COURSE MAKER PRO

Course & Membership Guide

Create an authority-building offer that exceeds client expectations, drives revenue, and positions you as the expert

Build My
brand iD®

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Introduction

There's never been a better time to launch an online course or membership program.

With the e-learning market expected to reach **$325 billion by 2025**, there's no shortage of

opportunities. Breaking into the online education industry is a powerful way to build your brand authority, share your expertise with others, and reach new potential clients. And as an income source, the revenue potential of an online course is almost limitless.

But with so many courses and memberships on the market, it can be hard to reach the right people. **That's where your personal brand comes in.**

Your personal brand is the key to standing out in a crowded market, building real connections with your audience, and attracting the right students for your program. Think of your course or membership as an extension of your brand. Your students are embarking on an educational journey that only YOU can lead them on.

A beautiful and professional website is only the first step to selling your course. This guide will help you get the most out of your e-learning venture by maximizing your revenue potential *and* the value you provide to your audience.

BY THE END OF THIS GUIDE YOU'LL FULLY UNDERSTAND HOW TO:

- Create an informative and actionable course curriculum
- Market your course effectively across different platforms
- Use your course as a tool to expand your personal brand

Ready to turn your ideas into an impactful and profitable online course? Let's get started!

The SOULiD Framework

At brandiD, we've helped hundreds of clients build soulful, strategic, and scalable brands using our proprietary SOULiD framework.

This guide follows the same principles: we'll walk you through the basics of building your brand, how to turn your ideas into a profitable course that helps your clients, and how to leverage that course to grow your business and personal brand.

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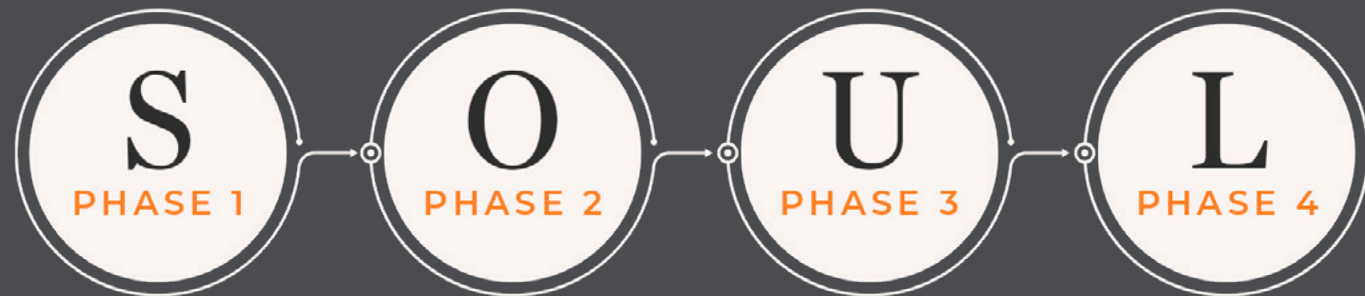
STRATEGIZE

The first step in building your personal brand is to define your voice, vision, and goals. What motivates you and inspires your work? Answering these questions will help you uncover what makes your brand one-of-a-kind.

OPTIMIZE

Clarify your audience, define your niche, and streamline your content. This is where you'll get clear on what your course or program offers clients and how that intersects with their needs.

UTILIZE

Strategy meets implementation. This is where the introspective work from the previous two steps comes to life, as you craft a positioning message that communicates your program's unique promise in a way that connects to your target audience.

LEVERAGE

Once your course is launched, it's time to expand your impact! The last few sections in this guide will give a roadmap and tools to leverage your course as an asset to grow your business.

Want help building your personal brand platform with clarity and confidence?

Learn more about platform building

Identifying Your Target Audience

Before you can create an impactful course or membership program, you need to get clear on who you're creating it for.

This will help you set the tone for your program and create informative content that helps your ideal clients reach their goals.

You may be tempted to keep your audience broad and say that your course is for anyone interested in learning about your area of expertise–but remember that when you speak to everyone, you're speaking to no one. A tightly defined target audience will streamline your course creation process and make it easier to market and sell your program.

HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS TO HELP CLARIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE:

Define Your Niche

There are hundreds of thousands of online courses out there. Choosing a niche allows

you to plant your flag in a crowded marketplace–you're declaring who your program is for and who it's not for.

A clear niche will help your ideal client understand right away that you created this course for someone exactly like them.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Who are you creating this course or program for?
- What is your area of expertise?
- Why are you passionate about this subject?
- What value are you hoping to provide?

Another powerful question to consider is what makes your course different from your competitors. Do a little digging online to see what other courses are offered in your industry to see if you can find a unique angle or if there's a specific topic that hasn't been covered in-depth before.

Research Your Ideal Client

Market research can help you validate your ideas and create content tailored to your target audience. let's get to know your ideal client, so you can create a course that provides as much value as possible.

REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS BELOW AND JOT DOWN ANY NEW IDEAS THAT COME TO MIND:

- What are your ideal client's goals and motivations?
- What challenges or pain points are they currently facing?

- How will your course or membership help them overcome those challenges?
- What are their demographics (age, gender, location, income, education, occupation, ethnicity)?
- Where do they hang out online?
- What are their hobbies and interests?
- What type of information or solutions are they searching for?

Create Learner Personas

After you've researched your ideal client, it's time to turn that data into learner personas: demographic profiles to keep in mind as you design your course.

Just like a buyer persona for your business, each learner persona should include demographic data and emotional factors such as needs, wants, and motivations. Other factors to keep in mind include their learning style (written, oral, visual) and online habits. Lastly, consider what education or skill level your learners have in the subject of your course. Are they total beginners, hobby or professionals looking to upskill?

You may have multiple target audiences for your course, in which case you'll want to create multiple learner personas. Write out a brief description for each.

As you create and refine your content, keep these personas at the forefront of your mind– these are the people you're creating the course for, and you want the content of your program to be as helpful and engaging as possible for them.

Setting Clear Learning Objectives

Learning objectives are a crucial part of any online course–both for you and your students.

As the creator, defining the outcomes of your program upfront will help you design your course with intention and keep you focused. Trying to cover everything you know about your industry in one course will quickly become overwhelming. Outlining clear learning objectives will help you determine which information to include and which to leave out.

For your students, learning objectives will keep them on track as they progress throughout the course and help them stay motivated as they make meaningful progress toward their goals.

TAKE SOME TIME TO THINK ABOUT WHAT OUTCOMES YOU WANT YOUR STUDENTS TO BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE BY THE TIME THEY FINISH YOUR COURSE. FILL IN THE STATEMENTS BELOW:

"By the end of this course, you will be able to..."

Keep Your Audience in Mind

As you craft your learning objectives, think about the outcomes your audience is searching for. Revisit your research and learner personas from the last section to see how your course objectives match your ideal client's wants, needs, and goals.

Are Your Learning Objectives SMART Goals?

SMART GOALS ARE SPECIFIC, MEASUREABLE, ACHIEVABLE, REALISTIC, AND TIME-BOUND. AFTER YOU'VE DEFINED YOUR LEARNING OBJECTIVES, RUN THEM THROUGH THIS QUICK TEST:

- Are your learning objectives highly specific?
- Will your students know without a doubt when they reach each objective?
- How will learners measure their success?
- Are your objectives achievable and realistic within the timeframe of your course?
- What is the timeline for each objective? Have you set a deadline for success?

Designing the Course Curriculum

Now that you've defined key learning objectives, you can start building your course!

As you outline what to include, remember to be generous with your knowledge. The more in-depth and the higher the quality of your content, the more likely your students will refer others to your course.

HERE ARE A FEW MORE TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU CREATE YOUR CURRICULUM:

Design Backward

Starting with your learning objectives from the last section, work backward to determine what type of assessments, materials, and topics need to be covered to help your students reach the desired outcome(s).

Depending on the subject of your course, your modules may or may not follow a linear progression from start to finish. This works well for courses that have a clear endpoint in mind; for example, how to launch a podcast or start a side hustle.

Another option is to group similar subjects together into modules. This works best if your course is more about delivering general knowledge than achieving a certain outcome.

Make it Manageable

Although you want to be generous with your knowledge, try not to go overboard. The last thing you want is for students to open your course and be overwhelmed by the amount of information.

Keep videos short (under 20 minutes if possible) and break larger topics into smaller, bite-sized chunks. Not only will the information be easier to digest, but students are more likely to stay engaged and motivated as they complete each module.

Consider Different Learning Styles

Everyone learns differently; some people love watching videos while others prefer to read text or see visuals. To maximize the value of your course, try to incorporate several types of learning material: frameworks, videos, PDFs, text, audio, infographics, quizzes, printable workbooks, etc.

Make your content interactive wherever possible to keep students engaged. For example, you may want to include a quiz after each module or a workbook for students to fill out as they work through the material.

Creating Engaging Content

The best way to turn your students intro brand advocates is to provide and enjoyable, engaging experience.

No one wants to watch a boring slideshow and be talked at for hours. Your students want to engage with you as a teacher–even if you aren't delivering the material live.

Incorporate Storytelling

People are innately wired for stories. Adding a storytelling element to your course, even something as small as sharing your personal brand story in an introductory module, will build a sense of connection between you and your audience.

The more stories you can weave through your course, the more engaging it will become. As an added bonus, storytelling makes your content more memorable. Your students are **20 times more likely** to remember key facts if they're used as part of a story.

Record High-Quality Video

VIDEO QUALITY CAN MAKE OR BREAK YOUR ONLINE COURSE EXPERIENCE. HERE'S HOW YOU CAN ENSURE THE BEST POSSIBLE FINAL PRODUCT:

- Choose a quiet space with good lighting
- Consider investing in a professional microphone, ring light, and camera to improve your audio and video quality
- Record a few test videos before committing to a certain space or setup
- Prepare a script or outline, so you don't have to worry about forgetting anything
- When you're finished, watch each video back and edit out any mistakes, or hire an editor to clean things up

It may take a few takes to get things just right, but the result will be worth it. Higher-quality videos will lead to a better experience for your students–and that leads to more sales and referrals.

Use Real-World Examples

You may be an expert in your industry, but your students don't have your level of experience (that's why they signed up to learn from you!). Incorporating real-life examples can help bring your content to life and make it easier to understand.

Case studies are another great way to illustrate your ideas. Success stories from past clients or students will help demonstrate your expertise, build trust with your audience, and make your content more engaging.

Naming Your Course

Naming your course is one of the most difficult but most rewarding parts of the process.

You want it to be catchy, yet descriptive. Short, but not too short. Attention-grabbing, but not clickbait-y.

Why have we waited until now to decide on your course title? Because you've already done the hard work of outlining your learning objectives and curriculum, this step will be much easier.

By this stage, you should have a much clearer vision of what you want your course to look like. You may have a few title ideas in mind already, and in this section, we're going to put them to the test.

TO CHOOSE YOUR COURSE TITLE, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

Brainstorm Effective Titles

Start by brainstorming as many different titles as possible. Aim for quantity over quality at first, and write down every idea that comes to mind without censoring yourself. Then once you have a good number (20+), comb through the list and choose your favorites.

It's always better to be clear than clever. When in doubt, keep your titles short and simple. Describe exactly what your course covers, who it's for, and the outcomes it will help them achieve.

Put Your Title to the Test

Once you have a shortlist of potential titles, the next step is to test them with a sample audience. Run your ideas by a small group of your ideal clients to see which titles resonate the most. Getting an outside perspective can help you narrow down your list, and eliminate any options that your audience finds confusing or less appealing.

Commit and Move Forward

It's easy to spend months agonizing over the perfect title, but we want to keep you moving forward so you can launch your course and start generating revenue. Once you land on a title you love that resonates with your target audience, it's time to commit!

Pricing Your Course

Online courses can range in price from free to thousands of dollars, and it's not always easy to determine where your course falls on that spectrum.

In this section, we'll help you decide on a pricing structure that provides great value to your audience *and* generates sustainable revenue for your business.

Market Research

A great place to start your pricing research is to look at what competitors are charging. If the average price of a course in your industry is $200, charging $2,000 may give some people sticker shock.

That doesn't mean you can't charge a higher price, but you need to be conscious of people's expectations and what makes your course worth more than your competitors (which we'll get to in the next sections).

FOR EACH COMPETITOR COURSE YOU COME ACROSS, ASK YOURSELF:

- How much are they charging?
- How are they justifying that price?
- What's included and how does that compare to your course?
- What does their pricing structure look like?
- Are there bonuses, promotions, or limited-time offers?

Tiered Pricing and Bundles

Tiered pricing offers customers a variety of options to choose from at different price points. For example, you might offer a budget-friendly, entry-level course, as well as a more advanced version. To create a higher tier option, you might add private coaching to your course for additional support.

If you have more than one course or membership program, you can also bundle together multiple offers. For example, students who sign up for your self-paced course receive a discount if they join the membership community.

The benefit of tiered and bundled pricing is that it allows each customer to choose the best option for them—maximizing both revenue and value.

Value-Based Pricing: The best way to price your course is to charge for the value it creates. Consider the objectives of your course and what those outcomes are worth to your ideal client. You can increase the value even further by adding bundles, bonuses, live interaction, a membership, or some other type of community element.

Discounts and Promotions

Discounts can be a powerful motivator for your customers, but be careful not to overdo it. Make sure you run the numbers to ensure you'll still be generating a profit on each sale. Don't forget to account for your time, the tech/software you used to create the course, and the cost of paid advertising.

Some course creators choose to offer an early bird discount to those who sign up before a certain date. This can be a great strategy to create a sense of urgency, build anticipation, and make your audience feel like they're getting something special. You can also use early bird pricing as a pre-launch strategy to sell spots before your course opens to the public.

If you'd prefer not to discount your price, consider adding bonuses instead. Offering bonus resources increases the perceived value of your course and makes customers feel like they're getting a great deal.

Adding Interactive Elements

Looking for an easy way to elevate your course and instantly make it more engaging?

Interactive elements like quizzes, polls, and assignments can turn a passive online course into a two-way conversation.

Not only is interaction fun for your students, but it also helps them retain more of what they're learning. Interactive teaching helps students learn six times faster than other methods leading to better outcomes, reviews, and referrals for your business.

Let's take a look at a few options to make your course more interactive...

Interactive Tech Tools

1. **ZOOM** for hosting live classes or Q&A sessions

2. **MOTRAIN** for reward systems and gamification

3. **GOOGLE HANGOUTS** for group calls

4. **CIRCLE** to host community and group discussions

5. **FACEBOOK OR SLACK** for group chats

6. **TYPEFORM** for quizzes and feeback forms

7. **GENIALLY** for interactive presentations and scenario branching

Learning Checkpoints

Adding quizzes, polls, and assignments throughout your course allows students to take charge of their learning process.

Instead of waiting until the end of each module, try to space interactive elements throughout the course, and vary the style of each quiz or assignment. For example, a multiple choice quiz in one module and an interactive video in another..

Encourage Community

Online groups, chat rooms, and message boards are a great way for your students to connect with you and each other. Consider hosting Office Hours on Zoom or inside a private Facebook group.

You can also encourage collaboration by breaking up your students into "study groups" (or splitting large Zoom calls into breakout rooms). Having face time with other students will increase accountability, boost motivation, and lead to a better overall experience.

Building a Community

Community building is an essential part of any online course or membership.

Creating a loyal community around your brand is what will lead to repeat customers, referrals, and ultimately higher revenue.

In the last section, we talked about adding interactive elements to your course. But it's not enough to include a few quizzes here and there–if you want to build real connections with your audience, that interaction needs to go both ways.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- When, where, and how will you make yourself available to your students?
- How will you continue to provide value beyond course modules?
- What platforms will you use to stay connected to your audience?
- How will you nurture those relationships both within and outside of your course?

Online Forums and Discussion Groups

Forums and discussion groups are a great way to stay in touch with your course students without needing to be there in real-time. You can set a deadline for students to submit their questions or assignments for feedback, then respond to everyone at once. You can also encourage students to answer each others' questions, or post a weekly discussion question and invite everyone to weigh in.

Fostering Engagement on Social Media

Don't forget to nurture relationships outside of your course as well. Engage with your audience on social media, email your list regularly, and continue to grow your community on other platforms. From there, it's a natural next step to invite people to check out your course.

Live Webinars and Q&A Sessions

When it comes to building community, nothing beats live face-to-face interaction. Sitting down with your students is one of the best ways to build trust and nurture

relationships. Be generous with your knowledge, take the time to thoughtfully answer questions, and your students will reward you with glowing testimonials.

Marketing and Promotion

Congrats on making it this far!

You've put in the work to build a course that's informative, engaging, and interactive–now you just need to get the word out. That's where your marketing strategy comes in.

Step #1: Identify Your Differentiator

With so many courses and memberships available online, the first thing you need to do is identify what makes your program unique. Think of this as your special sauce, your X-Factor, or as we call it at brandiD, your O-Factor—the intersection between the obviousness of the market's need and the obviousness of your solution.

HERE ARE A FEW PROMPTS:

- Who are your main competitors and what do you do differently?
- What does your ideal client want more than anything?
- How does your course/membership solve your ideal client's pain points?
- What makes you an expert on this topic?
- What's one thing you do better than everyone else?

Step #2: Develop Your Strategy

Marketing is the key to getting your course or program in front of the right people at the right time.

KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Will you run an early bird discount?
- How many email subscribers do you have and how engaged are they?
- Which social media platforms perform best for your business?
- Will you run paid ads or rely on organic traffic?
- Where have your leads typically come from in the past?
- Will you run a live webinar or create another type of lead magnet?
- Can you partner with influencers or affiliates?

There are hundreds of marketing strategies out there, but we've hand-selected our top picks for course creators below.

Social Media Marketing

Choose your favorite platform and start planning content around your course. Include educational and entertaining content along with promotional posts, and make sure to engage with your audience regularly, even outside of promotion periods. No one wants to feel like they're being sold 24/7!

Social media is a powerful tool for growing your brand visibility, but it's best used to drive traffic to your website and email list. Which leads us to...

Leverage Your List

Email is one of the best places to market your online course or membership program. Your email subscribers are already familiar with your brand, which means they're more likely to buy than a cold audience.

HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS FOR HOW TO SELL YOUR COURSE OVER EMAIL:

- Use the discount and promotion strategies from Section 7 to pre-sell your course to your email list before the public launch
- Create a free download (lead magnet) and follow-up email series that drives people to your course
- Offer behind-the-scenes bonuses to email subscribers
- Promote your course in your weekly or monthly newsletter

You can also use email to keep engagement up as students progress through your course. For example, you could send a Monday Check-In email to let them know what's happening each week, what they'll be learning, when the calls are, and any additional resources you want to share.

Collaboration and Partnerships

If you want to grow your audience, consider partnering with another business or influencer in your niche. Guest blogging, podcast interviews, and affiliate marketing are great opportunities to expand your brand reach and get in front of new people.

To make the most of each partnership, look for businesses that are in an industry adjacent to yours and share a similar ideal client (so you're filling your audience with quality leads who will be interested in your course).

Feedback and Iteration

BUILDING A FEEDBACK COLLECTION PROCESS INTO YOUR COURSE (EITHER AT THE END OF THE PROGRAM OR ON AN ONGOING BASIS) IS VITAL FOR TWO REASONS:

1. IT HELPS YOU IMPROVE THE COURSE/MEMBERSHIP FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

2. IT SHOWS YOUR CURRENT STUDENTS YOU CARE ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE

Your students can offer valuable insight into your customer experience and what led them to purchase from you over your competitors–ideas you can incorporate into your marketing.

Tools and Techniques for Gathering Feedback

The most common method of collecting feedback is through a survey. You can embed surveys directly into your website or course platform, or use a tool like Google Forms or TypeForm to send it via email.

If you find people aren't responding to your survey, try shortening the number of questions (no more than 10) or offering a small incentive such as a $10 gift card.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- How easy was it to sign up for this course?
- What was the buying experience like?
- Which part of the program did you find most/least helpful?
- Were you considering other courses/programs? What led you to choose this one?
- What surprised you about the program?
- If you could add anything to this course, what would it be?

Decide on a goal: *Before requesting feedback from your students, make sure you have a clear purpose in mind. If you're running this program for the first time, you'll want to focus on the basics, such as finding mistakes or tech glitches. If you've run the program a dozen times, your survey questions might be geared more toward improving or restructuring the course content.*

Iterating and Improving Your Course

As more students go through your program, you'll naturally notice changes you want to make, as well as sections you want to add or remove.

Try to stay open to critical feedback from your students by asking what they would change about the course. Praise is great for testimonials, but if you want to create the best course possible that means being open to improvement.

Asking if there were any issues also gives you the opportunity to resolve them. If you respond quickly and kindly, your customers will be able to see how much you care about giving them a great experience.

Continuous Engagement and Updates

One of the biggest challenges for course creators is to keep students engaged over the long term.

Ideally, you don't want someone to buy from you once and disappear–you want to build a brand they come back to over and over again.

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS TO HELP BOOST YOUR RETENTION RATES:

Keep Your Content Fresh

As you move out of "beta mode", you may find yourself making lots of small tweaks and updates. Once your course is live, it's a good idea to revisit the content every six months to see if anything needs to be updated. If you're in a fast-paced niche or there's been a major change in your industry, you may need to go back in more often.

Although it might feel tedious to make edits, the benefit is that you can send an email to all your current and past students letting them know that the course has gotten a refresh. Inviting them to check out the new material is a great way to re-engage cold leads.

Re-Engage Past Students

The best way to stay in touch with past students is to not lose touch in the first place. Nurture your relationships with students past and present, email your list regularly, and stay engaged with your community. That said, life happens and not everyone will work through your course at a steady pace.

HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS TO HELP KEEP YOUR STUDENTS ON TRACK:

Sometimes a simple email sequence can be enough to prompt students to revisit your course. Use your email marketing platform to set up an automatic drip campaign whenever a student goes X amount of days without logging into your course platform.

Other times, depending on your business and how many students you have, you may want to perform personalized outreach. A quick note to check in on a student's progress might be the extra motivation that person needs.

You can also use both of the tactics above to direct past students to new offers–if you're launching another course, for example, or 1:1 coaching.

Next Steps

Congratulations on making it this far!

Launching an online course or membership is a huge accomplishment, so let's take a moment to admire all your hard work. Not only have you created a new income stream, but you've also built a long-term asset for your personal brand.

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS FOR WHERE TO GO NEXT:

Use Your Course as a Springboard

Your course or membership program can pave the way for more advanced offers, like a high-ticket service, coaching program, or 1:1 support–generating even more revenue for your business.

Turn Your Students intro Brand Ambassadors

You've also opened the door to creating brand ambassadors: students who love your course so much that they generously refer their network to your offers. Brand ambassadors can become powerful affiliates, adding another source of income to your business.

Course Maker Pro Website

Our Course Maker Pro Website Template can be customized to reflect your style and all the things that make your personal brand uniquely you! The layout is built specifically to market your online course, engage potential students, and communicate that you're an authority in your space, without actually saying that—unless you want to!

Bring Your Personal Brand to Life with brandiD

If you want more support in building your personal brand, our team has over 15 years of experience helping course creators like you turn their big audacious goals into reality.

We can help you build the foundation for a new online course or elevate your existing brand with a new strategy, professionally built website, and authority-building content.

Book a Call
or email us at: **info@thebrandiD.com**

Here's to your continued success!