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

What if I told you that you can build a six figure digital course business without hiring a big team? In fact, what if I said that I don't think you should hire a team at all, or at least not yet. On today's episode of the Tiny Course Empire Podcast, I want to talk about some of the mistakes I see new business owners making when it comes to outsourcing. And one of them, actually, maybe the biggest one of all is simply outsourcing too soon. Stick around and I'll give you the scoop, including the five questions to ask before you outsource anything.
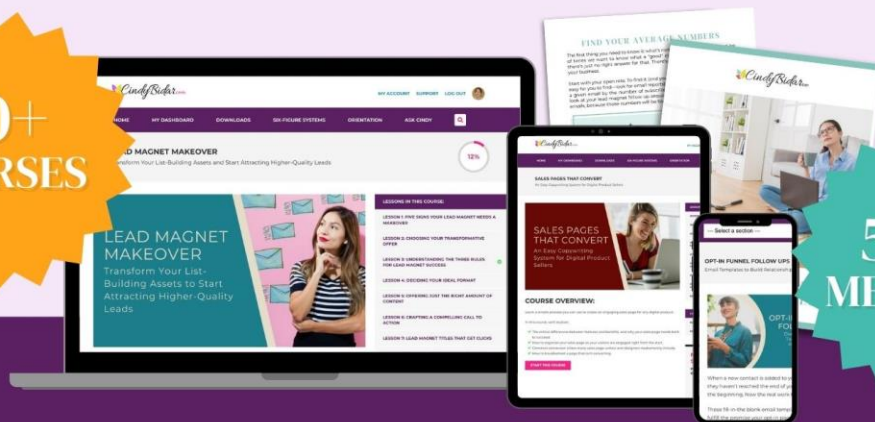
Hey, it's Cindy. And thanks for joining me for this episode of The Tiny Course Empire Podcast, you'll find show notes and recommended resources at TinyCourseEmpire.com/42. And I have a free download for you there. It's an outsourcing prep cheat sheet. That's going to help you to know which type of team

member you need, and how you're going to work together. But before you go and grab that, you have to know if you're even ready to outsource anything yet.

I've seen so many people jump into outsourcing, because they've been told that it's the key to building a successful business. But what really ends up happening is that they spend a bunch of money that they can't really afford, because they're banking on those team members to help them grow that business. In other words, they just don't have a plan. My goal for you with this episode is to help you think more strategically about outsourcing so you can create a plan before you dive in. And then you'll know that every single penny that you spend on outsourcing is a wise investment that actually grows your business rather than just another expense.

So let's start with that first question, because it's probably the most important one of all,. Ask yourself this: is my business growth consistent and stable. And here's what I mean by that. Outsourcing is not going to bring you a stable income, you have to have that foundation in place. First. I think a lot of people think that outsourcing is some kind of magic pill, they're going to just hire a bunch of people to do all of the work. And somehow, they're going to grow their business that way. And that's honestly, not how it works. But I know that if you talk to some people, some other business owners, maybe some coaches out there, they're going to say, Oh, just outsource that, Oh, you don't like to do that. Just outsource that, Oh, you don't know how to do that. Just outsource it, someone else will do it for you. And that is not how successful businesses are grown. I'm sorry to have to be the one to tell you that. But it is absolutely true.

Several years ago, when I was a relatively new virtual assistant, I had a client come to me who had a great idea for a business or what he thought was a great idea for a business. But he had very, very little business skills, he had zero foundation in place. And he basically wanted to abdicate the entire building of his business to me. He thought that he could just pay me enough to create his business for him. And I think sometimes that's what people believe. They believe that they can just have an idea and outsource the entire execution of the business, everything from creating the products to setting up the website to doing the email marketing to doing the social marketing, they think they can just outsource the entire thing. And that never ever turns out well.

So that's what I mean when I say that your business needs to have a solid foundation, you need to have seen some consistent growth and stability before you start outsourcing. You cannot outsource the launching of your business, that is on you. And here's something else to keep in mind. You need to be able to absorb the cost of that new team member and still earn a profit and you need to know that going in. You need to know what your budget is. You also need to know that you're going to be in business for the foreseeable future. Otherwise, why are you hiring someone anyway? So if you don't have a long term vision if you don't have a long term plan for your business and how you're going to pay for this outsourcer, then maybe now is not the right time to be doing that.

I would be focusing on getting some consistent business growth, build up those consistent sales, work on building your email list, work on driving traffic to your site, work on creating products and getting them sold. Once you have some consistency there, and you're starting to see some income come in, then you can talk about outsourcing.

The next question that you want to ask yourself is exactly which projects and tasks do you want to outsource? And why, and that why is really important. A lot of times, the advice that we hear is that you should outsource what you don't like to do. And that's great, I guess that's certainly something to strive for, I would love to outsource all of the things that I don't like to do. But here's what happens. Here's the problem with that. If we outsource all of the things that we don't like to do, or we outsource all of the things that we are a little bit confused about, or we outsource all of the things that we just don't want to learn. I don't want to take the time to learn how my email platform works, or I don't want to take the time to learn how my website works. Or I don't want to take the time to learn how my shopping cart works, or it frustrates me or I find it confusing. So I'm just going to outsource it, what you're actually doing is you are abdicating responsibility for your business. You must know how your business runs. And that means you must know how all of the pieces of it run. And you must know it even if you don't like to do it. And even if you find it confusing, because if you don't know how your business runs, you cannot effectively outsource your business, it just doesn't work.

Here's what ends up happening in that situation where you are trying to hire somebody to do a job that you don't understand or don't fully comprehend

yourself. You don't have a plan for it, you don't have a process for it, what happens is you maybe hire somebody who also doesn't understand what the scope of the work is. Or maybe you hire somebody who way over charges you maybe not even because they think they can overcharge you. But just because they don't understand what it is you're asking them to do. Maybe they think the scope of the project is much larger than it actually is. So they charge you accordingly, when actually what you really need is a much smaller piece of the project done.

Or you hire somebody who is not qualified because again, they don't understand what the project entails because you don't fully understand what the project entails. And you can't explain it to them. So listen, I am not saying that you have to know every single in and out of every single bit of software in your business. That's a lot to ask of everybody. I'm not expecting you to be a technical whiz with every piece of software that you use, with your website with your shopping cart with your auto responder, all of that it is a lot to learn. But you do have to have at least a basic understanding of how these systems work and how they talk to one another so that you can effectively hire and manage a team to have operate them for you.

Here's a different way to think about this. Rather than thinking I'm just going to outsource all of the things that I don't know how to do or don't want to learn or don't fully understand. Instead, think about outsourcing as I'm going to outsource the low level tasks that are not the best use of my time, so that I can instead spend my time on the high level money making activities.

So here's an example. I have someone, Gina who handles all of the transcripts for this podcast. Now transcripts are important. So I don't want to imply that that this is you know, low level unimportant work. But it is not the best use of my time. By outsourcing that task to Gina every week, I save a couple of hours of my time that I can then spend doing something else that brings in money. So I can spend that time writing email campaigns, I can spend that time creating courses, I can spend that time coaching clients, I can spend that time working with my Six-Figure Systems Members, that is a better use of my time than organizing a transcript for a podcast. That transcript is allowing me to leverage my time so when I was looking at things that I can outsource and I'll tell you how I how I do that in just a minute. But when I was looking at this, things that I could outsource, I was looking for those things that were, you know, not the best use of my time, those kind of lower level

tasks. So you want to be thinking about which projects and tasks do you want to outsource? But more importantly, not only which ones do you want to outsource, but why do you want to outsource it at all?

Next thing you want to ask yourself is, who is the right person to hire for this job? So when you consider which projects you might want to outsource, you can ask yourself, Is this a one-time project? Or is this an ongoing thing like a weekly podcast transcript? Or is it this big project? That's only going to happen once I'm going to redo my website? Or I'm going to move from AWeber to Active Campaign? Or I'm going to set up a new shopping cart? That's kind of a one-time project. Do you need a specialist? Or do you need a generalist. If you are moving from one email platform to another, you probably need a specialist you need somebody who knows that platform and who knows what they're doing. If you are hiring somebody to create slides in Canva, maybe you don't need a specialist, maybe you just need somebody with a good working knowledge of Canva, maybe you can use a generalist. And when I say generalist versus specialist, you're going to find a difference in pricing there. So that's a consideration as well, if you hire a specialist, if you hire somebody who is an Infusionsoft expert, or who is an Active Campaign expert, you're going to pay a premium for that. As opposed to if you are hiring a generalist VA who's kind of a Jack or Jane of all trades, that cost is going to be significantly lower. So ask yourself Who is the right person to hire for this job?

The next question you want to ask yourself is do you have documented processes for all of the projects and tasks that you want to outsource? Now, you might be thinking to yourself, Cindy, I want to outsource this because I don't have documented processes and systems in place. That's why I'm hiring someone. But let me tell you again, I know I mentioned this a little bit ago, and I talk about it all the time. But you must know how your business runs. You don't have to know every single little detail every box to check every line to look at in your software platform. But you must must have a good idea of how your business runs. I've said before many times that when I was a virtual assistant for 10 years, I worked with six and seven figure businesses. I've had dozens of clients all in various states of successfulness. And I can tell you this, the most successful ones, the six and seven figure earners were the ones who did not need me at all. They knew exactly how their business ran, they knew exactly how they wanted things done. If they needed

to send an email, they could log into Infusionsoft, they could log into Ontraport. And they could send an email. They were not dependent on their contractors.

Now they hired skilled people. Obviously, they hired me, right? And I was not an inexpensive freelancer. I knew what I was doing. But they didn't need me. They could do the work themselves. They were going to go back to that other question I asked you a minute ago about leveraging your time. They were leveraging their time, they knew that by paying me to take care of these tasks in these projects for them they could work on more important projects, the things that only they could do. But again, they didn't need me, they knew how their business ran.

And this is true in any business. I've told the story before about my last day job where I worked in an automotive factory. And the owners knew every department in that factory their kids came in in the summertime and worked in the factory, they worked out on the factory floor, they ran machines, they drove trucks, they loaded trucks, they packed boxes. They knew how that business ran inside and out. And that's one of the reasons why it was as successful as it was. And your business will be more successful if you know the ins and outs of how it runs, too. So please don't tell yourself that this piece of software is complicated. And I'm confused by it. And I don't want to learn it. So I'm just going to outsource it. Because that is not the way that you grow a six or a seven figure business. You grow that kind of a business and you have that kind of business success by knowing how your business runs.

The next thing you want to ask yourself is Do you have an outsourcing budget? This is something that a lot of people I think maybe avoid I think maybe people avoid budgeting in general not just for outsourcing, but sometimes numbers are things that we don't want to look at. That's one of those things that we don't like, you know, we want to outsource the bookkeeping, why not outsource all of that stuff? But you have to know what your numbers are, you have to know how much you can afford to spend. What's your profit margin right now? How much of that are you willing to spend to hire someone to join your team to take some of those tasks off of your plate? How much can you afford to invest? And to go along with that question, ask yourself, how exactly are you going to leverage that time that you're buying into bigger profits?

So for example, if you hire somebody to take over your helpdesk, for example. And you estimate that that's going to save you 30 minutes per day. Well, what are you going to do with that time to earn back the cost of that outsourcing? And hopefully even more than that, you know, are you going to create more products and courses? Are you going to bring on an additional coaching client? Are you going to spend 30 minutes a day working on a book to grow your business? What will you do with that time, because if you're not going to leverage that time that you are buying from that person, you're basically buying time, and if you're not going to leverage that time, then maybe it's not the right time to outsource. If you don't have a good plan for how you're going to turn that expense, that investment in outsourcing, how you're going to turn that into more money in your business.

All right, so those are the questions that you want to ask yourself before you decide to outsource. You want to know, is your business growth consistent and stable? Can it support a team, you want to know exactly which projects and tasks you're going to outsource and why you want to outsource them? You want to ask yourself who's the right person to hire for this job? Do I need a specialist? Do I need a generalist? Do I need someone low cost offshore? Do I need someone who is near to me in my same time zone or in North America? This is an important question to answer as well. You also want to know, do you have documented processes for the projects and tasks that you want to outsource? And how can you get them if you don't? And do you have an outsourcing budget? What can you afford to spend?

Once you have answered all of those questions satisfactorily, once you've kind of worked through that and decided, yes, now is the right time to outsource things in my business, the next question you're going to ask yourself is what am I going to outsource? And the way that you're going to find that out I talked about this, I mentioned earlier that I was going to tell you what my process is for this. The way that you find this out is to keep track of what you are doing. I have talked before on this podcast, I'll link to the episode in the show notes about tracking your time. But more importantly, track what you do. Jot down every day what it is that you are doing.

I'll give you an example of how I do this. I have a daily note that I fill out in my note taking app every single day. And at the end of the day, I ask myself, What did I do today that I should have outsourced. And I think back on my day, all of the things

that I did, I sent some emails, I wrote some course content, I formatted some documents. Maybe I followed up with a potential client, whatever it is that I did, and I can look back at that list and say, which of these things should I have outsourced? Yesterday as an example, I spent a couple of hours figuring out something really nerdy that I probably could have paid someone else to do. That goes on my list, I should have outsourced that. I enjoyed doing it. I kind of had some fun with it, I felt a great deal of satisfaction when I was done that I got it done. But it probably wasn't the best use of my time, I could have paid someone else to do that.

So look at your day, every single day and ask yourself, what of the tasks that I did today was something that I should have given to someone else and then go back through those questions that we just asked. Do you have some documented procedures and systems in place? Or can you put them in place to outsource that project or that task that you found that you did that you probably shouldn't have been spending a bunch of time on and who's the right person to hire for that task? If you do decide that you're going to hire them and what's your budget? So that's kind of how you figure out what are the first things that you're going to be outsourcing in your business. Before you go there, make sure that you answer those five questions and really get your business in a good place. So that you can hire good team members and grow your business in the right way.

Alright, that's it for this episode, head on over to TinyCourseEmpire.com/ 42 To find the show notes, all the resources we mentioned. And while you're there, leave me a comment. I would love to know if you've started building a team yet or if you're still in the planning stages. And what's been your biggest aha moment when it comes to outsourcing, what have you discovered about outsourcing that surprised you or that you didn't expect? And finally, if you're enjoying the show, would you do me a favor and leave a rating and review over at Apple podcasts, or wherever you're listening that helps others to find us. And of course, if you have a friend or a colleague who would love to hear this episode, or who could use it in their business, go ahead and send them the link again, that's TinyCourseEmpire.com/42. Have a terrific day, everyone and I will talk to you all again next week.

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