

Episode: 036

Title: Selling on Course Marketplaces

Hey y'all, welcome back to the podcast. I know that it's been a while. I think I took about a month's break or so. I'm sorry for that, for the inconsistency.

I honestly just, first I was sick and then I had a personal crisis happen in my life and to be totally honest with you, I just couldn't get myself inspired during this time to get on here. Sometimes you just can't put on a brave face, you know, and um, I'm doing better now but I just want to say that I'm sorry for taking a break but honestly This is just how it is right now in the business.

I'm just gonna be 100 percent honest with y'all. Noah and I are working so hard behind the scenes on getting a lot of things moving right now and We're both finding it pretty hard to turn up for this front-facing stuff For me the podcast and for him the YouTube channel because there's just so much personal work behind the scenes that it's kind of hard to just shut that off sometimes and put out a piece of content that's kind of also not always directly related to what you're working on.

And for us right now, that is all of these updates. So we've updated Launch Your Blog Biz entirely. We've updated our Pinterest course entirely. Noah is working on SEO right now. And I am working on Six Figure Course Creator. And on top of that, we're also moving to a new platform. So I've been kind of moving some things over to the platform while also doing these course updates.

And it's been a lot. I want to say thank you to all of y'all that purchased our courses on Black Friday. We're so excited for y'all to get started with us and access these new updates. If you purchased a course like SEO or Six Figure Course Creator and it hasn't been updated yet, don't worry. These updates are coming really soon.

We will also be updating the course prices for quite a few of our courses, but especially these last two. They're going to be really big updates and it's going to make the courses even longer. So we're going to be updating the prices. So if you have purchased and you don't have these updates just yet, don't worry.

The courses are still. Up to date, the strategies are not wrong or different. We're just building upon these strategies and really expanding upon them. And especially if you purchased during Black Friday where everything was 30 percent off, know that that was the lowest price you're ever going to get because of that discount, but also because we're raising those prices soon, most likely in the upcoming year.

So really, once we get these last couple of courses updated, we're then going to launch our brand new platform. It's not going to be unteachable anymore, and... It's going to have a totally revamped community program that Noah and I are going to hop in personally From week to week and do things like office hours.

There's going to be so much coming and we're so excited But y'all major updates like these... They take a while even with two people when you're totally rehauling things behind your business So it has really been kind of a lot for us lately, and I just want to let you know that we are still working really, really hard on these things, and it's kind of just hard to take a pause sometimes from things that you know are so important for moving your business forward and for your students to kind of, you know, come on.

But anyway, going back to kind of this lack of inspiration that I felt, I thought that I was going to take another couple of weeks off. I honestly wasn't sure when I was going to return to the podcast. And then honestly today I just woke up and I felt this weird surge of energy to get on here and to talk about all this.

And yeah, I'm just going to go with it. I actually script out a lot of the episodes for the podcast just because it helps me. To really make sure that I say everything that I want to say and there's no script today. I'm just talking and yeah, I'm happy to be back. And you know, one of the reasons that I wasn't super inspired is because sometimes it's hard to think about what you want to say.

And when we've had so many other things going on in the background. I haven't been able to have the chance to kind of plan out the next 25 episodes and know, you know, what guests I want to have on and what I want to say. And all of this, I've been doing it all on the fly, but I thought, what a great topic to actually talk about on the podcast, some of these updates.

So today I thought it would be cool to just give y'all a bit of a sneak peek on some of these various updates that we're going to have in these courses, right? Some brand new content. So today I thought that I would do one from Six Figure Course Creator since that is what I'm personally working on updating right now, and it's all fresh in my mind.

So, I want to talk today about selling products on your own, versus selling them on marketplace platforms, like Amazon, Etsy, and Skillshare. Anytime you are relying on traffic on a marketplace type of platform. We already have this a little bit in Launch Your Blog Biz where we talk about different ways to monetize.

And we talk a little bit more about it in Six Figure Course Creator. But in the past, in Six Figure Course Creator, we've generally just pushed people towards creating their own products and selling on their own. Because we personally think that it's the best way to go. You're going to earn the most money, you're going to have the most control over your products.

There are a lot of reasons that I'll go into detail on but we've never really presented an argument for selling on marketplaces. To be honest, since then, I have more experience with it personally and it's also something that my brother does. It's how he makes a lot of his money.

So I have a lot more insight to share on the differences between selling on your own and selling on marketplaces and I have arguments for both. So I want to talk about these today because it's super important when you're thinking about how you want to sell because you can sell on your own, right? And what I mean by on your own is that you create a course, let's say, or an ebook and you sell it on ClickFunnels or Teachable or whatever platform you decide, but you drive all of the traffic, right?

You create your own custom sales page and checkout page. And you drive all the traffic to your sales pages and through this checkout process. When you sell on marketplaces, of course, you sell on Amazon, you sell on Etsy, Skillshare, and you don't get to create any of your own sales pages. You literally just create a product, you create an image for it, and you upload it, and then it's done, right?

You send it to this platform. So it's very different. And of course, on these marketplaces, you have access to. All of the search traffic on these platforms, and that's really the biggest pro, the biggest argument for selling on marketplaces is that it can be very passive if you just let it go and you have your product keyworded correctly so that it gets found in search and you get access to all of the traffic that that platform has.

Of course, if you're talking about Amazon, that is a massive, massive amount of traffic, right? So that's definitely the biggest pro there because building your own audience and your own traffic platforms... That is honestly, in my opinion, the hardest part about having your own business. It's not creating the products.

It's not even really creating the content. It's just getting those people in the door, keeping them around, but even more importantly, getting that constant stream of new people all the time. Also, while you're battling changing algorithms on every single platform out there. That to me is the hardest part.

And that's why when you're able to accomplish that, that aspect of it and sell your own products for whatever price that you choose, that is why it's more lucrative and you can make a lot more money. So that's kind of those things in a nutshell, right? But let's dive into a few different aspects of, you know, the characteristics between these two things.

Number one, when you sell on marketplaces, you're generally going to have to sell for much lower prices. And that's due to simply competition, right? If most of the eBooks on Amazon are 10, well, you're going to have to sell yours for 10 or even a couple of bucks less in order to be competitive. Same thing with Udemy are...

Really anywhere upwards of a hundred, but Udemy discounts everything to like 10 to 20. So you're also going to have to keep your course prices very competitive and around those ranges. But if you sell on your own, you can sell an ebook for 30. We sold a yoga ebook for a long time for 27. Then we bumped it down to 17 and we found that that was a better price point.

But still, we sold it for those prices, and we also kept all of that. The other thing is that when you sell on these marketplace platforms, the marketplaces take anywhere from 30 to even 70+ percent of your earnings. Just depends on the platform, they all have different rules. When you sell on Skillshare, you don't even set a course price.

They just have a membership price that members pay. And then they can access all of the course content for free or with their membership, but they don't pay for individual courses. You actually get paid based on minutes watched. And let me tell you, you get paid cents on The minutes that you have watched.

So, they all differ, right? But the point is that because of competition, the prices on marketplace platforms are significantly lower than what you can charge. You can charge 20 for a course on Udemy, but if you sell a course on your own, you can charge 300 plus, right? The same course, but that's just how it goes.

So prices are a big one, and this really is a big part of what impacts your overall earnings, right? If you have 10,000 people purchasing at 20, of course, it's probably going to be a lot better than a handful of people purchasing at 300. So if you have the traffic, the marketplace platforms absolutely work, but you have to have massive amounts of traffic to make the same amounts of money.

And that kind of brings me to the next point is the deal with traffic here. Selling on marketplaces does provide you with a massive potential for traffic. Think about being on page one of search results for something on Amazon or even Etsy. It matters. But the thing to keep in mind here is that you really have to be on page one to benefit from this.

Selling on marketplaces can be so much more passive than selling on your own. You don't even have to create content to sell anything, right? You just publish it and it just makes money because people are finding it in search. But because it's so competitive, you really have to land on page one.

In a few minutes, I'll talk about how to get on top here. If you want to sell in marketplaces, you know, how to get your content seen more and to reach that page one. Cause there are a few strategies here. But for now, just keep in mind that if you're not on page one, you're not going to get any search traffic.

Then you're going to be right back to square one selling on your own, where you don't have any traffic. So you have to sell, so you have to create content to drive traffic to those products. So, you really have to make it to page one to take advantage of this search traffic here. Another thing to think about here when you're selling on marketplaces is that there are a lot of rules on self-promotion.

So when you create a course, platforms like Udemy and Skillshare have very specific rules on how often you can talk about your own website, where you can drive traffic to, etc. You can't just always say, go here on my website to do this. You can't self-promote other courses very often. There are quite a bit of rules on what you can do here, right?

Especially on the platform itself, when you think about these course platforms. You can't just put links back to your own website and your own lead magnets, your own email lists. You're usually only allowed maybe one link that goes back to your website somewhere. So it's really not set up in a way that makes it easy for you to draw traffic back to your website or back to another course.

That's on purpose because Udemy and Skillshare and these types of platforms want you to stay on their platform, right? They're all the same. So you are limited a little bit more in how you can do that, as well as affiliate links. One of the great things about creating courses is that you can promote affiliate links and affiliate products in your courses as well.

In all of our courses, we promote hosting, we promote Teachable, and other software and links, you know, to grow our own business and it helps our students, but it also gives us affiliate income as well. So it allows us to earn a little bit more on each course, but generally, affiliate links are a complete no-go on marketplace platforms.

You usually have to draw people back to a link on your website that has resources that contain affiliate links. These additional barriers make it a little bit harder for people to click on those links and, you know, you, for you to get that affiliate income. Whereas if you sell on Teachable or your own platform, you can generally have the affiliate links right around the videos and, you know, very easy to find. So, keep that in mind as well.

Then finally, the last thing I want to say here about selling on marketplaces is that you are at the mercy of this platform. I want to talk for a second about my brother's experience with selling on Skillshare. My brother has a few different courses on iPhone photography and drone cinematography and a couple of courses on music now.

He's super talented and he went to school for film. So my brother's courses are very, very good. They're much higher quality than many of the other courses that you see on these platforms and that's one of the reasons why he has risen to success so quickly on these platforms. When my brother first started on these platforms, I think it might have been three or four years ago now, it took a few months for the income to start climbing up. But a couple of years ago, when he was at the height of his income on these platforms, he was making over twenty thousand dollars a month because he was at the top of search results, because his courses were so good, he became a top creator on Skillshare.

Skillshare featured him more often. There was also some pressure there because when you're in Skillshare's top creator program and you get featured a bit more often, you have to produce at least one

new course every six months in order to stay in that program. That was something that my brother did not like because he didn't want to be on their time schedule when he created new courses.

It was a lot of pressure. He was trying to do other things and he was making great money, so he didn't really, again, want that pressure. But anyway, over time, Skillshare actually went through a lot of changes in the last year. They essentially lost some funding and totally restructured how they pay their teachers.

It was a bit cringy, to be honest, how the whole thing happened because they told their teachers that their income likely wouldn't see any drop whatsoever. Most teachers saw over a 60 to 70 percent drop in income immediately after these changes happened. It was a change that they should have made a long time ago because their current payout system is more tied to the actual revenue that they're bringing in.

It's a more sustainable business model for them, but it's something that they should have done a long time ago because obviously, these teachers on this platform have been making a certain amount of income for a consistent time period, you know, a year, two years, more than that, all of a sudden lose 60 to 70 percent of their income overnight.

That's life-changing because people use this money to put food on the table for their kids. But that's the thing, when you are using these platforms, platforms like Amazon and Etsy and Skillshare and Udemy, you are at the mercy of their algorithms and things like this can change overnight. You can drop out of search results.

They can lose funding and they can change drastically how they do things. Another thing that Skillshare started doing is they started creating their own content within Skillshare. To me, this is a little bit cringy as well. I get why they're doing it, but they have access to all of the data from You know, which courses are performing the best and they can essentially create their own content to replace some of this top content and they can keep some of that income internally, right?

Rather than paying it out to teachers by, you know, shifting some of that watch time over to their own produced courses. So we're seeing, you know, more and more of some of their own content, like being pushed towards the top of search results. You know, again, these are just examples of things that you have to compete with when you are, you know, selling on these types of platforms.

Every single one is different and yeah, they all have their own rules. So just keep that in mind. I know I've made a lot of arguments here against selling on marketplaces because there are a lot of negatives. But I think here it really boils down to that traffic aspect. You can make tons of money selling on marketplaces and it can be so much more passive than selling on your own, right?

So that's the biggest pro here for selling on marketplaces, and that pro is huge. But the problem is that it's hard to attain, right? It's hard. To land on page one it's hard to stay there. But again selling on your own it's really hard to build your own audience too. So both of these things have their pros and cons.

I think that selling on your own has the potential for a lot more because selling on marketplaces you're still never going to make it into the millions. There are people making into the millions. Our business has made over a million dollars a year at its height a couple of years ago when we were selling on our own.

And of course, there are additional disadvantages to that as well. We have had our income go up and down, up and down over the years because of COVID and because of ads changing and all kinds of

stuff. Right. So again, pros and cons to both. I think that both of these can have a place. I'm going to talk a little bit about how you can do this in your strategy.

I just think that it's important to kind of set your mind right about what you want, how you want to structure your business, and what kind of business model you want, because these really are just two different business models, two different ways of selling.

I actually have experience with both because I also have created a few Skillshare courses just to kind of test it out and see if it could be a way to earn some extra income. I learned a lot throughout the process, but I've learned that, for me, selling that way isn't going to make me more than a few hundred dollars a month. I hit a ceiling of about five hundred dollars a month in earnings, and even that was with some additional affiliate income. And any more than that, I would have to promote the content myself a lot more.

So if you want to make selling on marketplaces this passive thing, where you don't have to drive your own traffic, you have to just experiment with it. And if you hit a ceiling, My brother also is his ceiling. His ceiling is much higher than mine. But he also has his courses on a topic that's super, super popular on these platforms too, right?

Remember that when you are at the mercy of this search traffic, you're also at the mercy of the keyword volume for the keywords that you're going after. So if you're going after a topic like health and fitness or Even photography, right? These things are going to be searched a lot more than certain topics like finance or investing.

You know, some of the biggest pros and biggest advantages of being in niches like finance and business and investing are that you can charge a lot more for your products, but you completely lose that advantage when you sell on marketplaces because you have lower search volume for these topics and you also can't charge as much as you can, when you sell on your own.

So again, all these things are super important to think about and to be realistic about, you know, what that ceiling might be. And you really don't always know that until you try, but I quickly learned that after publishing a few courses. I was going to have to build out an entirely new audience and an entirely new business around trying to sell these courses.

That was something that I wasn't going to do because I can make a lot more money selling courses the way that I do on Create and Go and spending my time growing in this way. So I realized pretty quickly kind of what it was going to take to get to the next level there, and that was even with reaching page one of search results.

I was already on top for a few different keywords, but my keywords just weren't searched enough to bring me in a ton of search volume. So yeah, a lot to think about here. And again, I wanted to bring up my brother's story about earning, you know, over 20, 000 a month through this, because there is so much potential for selling on marketplaces.

I never would want to discourage anyone from that path. I just think that there are a lot of different steps to take to get to, you know, where he was and it's not going to be something that's going to be feasible for everyone. But again, if you want to sell on marketplaces, let's talk about quickly a few different ways that you can get to the top, right, to get to the top of search results.

The number one best way that you can get to the top of search results is simply to create better content to blow them away with quality. This is what my brother did because again, a lot of the courses that you

see on Skillshare and Udemy, they're not always the highest quality. Many of them have people using PowerPoint presentations and things like that.

In order to really get seen and to get noticed and to get immediate great reviews, you need to blow them away with qualities. That means getting your face on camera, having high-quality footage, and ideally some pretty great edits as well. Now, I'm not a great video editor. I've definitely been learning a lot and have taken ours up in our course updates a lot because we are on camera now in these course updates and we are doing more video edits.

But man, it's a lot of work if it's something that you're not familiar with. Again, my brother went to school for it and it still takes him a long time to get those high-quality edits done. But that is what his strategy was, was to just be so much better than everybody else. It meant that people would immediately watch his courses all the way through.

So, that longer watch time is what signals to these platforms that your content is better than other people's. And the fact that more people are buying it or more people are watching it. So that is what bumps you up in the algorithm, right? Additionally, having reviews is what gets you there, of course, but getting reviews is hard.

I mean, I tried with, you know, having a few courses on Udemy and Skillshare, and when the people don't really know you, it can be hard. I did get some reviews, but even when you do all the different prompts Udemy allows you to ask people for reviews. It's something like, you know, 5 percent of people will ever bother to leave a review and then all it takes is one person who didn't like one silly little thing about your course to give you a two-star review and just knock you out of search results.

And the worst part is when people leave bullshit reviews like that There's nothing that you can do. You can sometimes appeal it, but generally, that person is allowed to give you whatever review that they want. And that review is going to stick. So, all it takes is one negative review to bump you back out of search results.

It's gutting, really, especially when the person doesn't always have best grounds to give that review, you know? So getting reviews is really, really important, but it can be really hard. One of the ways to do this is to actually have your own audience. If you do sell on marketplaces and you drive your own traffic to these marketplaces, because that's an option.

You can still create a website and drive all your own traffic, but drive them to the marketplaces rather than your own platforms. Again, you're still going to have much lower prices. So I don't think that this method is totally worth it, but it can help you to get those initial reviews because people on your email list and in your audience are going to be more likely to give you those reviews.

Additionally, getting reviews is a lot easier when you have fantastic content. So again, if you blow them away with that quality, people are going to say, Oh my gosh, this is so much better than anything else that I've seen. On this platform, they're going to give you five-star reviews. So those reviews are super, super important.

Then finally, the other way to get on top is to just keep publishing more. Some platforms reward you for publishing more. That's not seen as often on marketplace platforms, but again, that was part of Skillshare's algorithm with our top teacher program. You did have to keep publishing every six months.

And I will say that if you want to earn more, by selling on marketplaces you do have to publish more. So every course that I created earned me, you know, another 50 bucks a month. It wasn't much. Again, I

realize that this is not worth it for me, but every course that you publish, every book that you publish, you're going to be targeting new keywords and a different level of search volume, different subset of people, as well as the people who love your content and want to take other courses, right?

But publishing more is what's also going to earn you more. And I think that pretty much sums it up, y'all. I really just wanted to go into a bit more detail about this. This is going to be in the updates for the Six-Figure Course Creator course. And yeah, think about all this when you're thinking about selling your products, make sure that you set the right expectations about, you know, what.

You can realistically expect from either of these different platforms, especially when it comes to marketplaces, because we look at people on top and we watch YouTube videos from these creators making tons of money. But you really do have to get to the top, so you need to come up with a strategy that will get you to the top or else it's.

Most likely not going to be worth it for you unless you just want to make it a side hustle I've also sold a product on Etsy more just to experiment with what it was like. It was also very competitive and hard to do this and I realized that it wasn't for me. But I did it as a side hustle side project just to see if it was a route that I wanted to go in to make some extra side hustle money.

I think that projects like this can help you just to experiment, can help you get some confidence in what you're doing, and they're, of course, learning lessons as well, but remember that you can create a whole course or ebook and sell on your own and you can sell it for three four five plus times the amount of money. It's just a matter of where you want to spend your energy, right?

Whether you want to spend it building your own audience or whether you want to spend it trying to fight your way to the top of those search results. So, both are really great options, and you can make a few thousand to even over \$10,000 a month with both of these. Again, I don't think that people at the top of these market platforms are really making millions unless you're one of those Amazon FBA sellers that sells like, You know, 10,000 products on Amazon.

That's different, right? Different from the types of products that we're talking about here. I'm really talking about courses, downloadable templates, and e-books, you know, things of that nature. Online programs. Alright, y'all, that is it for this episode, and I will see you next time.