

THE CHEAT SHEET SERIES

The Ultimate Guide to Selling Courses Online

1. Identify your audience

This is the first step for setting up a successful online training business. Even if you use the most advanced marketing activities, it won't have any impact if you're speaking to the wrong people. The things you need to consider, are not limited to, but may refer to your audience's:

- Goals & Objectives
- Needs & Pain points
- Interests
- Demographics
- Preferences

Start by creating a survey in your portal or reach out to your users directly through email.

2. Create a blog

Maintaining an active blog is one of the most effective practices to market your courses online. Updating your blog regularly (the more often the better, but 2-3 times per week also does it) with interesting content that applies to your audience's needs can work miracles in terms of attracting visitors to your portal. Platforms like e.g. [WordPress](#) can be pretty handy to use for that purpose and here is a thorough [guide](#) on how to make your blog stand out.

3. Offer free resources

Offering free learning resources to your users is always a great idea. They can offer insight to your audience of the experience they would receive from attending your courses and motivate them to join. The resources can vary in context and format depending on your area of expertise but some of the most common ones with proven usefulness are:

- eBooks
- White papers
- Industry reports

- Infographics
- Templates
- Cheat Sheets
- Short sample courses

4. Use social media

Social media is proven to be a very useful channel when it comes to sharing and promoting your content. Having a well thought out social media strategy requires that you understand your target audience (as mentioned above). Each platform ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), etc.) has its own tone of voice and personality and it is likely that they won't all apply to your goals and business context, so choosing in which channel you will put your effort into is crucial.

5. Start a newsletter

What better way to keep your learners posted about any new updates regarding your training portal than to utilize email marketing platforms such as [MailChimp](#) and [Campaign Monitor](#). You can promote amongst your users (even for free) anything you feel like worth sharing, from new learning material and courses to coupons and discounts. Some of them, like MailChimp for instance, can also be easily [integrated](#) with your LMS. Depending on your activities' frequency, you could establish either a monthly or a weekly newsletter. A few ideas on how to acquire a list of users to begin with:

- Running a contest on your portal
- Asking for your users' email addresses when offering free resources
- Using pop-ups on your portal - an exit-intent pop-up would be less disruptive
- Using Widgets & In-page options, like e.g. subscribe boxes

Once your contacts are captured, it is time to nurture them and turn them into leads. There are a few ways to handle



your contacts effectively, some of them including offering:

- Useful resources
- Time-limited bundles, discounts & coupons
- Free courses
- A free trial period on your portal

6. Create a forum

Having an active forum gives a sense of community to your users while at the same time offering insight on their specific needs and problems. Some LMSs offer the opportunity to create a forum internally, like the TalentLMS discussions tool.

7. Influencer outreach

Depending on your focus industry, it is valuable to recognize people with proven expertise, such as influencers and opinion leaders. Once you've identified influencers that qualify, reach out to them with an offer they cannot refuse. Ways to do this:

- Offer a piece of high-quality content or a course you've built that they can share with their audience
- Ask them to collaborate with you for one of your courses
- Host an interview or a piece of content (e.g. a blog post) that they're willing to share on your portal or blog

In any case, don't forget that the nature of the relationship you want to establish should be mutually beneficial.

8. Paid advertising

Once you've used some or all of the organic practices described above to promote your courses, the next step to boost your eLearning business is to invest in paid advertising. Paid Ads related to your portal can be placed on several different networks, with the most common ones being:

- Search networks
- Social media
- Video channels
- Display networks

9. Remarketing

Remarketing (or Retargeting) is a common tactic used in Paid Advertising. It allows you to position your ads in front of users that have previously visited your eLearning portal but didn't subscribe or buy a course. In the same way as with paid ads, remarketing can be amplified through several different networks by adding a tag (a piece of code) on your platform.

10. Gather testimonials

Using your existing clients' endorsements is a highly effective way to promote your business. This could be communicated in any format that you (and your clients) prefer, such as:

- Quotes
- Interviews
- Videos
- [Case Studies](#)

The more distinguished and well-known your customers are, the higher the credibility your business will receive. It is as simple as sending them an email but can have a great impact on your eLearning business.