Launching an Online Course

What is a course launch?

A course launch is a marketing campaign sent to your existing audience, that serves to build awareness of, and facilitate enrollments in your online course — within a set period of time. Course launches are typically done over a period of 3-4 weeks, via a series of emails or social media posts, and consist of **three phases** that take as many people from your audience from Unaware → Problem aware → Solution aware → Most aware.

The three phases of a course launch are:

1. **Creating awareness & building hype**

   Here, you begin by addressing your audience's problem (through your content) with NO mention of your course whatsoever. For example, if you teach dog training, you could share a listicle of the top ten signs your dog needs training — but that's it. Meaning, you should not be doing any direct selling of your course, or leading customers to your sales page yet! At the very most, you may want to mention that you're working on "something big" and that it will be launching soon, but really, this phase is about priming your audience, and getting them into the right mindset for your course launch.

2. **Official launch/Cart open**

   Now is when you'll start sending customers to your sales page. Your campaign's focus at this point is to get as many people as possible to purchase your course. This phase will be the bulk of your launch campaign, and can be broken down further:
   a. Launch
   b. Problem
   c. Solution
   d. Benefits
   e. Social proof & FOMO
   f. FAQs & Risk Reversals

3. **Cart close**
   In the last 2-3 days of your campaign, you'll want to ramp up your touchpoints, communicating with your audience much more frequently to keep their attention, and to keep your course top of mind right before closing your cart, for those who are still on the fence.

When Should I Launch My Online Course?

You should only launch your online course once you have a **completed** product — beta versions are fine, but it shouldn't be missing entire modules, or other large components of the course's offering.

The exceptions are if you'll be using a drip schedule to release your content slowly over a number of weeks, or delivering content live. In these circumstances, you can continue to work on your course content as you go — so long as you have a very clear idea of what needs to be done, and you aren't 'winging it' week-to-week.

Note: Your first launch will likely be most popular with the people in your audience who are already 'warm' to your brand (since you've already been priming followers with your content and/or community). Therefore, it's also important to plan to think longer-term about how you'll bring a new audience to your course after your initial launch.

You'll need to eventually create a way to consistently drive traffic to your course, ie. a growth engine. Luckily, your initial launch gives you a great headstart on that, as it allows you to create a basic sales funnel which you can build upon over time.

Planning your online course launch

Here are some of the key details to identify for your launch:

Your launch date:
Your launch campaign should begin 3-4 weeks before this date.

Your primary communication method:
How/where do you communicate with your audience most? Use that channel for your launch communications, if possible.

Email

Social Media (e.g. Instagram)

Community (e.g. Facebook Group)

Affiliates

Ads

Other:

Your content schedule (use the calendar below)
Your content is how you will execute on, and move your audience through each phase of your launch (from building awareness & hype, to the official launch/cart open, to cart close).

Your Content Schedule (30 Day Launch Calendar)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	🎙 Content Promotion Email Content Ideas:		🎙 Content Promotion Email Content Ideas:	
		🎙 Content Promotion Email Content Ideas:		🎙 Content Promotion Email Content Ideas:
$ Cart Open Announcement		$ Discuss Problem		$ Discuss Solution
$ Course Benefits	$ Social Proof	$ FAQs + Risk Reversal	🔔 Cart Close (24 hr)	🔔 Cart Close (12hr & 1 hr)

Launch Email Templates

Below, we've outlined a launch sequence spanning 30 days and provided templates for each step for you to use or get inspired by.

Each of the templates below will give you an idea of who to send the message to, what to say, and what you should be telling people to do.

Keep in mind... we've set this sequence up for a launch to a mailing list, but you can take the structure of the sequence and, in some cases, the templates provided, and use them elsewhere.

Not using email?

You can adapt the sequence and templates below for a video series, a blog post series, tweets or other social media posts, and beyond.

Before you begin

If you're selling the course, make sure to price the course regularly and then set up a time-limited or quantity limited coupon code for your launch promotion.

Learn how to set up a coupon for your course at the Thinkific Help Center →

Before Launch: Staying Top of Mind

Before sending anything related to the launch of your course, you need to get your audience into the right mindset to listen to you in the first place. Your goal for the few weeks or days preceding your launch is to simply drive engagement with your brand.

You want to be top-of-mind for your audience. You want them to see your launch emails after hearing from you and think, *"Yes! This is the person I love to hear from about this kind of stuff! I wonder what they have to offer..."*

Note: If you think you do this already, you can skip ahead!

You will do this by sharing valuable but freely available content that is highly relevant to the target audience you built your online course for. The content could be related to what you cover in your course, or simply interesting to your audience. For example, prior to many course creator's launches they might run free educational webinars, release (or re-release) blog posts or other kinds of content (e.g. YouTube videos, podcast episodes, etc.).

To do this, take stock of what kind of content you have that fits the bill here. Think about which of your content has already seen a high level of engagement with your target audience.

No re-usable content?

Alternatively, brainstorm content, or unique opportunities like webinars, you could create to engage your audience. Think about content that is related to your course but not directly repeated there

For example, if you taught dog training, you could produce content about "signs that your dog needs training," or if you teach corporate leadership you could produce profiles of famous leaders and what they did right or wrong in your opinion.

Promoting your content

Next, plan to share this content with your audience via your favourite channel (e.g. email, social, etc.):

Ways I'll promote this content to my audience:

> Email

> Social Media (e.g. Instagram)

> Community (e.g. Facebook Group)

> Other:

Content Promotion Email Template

There's many ways to promote content via email (or other channels) but our recommendation is to keep things simple, short, and to keep this goal in mind: get the reader to engage with your content (i.e. read it, watch it, etc.). Your emails shouldn't be the content.

Recipients:

Your whole audience/any follower.

Subject line:

(Use the title of your content)

- or -

Thinking about [course topic]? [Read/watch] this new [article/video/etc.]

EMAIL BODY:

Hey [First Name]!

A lot of people ask me about [topic of the content you're sharing]. I've been working with people on this for some time now, and decided to collect my thoughts on it.

I put out a [article/video/etc.] recently and here's what I thought were the main takeaways from it:

[Takeaway 1]
[Takeaway 2]
[Takeaway 3]
[Takeaway 4]
[Takeaway 5, etc.]

CALL TO ACTION:

Want all the details?

"Read the article"

- or -

"Watch the video"

[Link to your content]

Launch Day Announcement and Time-Limited Offer

This is going to be your big announcement! In this message, you're going to roll out the red carpet for your offer, presenting it as the most amazing thing since sliced bread.

Remember to mention your offer is time-limited to create a sense of urgency.

Recipients:

Anyone in your audience that hasn't signed up yet.

Subject line:

It's here! [Course Name] is open for enrollment!

- or -

Announcing [Course Name]: available at [discount amount] for [discount time period]!

EMAIL BODY:

Hey [First Name]!

[Course Name] is launched and open for enrollment!

[Main call to action]

For the next [discount time period] you can get it at [discount amount] off the regular price.

Here's what you're going to get:

[List all the features of your course, like hours of content, bonuses, extras, or add-ons]

Remember that your discount expires on [discount expiry date], so sign up soon!

[Another call to action here]

I'll be answering any questions by email, so just reply and I'll get right back to you.

Cheers,

[Signature]

PS: I'd love for you to join in on the launch day celebration! Forward this email to your friends or share the following URL on social media:

[Your course landing page URL]

CALL TO ACTION:

"Sign Up Now!"

[Link to your course with the coupon code attached]

Introducing the Problem

The 'Problem Analysis' series of messages is going to be how you explain the problem your course solves, the solution your course offers, and the benefits of solving that problem with your course, to your audience.

This is essentially the sales content from your landing page broken up over three different parts. Send one part per day.

In the first message, you're going to analyze the problem in-depth. Provide a description of it, and the consequences of not solving the problem.

Recipients:

Anyone in your audience that hasn't signed up yet.

Subject line:

Here are a few mistakes we've all made...

- or-

Here's a problem we all struggle with...

- or -

I wasted so much time on this exact thing...

EMAIL BODY:

Hey [First Name],

I created [Course Name] because, like you, I've struggled for a long time with [problem your course solves here]. All I wanted when I got started was a clear path to fixing that problem.

I decided to look back at my journey and to put together what I did to solve the problem into one online course that covers it all.

I launched this course on [date] and you can still get it for [discount amount] off until [discount expiry date].

[Main call to action]

Over the next few emails I'll go over how I did it and how you can do it too.

First let's talk about all the mistakes I made (and maybe a few that you've made as well).

[Start talking about the problem specifically here from your perspective]

Solving that problem took a little while, and the time it took to fix it on my own ended up costing me.

[Speak about the consequences of the problem from your perspective]

Don't let that happen to you too. And if it has happened to you, don't let it happen again!

I'll go more into what I did to fix the problem in the next email. Stay tuned!

Cheers,

[Signature]

CALL TO ACTION:

"Learn More Here!"

[Link to your course with the coupon code attached]

Introducing a Solution

After discussing the problem in your last message, send out an outline of the solution. You can include actionable steps to provide someone with a part of the solution here, which will prove your expertise in your course topic.

Recipients:

Anyone in your audience that hasn't signed up yet.

Subject line:

Here are a few quick wins

- or -

How to fix [the problem your course solves] - permanently!

- or -

What I learned and how you can leverage it...

EMAIL BODY:

Hey [First Name],

On [day/date], I talked all about [the problem your course solves] and how it can cause all kinds of trouble if it isn't fixed.

Now, let's talk about how you can fix the problem once and for all. [Start talking about how you fixed the problem specifically here from your perspective]

It took me a lot of work to finally fix this issue once and for all and I've got the entire solution - shown step by step - in my online course called [Course Name].

I'm still offering that [discount amount] off the regular price for my online course until [discount expiry date].

[Main call to action]

Let me know if you have any questions about anything you read about the course! Reply to this email to get in touch.

Cheers,

[Signature]

CALL TO ACTION:

"Learn More Here!"

[Link to your course with the coupon code attached]

The Benefit of Solving the Problem

After going over both the problem, and the solution in detail, you're going to talk all about the benefits of solving that problem by taking your course. In this message it is especially powerful to show real proof behind each benefit you speak about.

For example, if your course boosts someone's revenue, show your own in a graph or chart over time and point out when you solved the problem.

Recipients:

Anyone in your audience that hasn't signed up yet.

Subject line:

Here's the next step!

- or -

What it really means to fix [the problem your course solves]

- or -

What should you do now?

EMAIL BODY:

Hey [First Name],

So far, I've covered how [the problem your course solves] can be a huge problem for people just like you.

I've also covered how someone such as yourself can go about fixing the problem on your own.

Now, I want to fast track that process with you in my online course. I've got so many more things to teach you along the way too.

I've compiled everything into my online course available here: [Link to your course landing page here].

And because you've made it this far, you're still one of the lucky few who has the option of applying a [discount amount] off discount at the checkout.

[Start speaking at length about the benefits of solving the problem as fast as possible, use examples or proof here]

If you want to learn more about the course, head over to the course overview page here: [Link to your course landing page here].

And remember, I'm here for you if you have any questions!

Cheers,

[Signature]

CALL TO ACTION:

"Learn More Here!"

[Link to your course with the coupon code attached]

Social Proof + FOMO

As we wind down to the end of your promotional pricing period for the course, you'll want to start addressing reasons why someone might not be convinced yet to buy or sign up for the course. One of these reasons might be that the lead just needs to see proof that their investment in your product will provide a return.

In this email, talk about a past client, or about someone who has already purchased the course and gave you feedback on why they chose you.

Any past reviews or testimonials work well here.

Recipients:

Anyone in your audience that hasn't signed up yet.

Subject line:

You're not alone!

- or -

You'll love this story

- or -

What's holding you back?

EMAIL BODY:

Hey [First Name],

Did you see that discount link for my new online course yet? Tons of other people have already used it and I don't want you to miss your chance!

[Customer Name] signed up already, and here's why [he/she] made the decision:

[Add your testimonial here - screenshots of social media shout outs work well here]

Right now, you can get a [discount amount] on my new course, [Course Name].

[Main call to action]

That's a fantastic deal (the regular price is [regular price here]) and it will expire on [discount expiry date].

Lock in your spot in the online course now, and get all future updates to the course for FREE!

Any questions? Reply and I'll answer!

Cheers,

[Signature]

CALL TO ACTION:

"Sign Up Today!"

[Link to your course with the coupon code attached]

FAQs + Risk Reversals

At this point if someone hasn't purchased the course, it's likely that they still have some objections about the pricing or aren't sure about the course content. This message should cover all the possible objections someone could have.

Recipients:

Anyone in your audience that hasn't signed up yet.

Subject line:

Here's a quick question for you...

- or -

Just wondering...

- or -

Here are my answers to some great questions so far about [Course Name]

EMAIL BODY:

Hey [First Name],

I released [Course Name] about [x number of days] ago now, and I've noticed that you've been interested but aren't really sure about buying the course yet.

You must have a few questions about the deal or if the course is right for you. A few others have already reached out to me and here's what they were wondering:

[Answer some common questions about the course below, making sure that your answers eliminate any objection to buying the course.]

Here are some typical questions to answer in this email:

What is the price of the course?

What do I get outside of the course content?

Can I get a free trial to see if this course is for me?

What if I don't like the course after I buy it? Can I get a refund?

I don't know if I have time for the course, how long is it? Do I need to book time to take it?]

Are you ready to sign up for [Course Name]?

[Main call to action]

Let me know if you didn't see your question here by replying to this email.

I'll get back to you ASAP!

Cheers,

[Signature]

CALL TO ACTION:

"Let's Get Started"

[Link to your course with the coupon code attached]

24 Hour Warning

You've made your case as to why someone should take the course, so this message will summarize what you've said so far. This should be your last content-heavy email. The rest will be reminders.

Recipients:

Anyone in your audience that hasn't signed up yet.

Subject line:

You need to act fast

- or -

Your [discount amount] is expiring soon

EMAIL BODY:

Hey [First Name],

I mentioned a few days ago that I'll be turning off the first week discount for my new course, [Course Name], on [discount expiry date].

I just wanted to give you a heads up that it's coming up tomorrow! You have 24 hours left to use your [discount amount] off discount.

[Main call to action]

Here are # great reasons why you should enroll in this course: [List off all the great aspects of your course. This could be the amount of course content, bonuses, added services and support, etc. Adding screenshots works well here.]

Because you're on this list, you're getting a huge discount. Click below before it goes away!

[Another call to action here]

(This course will go up to [regular price] in 24 hours!)

If you have any questions, just hit reply to ask me!

Cheers,

[Signature]

CALL TO ACTION:

"Enroll Now"

[Link to your course with the coupon code attached]

12 Hour Warning

On the last day of your promotion you just want to nudge any late comers to take action quickly. Send this 12 hours before the end of the promotion.

Recipients:

Anyone in your audience that hasn't signed up yet.

Subject line:

It's your last chance!

- or -

You have 12 more hours to get your discount

EMAIL BODY:

Hey [First Name],

Just a friendly reminder that I'll be turning off the [discount amount] off discount for anyone looking to take my latest online course, [Course Name], in 12 hours.

I've had lots of people sign up and they're all very excited to dig in. I hope to see you there too!

[Main call to action]

Cheers,

[Signature]

CALL TO ACTION:

"Sign Up Today"

[Link to your course with the coupon code attached]

1 Hour Warning

Just like your last message, this warning is more about notifying your audience than selling your course. They have heard enough about WHY they should buy, and now just need to feel the urgency of missing out on your discount.

Recipients:

Anyone in your audience that hasn't signed up yet.

Subject line:

There's 60 minutes left to get [discount amount] off [Course Name]!

EMAIL BODY:

Hey [First Name]!

Just another friendly reminder that I'll be turning off the [discount amount] off discount for anyone looking to take my latest online course, [Course Name], in the next 60 minutes.

After this hour, the regular price of [regular price for the course] will be in effect.

This might be your last chance to get this discount! Click below to take advantage of it:

[Main call to action]

Cheers,

[Signature]

CALL TO ACTION:

"Sign Up Today"

[Link to your course with the coupon code attached]