

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

I just took a look inside my members area over at [Six-Figure Systems](#) and in the past four years I've created more than 80 digital courses and products and earned more than a million dollars in revenue from them but my very first course was a total flop. I didn't sell a single one. I spent hours and hours on that course too. I wrote checklists and I recorded video and I set up the course access area. You know all the work that goes into creating something like that, right? But it wasn't enough. It just wasn't the right fit for my audience. I have to say it's a good thing that I didn't let that early failure get me down, though. And it's even better that I learned from that mistake and figured out how to validate. My course idea before putting all the work into creating it.

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This is episode number fifty seven of the Tiny Course Empire podcast. And today we're talking about how you can avoid making the same mistake I made just by spending a little bit of time validating your course idea before you actually create it.

I have six ideas for you to use, but before we get to that, I want to say thank you for spending a part of your day with me. I appreciate you more than you know if you're new. There, make sure you hit the subscribe or the follow button on your podcast app of choice so that you won't miss any future episodes. You'll find the show notes, the transcript, and all of the resources mentioned for this episode at tinycourseempire.com/57. Now, with all that said, let's dig into course validation and how you can save yourself a lot of frustration with just a small amount of time invested. The 1st way that I recommend you validate your course idea is through a simple keyword search. You don't need any fancy tools for this, you just need to plug a how to style keyword into a tool like ubersuggest and tack on words like course or training to see how many searches for that phrase come up. Here's an example. If I type learn to play guitar course or how to knit course or become a confident speaker, training into a search engine such as ubersuggest, it's going to tell me how many people are searching on that keyword every single month. So learn to play guitar course gets 10 searches per month. How to play guitar course gets 10 searches per month. Beginner guitar Courses 110 searches per month now obviously. More search volume is better in this case, but any search volume with a word like course or training is a good sign. That shows that people are out there looking to pay for a course on that topic. Courses are paid resources, so if people are searching for a course, that is a really good indication of a viable course topic. And keep in mind too that there are dozens and dozens of keyword combinations that people might be searching for. So just because how to play guitar course only gets 10 searches per month doesn't mean that there's only 10 people looking for a course on how to play guitar. It means that there were ten people who searched for that specific combination of keywords, but there are lots of other combinations that they might have searched on instead. Now, what you don't want to do when you want to be careful of this is don't do searches for things like tips or ideas. Those types of keywords do not have the buying intent that a word like course or training has. People looking for tips are looking for free content. Generally speaking, they're not looking to pay for something. So your searches for things like how to play guitar tips or how to play guitar ideas are going to turn up a lot more search volume. But the buying intent is not there, so that search volume is not as meaningful to you if you are validating a course idea.

If you're looking at building a blog, that's a whole nother story. In that case, those tips and ideas type searches might be more valuable to you. But if you are looking at creating a paid resource, you want to stick with the keywords and the key phrases that indicate a buying intent instead. The next thing you can do is ask your

audience. This is my personal favorite method. I like to do quick surveys to my email list four or five times a year, or to the members inside [Six-Figure Systems](#). I do that several times a year as well. There's a lot of different ways that you can do this, but the simplest way to do it is to just send an email with two or three links in it and ask people to make their choice by clicking on one of those links. So this really works. Well, if you are considering maybe two or three different courses to create, and you want to get input from your subscribers about which ones are of the most interest to them. So say you were thinking about creating a course about how to knit hats, and you are also thinking about creating a course about how to knit mittens. You could put both of those ideas into an email, make each one clickable, and ask people to click on one that is their most favorite, and then you just count up how many clicks. Each link gets and there's your decision. If you're really stuck and you don't know what course you want to create at all, then you can ask your subscribers or ask your social media followers what their biggest trouble spot is. Now the extra benefit of this not only are they going to give you ideas and they're going to help you out when you are looking for things to create courses around, but the extra benefit is you can mirror their language back to them in your sales copy for the course. That you ultimately create, and that will make your sales copy even more powerful. so 2 ways to ask your audience. You can send a simple survey where they just click a link, or you can look for ask them for new ideas, ask them to respond to your email. You don't have to set up even an official survey, right? You don't have to set up a forum at all, just ask them to reply to your email and let you know. You can also do these on social media. You can set up a poll in a Facebook group, or you can ask people to DM you on Instagram. With their ideas or their response to your ques.

The 3rd way that I like to validate a new course idea is by looking at the internal data that I have. ○ if you have been in business for a while, you probably have lots of internal data. You have maybe a blog or a podcast, or you have a YouTube channel and all of those content channels will give you analytics that will tell you what people are most interested in. So for example if you have a blog post that far outperforms all of your other. Blog Post gets a lot of traffic and it gets a lot of comment activity and it just generates a lot of engagement with your audience. Then that topic is a good thing to create a course around. What about social media sharing? Do you have some particular piece of content that gets a lot of social media attention? That's a good indication as well. We already talked about comments, but content upgrade activity if you have a blog post that has a content upgrade. In it, and it gets a lot of downloads, it gets a lot of activity. It earns you a lot of new email. Subscribers then that content that, idea that you're sharing there, is a

good basis for a course. It's indicating that your audience is really interested in that particular topic. Along those same lines, you can actually create a new lead magnet for a course that you have not created yet. So this is perfect if you have a social following or if you have an affiliate program. A new lead magnet about your course topic is going to help you gauge interest. Keep the three rules for a great lead magnet in mind. Remember that your lead magnet needs to be actionable. You must give your subscribers something to do with the information that you're giving them. It needs to solve the problem or make their life better in some way, and it doesn't have to be a big problem. In fact, don't make it overwhelming. That's too much, and don't make it too broad. It just needs to get them past whatever small hurdle they're facing, or improve their lives in some small way. Give them some next action, some next step to take that's going to make a difference for them right now, and it needs to lead them one step closer to paying you, in other words. It needs to be directly related to the course or the product that you are considering creating. If you can hit all three of those, and if that lead magnet is popular with your audience, then you've got a winner for a potential course on your hands. I have another podcast episode about creating lead magnets, and I'm going to link to that in the show notes. If you want more details about how to create something that fits well with all three of these steps, now those four ideas. Keyword research, surveying your audience, using internal data, and creating a new lead magnet. Those will all help you gauge interest, but that might not always translate directly into sales. Just because somebody says that they would buy a course doesn't mean they'll actually hand over their credit card when you ask them to.

So let's look at two ways that you can know with even more certainty if your course idea will fly. Now, before I do that, I want to take just a minute. To tell you about my [Six-Figure Systems program](#), I started Six-Figure Systems four years ago with one goal, and that was to help newer online business owners figure out and easily manage all of the moving parts it takes to keep a business running. If you've ever felt like you were juggling everything and getting nowhere, then you know how overwhelming and confusing the whole online business thing can be. My superpower where I really I guess I could say where my skills really shine. Is in making the hard stuff easy. I do that with step by step directions that anybody can follow, and I'm talking about things like starting an email list or creating a digital course or building sales funnels. If you're feeling like it's all too much to manage and you don't know what to do next or if you're doing anything right at all, then I want to invite you to join us. Visit tinycourseempire.com/join to see everything

that's included and I look forward to seeing you inside Six-Figure Systems.

Ok, let's get back to our list. So far, we've talked about four ways that you can gauge interest. But audience interest does not put dollars in your bank account. How can you really know if your course or your product idea will actually sell? Let's look at a couple of more ideas that you can use. The first one is competitor research. If somebody else is selling something similar, there's a good bet that you can sell it to. Now obviously, you can't know for sure. If it's selling, you don't probably have access to their bookkeeping records or to their shopping carts, so you have to look for clues. Have you heard of them before? That's a big clue. Is anybody else taking their course, or is anybody else talking about them? Are your friends or your colleagues talking about them? Are they sharing their content online? Do they have testimonials? Do they seem to have a strong online presence? Does their website look like a professional website, or is it? Something that was kind of thrown together and it's got placeholder images and Laura Mibsam text all over it.

Make sure there's no broken images or abandoned looking sites. Those can indicate that they once had a business but aren't really focusing on it anymore. So take a look around and see if they look legit. If this person who is selling a course similar to what you want to sell is actually making a living doing it and if you kind of put your critical thinking. Tap on you can look for those clues and figure that out. But here's the other thing. I don't want you to fall into the trap of thinking that there is too much competition. A lot of times I talk to people and I will ask them who their competition is and they'll say, oh, I don't have any competitors. Nobody else is doing this. And they think that that's a good thing. But it's not. If there is no competition, if nobody is selling a course similar to what you want to create, that might actually indicate that there is no market for it. So you want to be careful of that and you also want to be careful of thinking that there is too much. Competition that the waters are too full, that there are too many fish in the sea and you can't possibly be competitive in that market. Instead, I want you to consider ways that you can improve on what other people are doing to make your offer unique. So you've got an idea for your course. You can go out and do competitor research and do what's called gap analysis. Figure out what is missing in the current offers. What can you do to make your offer? More unique to fit within the gaps in the marketplace.

And finally, my last idea number six is probably one of the very best ones and that is to presell your course. This is the only 100 % for sure way to validate your course before you create it. All you need is a sales page and a rough outline of what your

course is going to be and the transformation or the solution that you are offering to your customers. Once you have that and you have a sales page up, you can start. Taking orders you do not have to create your course ahead of time and when those sales start to come in that is 100 % proof that your idea is viable. The only caveat I have for this method is that you need to have 100 % faith in yourself that you can deliver a course that has been pre sold. I have seen people fail at this so don't do that to yourself. Be sure that you can deliver on a course that you have presold, and this is a fabulous way to prove viability before you ever spend anytime at all actually creating a course. Now, you probably already figured this out, but I didn't do any of those things before I launched that first course. All of those years ago, I didn't do any keyword research. I didn't ask my audience what they wanted. It didn't even really have an audience to ask. I also didn't have any internal data or any stats to look at. I definitely did not create a new lead magnet for it. I didn't do any competitor research. I'm pretty sure I would have found no competition, which was entirely the problem. And of course I did not pre sell it. If I had done any of those things I might have saved myself a lot of time in trouble. I might have decided to scrap the whole idea, or I may have just found a better idea that would have sold. So skipping that validation step was a big mistake on my part, and it's one that I hope you won't make with your course.

Here's what I want you to do next. Head over to tinycourseempire.com/57 to find the show notes, the transcript, and all of the resources that I mentioned here. And while you're there, leave me a comment. I would love to know what course or product idea you have, or one that you are creating, and how you plan to validate that idea before you create it. Hit me up in the comments and let me know. And finally, if you're enjoying the show, would you do me a favor and send it to a friend? Those kind of personal. Introductions really help to grow our audience and I would be so appreciative. That's it for me this week. Have a terrific day. Everyone and I will talk to you all again next week.

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.**

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