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

I am a huge fan of digital tools. I love all of the note taking and the writing apps. I love spreadsheets and calendars and document designers, and I especially love that these digital tools, let me take my work with me wherever I go, but sometimes I just need to get away from the screen and go old school, and that's when I get out my Analog tools.

This is episode number 68 of the Tiny Course Empire Podcast, and today I'm going to take you behind the scenes of Cindy Bidar HQ and give you a peek at all of the analog systems I use to manage my digital course business.

Hey, it's Cindy, and thank you for sharing a part of your day with me today. If you'd like the show notes, the transcript, or the links to the resources I mentioned in this episode, you can get all of that at TinyCourseEmpire.com/68. While you're there, could you do me a favor and click that subscribe button?

Doing that lets the podcast directories know that you're interested in more content like this, and it also helps them showcase us to other people as well. Subscribing

also means that you will never miss an episode. Coming up next week, we are going to talk about my thoughts on bootstrapping your online business. Right now as I'm recording this interest rates are rising. Tech companies are laying off employees by the thousands, and even banks seem to be struggling to stay afloat.

If the financial situation is feeling grim, there is good news. You don't need a lot of money to launch an online business if you're resourceful. That's what bootstrapping is all about, and we're going to dive into that next week.

This week though, we are talking tools and specifically the kind that don't rely on electricity or an internet connection to work. So let's dive in.

My first must-have analog tool is my whiteboard. I honestly cannot imagine running a business without this tool. I have two of these in my office. My husband has one in his office, and they are always filled with notes about whatever current project we're working on. Right now I have one whiteboard that has sticky notes all over it in kind of a kanban style.

I have another whiteboard that has a bunch of notes about a project we're working on, and these tools really help keep us on track.

I use whiteboards in a lot of different ways. One way is I have several regular mastermind calls that I participate in every month, and most often when I'm on a call, you'll find me pacing around my office with a dry erase marker in one hand, jotting important notes as I brainstorm with other business owners. I like to say that I think better on my feet.

So this method of note taking works really well for me, but I have another system later for when I can't be walking around in my office. So if I, if I have to be on camera or something, I do something different. We'll talk about that in a few minutes. I also use whiteboards to brainstorm all by myself.

I don't have to be on a call with somebody else. I can just have my coffee and my whiteboards and use that time by myself to create promotional calendars, design products, lay out blog posts or podcast episodes, or think about how I'm going to promote something. There's a lot of different ways that I use whiteboards just in my thinking process, in my day-to-day planning process in my business.

I really, like I said, I can't imagine being without my whiteboards and my markers. They're just so helpful.

I also use them to map out complicated sales funnels. Now today, my sales funnels tend to be pretty simple. There's an opt-in and a few follow up emails and maybe a limited time offer before new subscribers get added to my general mailing list. But back when I was a VA working for high ticket business coaches, their sales funnels are really complex.

They typically run Facebook ads to a webinar, and then there are retargeting ads that have to be connected in there. And then there's an email follow up sequence and they get different emails based on whether or not they watched the webinar, how long of the webinar they watched, did they watch five minutes? Did they watch 10 minutes? Did they stay for the whole thing? There's different email sequences involved.

So there's just a lot of complexity in those. And then of course, if they book a discovery call, there's yet another sequence that is connected After that. There's a whole lot of moving parts and having a map of that funnel, like actually drawn out on a whiteboard is really, really helpful when you're trying to put all of that together.

So I have used my whiteboards in that way in the past many, many times.

Whiteboards are also really helpful for explaining complex ideas to somebody else. I sometimes use my whiteboards to explain my ideas to my husband. Even though it might be crystal clear in my mind when I try to tell him my plans, it comes out kind of all jumbled and it doesn't make sense to him probably because I haven't really thought it through myself.

So mapping something out on a whiteboard not only helps him to understand what I'm talking about, but it forces me to clarify my ideas too. If you've ever said to yourself, I just wish I could draw you a picture, then this would all make more sense. Then you need a whiteboard in your office.

I also use whiteboards to plan out promotions. For me, this typically means email campaigns. Maybe I am running a seven day campaign for a particular product, or, um, maybe I'm running a 12 day sale with a different product every single day like I do in October, or maybe I'm hosting a birthday sale. All of these things start on my whiteboard so I can kind of see everything, get an idea of the big picture, and that just makes it much, much easier for me to plan things.

The next tool that I use in day-to-day business is a legal pad. You know those yellow pads, they're eight and a half by 11 or eight and a half by 14. I don't use the big one. I use the eight and a half by 11 version. The big one is too big for my desk. But I have

one sitting by my side all day long, every day, and that is where I am jotting notes as I work.

It is my scratch pad. It's where I stop to write things down when a new idea occurs to me or when something I need to do occurs to me. Maybe I am writing a blog post or I'm writing a podcast episode and all of a sudden I remember that I need to set up a coupon for someone. I'll jot that down on my scratch pad, on that legal pad so that I don't forget, but so that I also don't get distracted and run off to do something else when I'm trying to complete a project.

I know sometimes when we have so many things to do and so many things on our mind, it's really easy to get distracted. I could very well, when I'm writing a podcast episode and it, it occurs to me that I need to create that coupon. I could run off and create that coupon, but then I'm distracted from the task at hand, I'm distracted from the project that I'm working on, so just jotting it down on my legal pad and then dealing with that later lets me get back to the project at hand. Lets me get back to what I'm supposed to be working on so I get more done.

I also use my legal pad for meeting notes. I can't be at my whiteboard all the time. If I have to be on camera, like I said, then I will definitely have my legal pad next to me for any notes that I need to take during that call.

I also use a legal pad for what's called a brain dump.

On most Sundays, you'll find me with my legal pad and my pen planning out my week. That always starts by just listing out everything that's on my mind. That's the brain dump part. I just make a big list, all the emails that I need to write the course that I'm working on, the errands that I need to run, the appointments that I need to schedule.

Absolutely anything that needs to be done in the near future gets listed on that sheet of paper so that I can organize my list and get everything scheduled. It clears out my brain so that I'm not distracted when I'm actually working. I know that I've captured all of that information, that it's all scheduled and I don't have to worry about it.

I don't have to think about the doctor's appointment I need to schedule. I don't have to think about when do I take the dog to the vet. I've got it all handled because I've done that planning the first part of the week. I've talked about this method of scheduling my week before, and I will link to that episode in the show notes if you want to go back and listen to that.

But basically the way this works is I just sit down and I write out, everything that's on my mind that I need to do or manage or think about or coordinate. Then I find a time in my calendar for each item on that list. Everything on my list becomes an appointment, but that planning starts with my legal pad.

Another analog tool that I cannot run a business without. I couldn't even run my life without this, and you've heard me talk about this before, and that is index cards and sticky notes. These are those three by five lined index cards, they come in packs of a hundred.

I buy them by the thousands. I actually buy like a 10 pack of a hundred cards on Amazon a couple of times a year. I use index cards to outline new courses. You've heard me talk about this before. I have a podcast episode about it. I've taught this process inside quick and easy course creation. I've also taught this process inside our course creation challenge that we did in February of this year.

And if you're interested in learning more about that process and how I actually create courses, I want to invite you to join me inside Six-Figure Systems for just $7. You can get that trial offer at TinyCourseEmpire.com/join, and that will get you access to both the quick and easy course creation course and the course creation challenge we just finished.

And you'll also get access to everything else that is inside [Six-Figure Systems](http://SixFigureSystems.com), all 60 courses, toolkits, all of the resources, all of the recorded Q and A calls, all for just $7 for your first seven days. Again, that's at TinyCourseEmpire.com/join. I hope to see you on the inside.

Now to me, using these index cards, like I said, this is the fastest and easiest way for me to outline a new product, whether it's a signature course or it's a tiny course, or whatever it is that you're creating. Outlining on index cards or sticky notes first makes it so much easier to manage.

I also use index cards to create my standard operating procedures.

This works in much the same way. I just start jotting down all of the things that have to happen to complete a project. Maybe I am creating an SOP for publishing a new podcast episode, and I start jotting down all of the things that have to happen.

First, I have to create my mind map. Then I have to record it. Then I have to edit it. Then I create the transcript. I hand it off to my husband and he does some minor editing on it, and he uploads it to Libsyn and he has a bunch of other things that he

does, and all of these things have to happen in order for this new podcast episode to show up in your podcast player on Thursday mornings.

So jotting all of those things down, every little step along the way on index cards helps me create that procedure, helps me finalize all of the things that have to happen so that I can document it, so that we can do the same things over and over and over again so that we're not constantly reinventing the wheel.

And the reason I like to use index cards or sticky notes for this kind of brainstorming for this kind of a process creation or course creation is because I can then rearrange them. So I take them and I lay them all out on my desk. I have a great big, uh, great big desk, lots of space, and I take all of those cards or all of those sticky notes and I lay them all, all out on my desk, and then I can shuffle them around and rearrange them and put them in the proper order.

Where if I was just using my legal pad to do this, it's hard to move things around. It's hard to rearrange my list once I've written it. It gets messy fast. So I like to use index cards for this kind of, um, brainstorming step for this kind of planning step because it's so easy to move things around.

I also use index cards to plan big projects.

I talked a minute ago about using my legal pad to kind of brain dump what I need to be working on that week. But when I'm planning a really big project, like maybe a new website development or something along those lines, it's helpful to use index cards or sticky notes in that situation too. Again, because I can move them around, because I can shuffle things around, I can organize them in different ways.

I can, you know, remove things, add things. It's just makes it much easier to be flexible. With the layout, when each idea, when each task, when each step in the process is written on a separate card.

I can also, I like to put notes on the backs of the card, so maybe I have a task on a card. You know, upload the podcast episode to Libsyn or whatever the task might be, and I can put notes on the back, you know, how does that have to happen?

What is the best process for doing that? You know, where do we go log in? All of that stuff can go on the back of that card so that when I go to document the process, when I go to document my procedures, I have all of that information right there. It's right on my index card, and then I can transfer it to a more permanent holding place.

Which brings me to my next point, which is that whiteboards, legal pad, index cards are temporary. These notes all of get all get transferred to more permanent locations as I need to. So for example, my whiteboards, I might snap a photo of that and store it in a note taking app.

I might move to do items to my calendar. I might revise flow charts or other graphics and add them to my journal. I'm going to talk about the journal in just a minute. As for the legal pad, my notes get moved to a note taking app if I need to keep them my to-do items get moved to my calendar and then I can throw those scratch pad sheets away.

Index cards, my course outlines get added to my writing app. Once I have that outline completed, once I'm happy with the way it's laid out on my index cards, then I move that into a more permanent placement in a digital file so that I can continue to work with.

If I'm creating new procedures and checklists, then those get added to our standard operating procedures in Google Drive or in Flowlu, which is our project management system. Project plans get added to My Notebook or to Evernote or to Bear or to Flowlu again. You could use something like Trello or Asana for that too.

The point is that all of these things that we've talked about so far, the whiteboards, the legal pad, the index cards, and sticky notes, those are temporary locations. Those are all planning tools for me.

I have one more analog tool than I use that is more permanent, and that is my Moleskin notebook. They're typically little black notebooks. They come in different sizes. They have really nice paper in them. You can get them lined or unlined or dot grid. I like the dot grid version and I use my Moleskuin journal for a lot of different things. I have it sitting on my desk all the time.

I use it, first of all, for journaling. Sometimes I just need to write out my thoughts and typing them out into a writing app or into a note taking app just doesn't have that same feeling for me as actually picking up a pen and writing out my thoughts. That can really help me to get clear on what I'm thinking, what I'm planning, if I'm facing a problem that I need to solve.

Journaling about it is really, really helpful. And I'm going to talk more about journaling in a later episode. I think that's, I think that's really important for, um, for entrepreneurs, for anyone really who wants to improve their life in any way. I think journaling can be a really useful tool. So I'll talk more about that in a later episode.

But the way I use journaling is, like I said, I just write out my thoughts, what I'm thinking, what I'm feeling, what's, you know, what problems I'm facing, and how I think I might be able to solve it. Sometimes I write letters to myself from the future, so future Cindy writes to current Cindy. That can be really helpful.

There's a lot of different ways that you can use journaling in this way, and I do all of that in my Moleskin notebook. I also write to-do lists in my moleskin notebook. I use a process called bullet journaling sometimes. I'm not a super avid bullet journaler. If you Google bullet journals, you will see just all kinds of beautiful designs and people who are really into bullet journaling.

That's not me. I'm not the artsy kind of bullet journal person, but I do follow some of the principles that Ryder Carol lays out in his website and in his book about bullet journaling. I will link to both of those in the show notes, if you're interested in learning more. That might be really helpful for you if you kind of struggle to keep track of your day-to-day operations and what needs to happen and when you might find bullet journaling works really well for you in that case.

And of course I cannot use any of these analog tools without a really nice pen. I am a big fan of office supplies. I always have been. Um, I actually once used to work in an office supply store. You probably didn't know that about me, but it's true. When I was a kid, I worked in an office supply store.

I've always been a fan of nice paper, nice pens, nice notebooks, all of those things. And a good pen is a must have when I am using my Moleskin notebook or my index cards or my legal pads. Whiteboards, that's a different thing obviously.

But those really nice pens when it comes to writing on paper, just make all the difference. Personally, I'm a big fan of a fine point pen. The finer the better in all different colors. I have pens of many, many different colors that I use for journaling and for keeping notes for myself. But you have to find the pen that works for you. So I would encourage you to find a pen that you really enjoy writing with if you are looking to embrace kind of an analog planning model for your business.

I'd love to hear from you too. Do you use analog tools in your business? Which ones help you run your business? How do you use 'em? Share your thoughts with me over TinyCourseEmpire.com/68. That's where you'll find the show notes and the recommended resources and the transcript for this episode, and I'd love to hear from you over there.

Finally, if you'd like to learn more about how to build and grow a successful online digital course-based business, don't forget about my invitation to come join me

inside Six-Figure Systems for just $7 for your first week. You'll find that at TinyCourseEmpire.com/join, and I hope to see you on the inside.

Have a terrific day everyone, and I will talk to you again next.

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