. The problem with self study courses is they are more difficult to create they usually have multiple lessons or modules.

It requires a more sophisticated course setup you would need a a platform such as Teachable or Thrive carts learn platform or there's a bunch of other ones there's Kajabi, there's Podia. You could roll your own with WordPress there are a bunch of WordPress plug insurance that will create a course platform for you on your own server but you would need a tool such as this to set up and deliver a self study course with all of these elements.

Now the good thing about this type of course is it has a higher perceived value people appreciate being able to log in, watch the videos, download the resources, maybe they come back, they watch the videos again and again and again to really, really learn what it is you are teaching them so it has a higher perceived value. A course like this is also an asset that you can continue to promote and sell overtime if you have bought any courses for me, you know that from time to time I sell those courses again so those courses, the time and effort that I put into it, it pays for itself over and over and over again so that's a big plus to creating a self study course of this type.

One big con like we already talked about is completion rates, self study courses, people can purchase them and they have the best of intentions. And I'm going to raise my hand here as a person who does this because I have courses that I have purchased that I have not completed and completion rates can be very, very low on self study courses because we. As humans think, I'll get to that later, I'll get to that later, I'll get to that later and then later, you know, later doesn't come. Life gets in the way and we never complete them so self study courses can have a very low completion rate.

So if you are the type of person that really, really wants your students to succeed to and and I'm sure you are, you wouldn't be here, you wouldn't be listening to this, to this podcast. But if you really want your students to be successful and to implement what you are teaching them, then you might want to consider the last type of

course, which is a cohort. This is a word that kind of confuses people, but what cohort means is that all of the students are working through the materials at the same time. So it's not the same thing as a challenge where there's a lot of interaction going on and there's, you know, all kinds of activity.

But it is the kind of course where you have, you know, we can use B school as an example, right there is an open cart where you can purchase the course and the course starts On this date and everybody starts at the same time and everyone finishes at the same time the the course materials might be drip fed, maybe they get a new lesson every week over 8 weeks or whatever, whatever the case may be. But the point is that all of the students purchase it all at the same time, and they all go through the course all at one time so that you don't have people you know who are on lesson 1 and some people are on lesson 8, and then you have another person that comes in on lesson one.

That's not how a cohort works a cohort is a group of students all studying the same thing at the same time. You might also hear this called a live launch. Now this is typically a larger, more comprehensive course, so it's not really suitable for the tiny course model like what most of my courses are. This is usually a really big intensive course. The pros of this model are it has a really high perceived value you can sell a cohort course for a lot more than you can sell a self study course, and certainly a lot more than you can sell a challenge or a single workshop for.

There's a much higher perceived value i have seen cohort style courses that sell from anywhere from a thousand dollars to eight thousand dollars and more. Completion rates are also higher in a cohort based course they're not as high as you would find say in a challenge, but they are much higher than you would have in a self study course just because there is that element of everyone doing this all at the same time we are all in this together it is a community of people.

Cohort style courses also include the ability to add some fun, interactive challenges and other elements, right you can include prizes or group events you can have a forum or a community. So there's a lot of opportunity for you to get your students involved and engaged and to keep them active in the course, to keep them interacting, to keep them moving forward as opposed to a self study course where they're kind of on their own. Another pro of a cohort style course is there is built in

urgency, which makes it easy to, well, not easy, but easier to make sales maybe right, because the course starts on September 1st or the course starts on August thirty first and that's the deadline you have to purchase, you have to be in before that date or you're going to miss out so that built in urgency can increase your sales.

Of course, there are cons to this type of course as well. They're much more difficult to organize and manage. As you can tell, there is a whole lot going on in a cohort style course and with a lot of students going through the course all at the same time, you might find that it is a lot for you to organize and to manage. This type of course also typically includes some kind of forum or interactive element, maybe a Facebook group, something like that so you've got that piece to manage as well so it's a lot to plan out and to manage and to, you know, kind of work through. There's there's a lot of planning, there's a lot of marketing that goes into this type of course so you have to keep that in mind.

If you think that you might want to create a cohort style course. And we've talked about six different types of courses, but that doesn't mean that you have to pick just one and do just one type of course you can create a business that has multiple styles of courses you can create a business like mine that has selfstudy courses and workshops and cohorts and challenges. I pull those different styles of courses out at different times depending on what it is I'm teaching and what I want people to get out of it.

You can also purpose some of your courses into different types so for example, you could easily turn a workshop into a self study course and sell it over and over and over again, even long after the live event has happened. You can also turn a self study course into a cohort and run it live and charge more for it because it's live and because it has those interactive elements. So how do you choose then? Which type of course is the right one for you to create? The first thing I'm going to ask you to consider is does what you teach lend itself to live teaching or is it better taught as self study? So some examples of this might be piano lessons.

There are lots of courses you can take online for learning how to play the piano there are memberships you can join there are courses you can take. They are all self study because piano lessons online digitally really don't do well with a live kind of

workshop style or cohort style, right? Students want to watch your lessons over and over and over again as they practice what you are teaching them so doing piano lessons live online to a group of people probably wouldn't be super beneficial i'm guessing financial fitness is another one that might be best left to self study.

People prefer to keep their finances private. They don't necessarily want to get on a workshop with 50 or 100 other students and talk about how much debt they have or where their paycheck is going or how much money they make right? So financial fitness might be better served with a self study course. Learning a foreign language though? Absolutely live teaching. It gives you the opportunity to hear and correct your students pronunciation. But also consider that some teachings can be effective in either format.

You can teach a foreign language in a self study course. You can teach financial fitness in a group setting if you get your students to get over the fact that they have to talk about their finances in public. So don't just consider that element of choosing which type of course is for you. Also think about what does your audience expect? And you can know what your audience expects because there are other people teaching what you teach what are your competitors creating how are they organizing their courses what format is their content showing up in? That's a really good indication of what your audience expects.

You also want to consider how comfortable your audience is with technology. If you have an audience that is not comfortable with digital technology at all, and you are asking them to come join you for some live thing that's happening in a platform they've never seen and never used before, that's going to be a stretch for them. But asking them to log in and download an ebook might be easier. And will they appreciate something that is interactive? Or are they too busy to join live calls are they too busy to show up and participate in a group and they would much rather just do the self study piece? So ask yourself what other people are creating for that same audience, what other people are creating to help them achieve that same goal.

And model your courses after that unless you have a really good reason to deviate. And finally, you want to ask yourself, what about you? What are your income requirements if your income requirements are really high, then you're probably not

going to get there with an E course or an e book. If your income requirements are lower or you're just starting out and you're thinking, you know, if I could make a few hundred dollars from this my first time out, then that will give me more confidence to create more things, then yeah, start small absolutely i'm all for that.

Are you creating a course as proof of concept or is it a major money maker if it's proof of concept, start smaller see what, see what people think, see what feedback you get, and that will help you determine what direction you want to go in the future. And also think about how confident you are in your ability to build and lead a community. Do you have help do you have community ambassadors do you have virtual assistants who can assist you? If so, then you might want to think about cohort based courses or challenges.

If you don't, then you might want to scale back a little bit do something that is self study because it doesn't require as much of you and as many moving pieces all at one time. Also think about how confident you are in managing the technology requirements of whatever style of course you want to create. If you are creating a a workshop, are you comfortable setting up and managing a zoom call or do you need help with that? If you are creating a self study course, are you comfortable creating video and editing video and uploading it and are you familiar with all of those pieces? Those are all questions that you have to ask yourself as you're thinking about which style of course is right for me to create inside my 6 Figure Systems program.

We have training and tool kits to help you plan and create a variety of course styles as well as build your email, list market your offers, and build your business so that it aligns with your lifestyle goals. I would love to invite you to get started with us today for just 7$ you can go over to TinyCourseEmpire.com/join to find out everything that you get, what's all included and start for just 7$ today for a 7 day all access trial I would love to see you on the inside.

Now I will tell you, I wish I would have known about all of these styles of courses that are available to me when I first set out to create a digital course, I thought it had to be this great big production and that really just held me back and kept me in planning stage for so long. The truth is you can start really small you can create an E course or write an E, book get some feedback from your students, make

improvements to it, and then create a challenge or a workshop or a tiny course and remember this too.

I know that for a lot of us, and I'm going to be the first to raise my hand here, but for a lot of us, there's this pressure to create something absolutely amazing, to have top quality videos and beautifully designed printables and on brand graphics right out of the gate. Here's the thing, most of us don't start there. We start by creating things that are just not quite up to the standards we set for ourselves but it's only by creating that thing do we learn how to improve it.

My video. My video editing skills will never improve if I don't ever edit any video. My speaking skills will never get better if I never speak. My design skills will never improve if all I ever do is read about designing and honestly, if I'm being honest here, my design skills are never going to improve so whatever. The point is, you have to go out and do the thing. You have to create the course, whatever that looks like. The next time will be better, and the time after that, and the time after that, and the time after that.

It gets easier. It gets better, but it never will unless you do the first one. Now, I would love to hear from you about your course creation experience. Click over to TinyCourseEmpire.com/120 and drop me a comment let me know what format of course you are creating or want to create and why you chose that one and let me know what you think about my new podcast format idea that I mentioned earlier. Are you, are you going to love having a new, more actionable podcast will you check out the YouTube channel? Is it helpful to you or do you honestly just wish everybody would stop changing things up all the time? I'm not going to lie, sometimes that's my reaction.

So if that's you, I want to hear about it. That's it for this week I will be back next week to help you figure out whether coaching or courses are your best business model or maybe even both. Have a terrific day and I will see you then.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

I'll teach you the simple systems that lead to

BIG RESULTS

even if you're brand new to online business.

START TODAY

If you like what you hear on the Tiny Course Empire Podcast, you're going 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