

E93 - How to choose the right topic and niche for your course.

Welcome to The Empowered Edupreneur Podcast. My name is Michelle Smit, and I am an ex-teacher turned online business coach for Edupreneurs, the owner of Digiteach and a six-figure entrepreneur. I am in love with empowering educators, just like you to create freedom filled online businesses and lives they love.

If you are looking to uplevel your skills, your finances, your mindset, and change the trajectory of your life as an educator in business, then you are in the right place. Think of this podcast as your weekly dose of business and mindset development to help unlock the infinite potential within you to play bigger with your life and go after your dreams.

We are going to have so much fun together. So thank you so much for watching. Now let's dive in.

Hello, hello. So good to be chatting to you today. So today, what am I going to talk about? I am going to share a topic that I think is really important. Because it really does form the foundation of your life. Business and the money you'll make and how profitable you'll be and how successful and all of that.

It is an important one. And yeah, I think there's a few things that I can share in this episode that could help you steer you in the right direction. So I'm going to talk about how to choose the right topic for your course. Basically the niche for your course. The topic, what you're teaching on the problem you're solving, as well as who you're teaching it to.

So I think I have about five key things that I want to share with you. So if you have like a teaching business or you want to start an online business and you want to create a course or a group program but you're, and you've got a few ideas of the topic you want to teach and the problem you want to solve and the people you want to solve that problem for.

But you're not really sure on which one to go for this episode actually might help you. So the first thing is you want to create an offer. When I talk about an offer, I'm talking about anything that's like a course or a group program. It could even be a membership. It doesn't matter what it is.

It's an offer that you are selling. And I'm thinking, I'm talking about like a core offer at this moment. And so your main product, let's say and this could be your first course, but it's the main thing that you generate income from in your business. It's your core, it's your signature thing.

So when you are creating this thing, you really want to create it on something that people want. And you think that I wouldn't have to say this, but I see it all the time. I've now helped so many people map out offers like over a thousand, I would say by now. And I'm especially in my boot camps.

And I see it a lot where people create, they want to create their offer. On something they want, but the masses, when I think about that, I'm like do people actually really want this? Is this something people are passionate about? Is this something that people are actively, paying to solve these problems?

Is there a market for it? So it seems weird that I would have to mention this, but you have to create something that people want. Selling something to someone if they don't want it is literally the hardest thing ever. You are selling something to a lack of demand and it's almost impossible to do that.

Doesn't matter how good you are at marketing and sales. If people don't want it, they don't see the need for it, or they don't have the passion for it. It's not a pain point that they actually really have that they're willing to pay money to solve, then you are not going to come right with that.

And I see it a lot. Don't create something that you want without checking if there's actually a market for it. And when you are looking for that, if you see competitors selling the same thing, that is a sign that this thing sells. If there is a lot of people selling it, it means that there's a market for it.

If there's zero human beings selling the thing, I'm not saying necessarily that means there's no demand or market, but I would consider that as a little bit of a red flag. And I would just dig deeper into market research. Even if it isn't a course or group program that people are selling, is someone selling the same similar thing, even if it's in person or whatever, because that would also be a sign that, people are buying it.

People want it and things like that. But yeah, please sell something that people actually want, because if you start off, if you choose something that you want, that you think is important, and you then need to convince people that they should want it, you're going to lose. If you need to convince someone that they should do this thing, you're going to lose.

I think I've made this example before. It's like selling a plant based vegan course to non-vegans. Imagine how difficult that would be like, here's my vegan course where I'm going to help you become a vegan. Because it's good for the planet. And then they need to convince the person on the other side of the screen that they should become a vegan.

And they should buy this course because it's good for the planet. And I think that we should all be vegans. And so I'm going to create a course to help non vegans become vegans, because that's what I think should happen. And then you go, and you try sell that thing. And you're literally having to convince people to want this thing that they don't want.

And you're just not going to win. You're not going to win that fight. It's a battle that is not worth fighting, I believe. And so what you would want to do is sell a vegan course or a plant-based course to people who are already vegan and plant based. Because they share the beliefs. They want the thing.

Maybe they just want access to better recipes and they want easier recipes, quicker recipes. Because they find it exhausting having to think of it on their own. And find the group of people that want the thing you want and sell the thing to them. So yeah, that seems pretty self-explanatory but it's a common one that people get wrong.

Crazy enough. Okay. The next thing is create a course on a topic or create an offer, whatever that offer is, course program, membership, whatever you want it, want It could even be your like a high ticket one on one package, whatever it is, create it on a topic or problem that people already spend money solving.

That's a sign that people are going to spend money to solve that problem. If they're already spending money solving that problem elsewhere in different ways, then you know that there is a market for it. And there's some problems that exist in the world that people don't necessarily want to spend money solving.

And then there's problems that exist where people are like, oh man, take my money. Just solve this problem. You'll have to think about that when you choose your topic for your program and your niche. It's are people happy to spend money solving this problem.

Are people already spending money solving this problem? Or are they like, oh, we'll just do it free because it's easier or whatever. Or it's not a big enough problem that people are wanting to invest in to solve. That's another thing. Can they go on YouTube and solve this problem pretty easily?

Because of course, everyone always says like, why create courses when there's so much free content online? There's stuff on YouTube, whatever, whatever. And that is true. There's a lot of stuff that I would go to YouTube for and just learn how to do. When I need to know how to do something on like a software or Canva things like that, like tutorials, I'm just going to go to YouTube and do that thing.

If you're going to go and create a course on how to use Canva are people going to buy that course or are they going to go to YouTube? Because it's just easy to search in YouTube what they want and then get the answer. But of course the more, and this brings me onto, my next point, which I'll mention now. But the more sophisticated the problem the more likely people are going to invest to solve it, right?

So the harder the problem is to solve. Like getting a quick fix on Canva is simple. But if they wanted to make like really crazy, I don't know, presentations, animation presentations using Canva that does all these crazy things, then maybe. I wouldn't go to YouTube to solve that. I would probably just buy something that told me how to do it from A to Z.

So that's the other thing. I'm one to go and invest in courses that give me the whole picture of the thing that I need to do. Like the whole puzzle. Especially the harder the problem is. For example, Facebook advertising, you can go, and you can go and look on YouTube on how to do Facebook advertising, but that's a sophisticated problem.

That's a pretty intense thing to Google search. Because it's a beast Facebook ad, like learning how to do Facebook ads. It's very hard to do it. I believe through YouTube videos, because it just gives you like these little tips. Bits of information that don't really lead to anything.

And then you're just throwing spaghetti at a wall and hoping something sticks. Like for me, that's why people create courses. That's why programs work because they give you the full picture from A to Z. So you just need to follow that course and get the result. Whereas with free stuff, you just get lost, right?

So that's why people buy programs because they want the full picture, and they want someone to guide them step by step. It saves them time, saves their money, but it needs to be on something that people are wanting to spend money to solve. If it's a really easy problem, people can just YouTube it, or whatever, Google it, chat, GPT it, things like that.

So then that brings me on to the next point, which is the bigger and the more sophisticated, the problem also, the more that you can charge for solving it. So a good example would be Facebook advertising. Learning how to do that on your own is like a beast. It's really overwhelming.

But it's so popular and everyone will probably need to look into Facebook advertising at some point. Or any paid advertising, whatever, if you want to do Pinterest, YouTube, but going in searching that on your own and trying to do that on your own is like seriously painful.

So of course, people are going to go and buy a program that's going to show them the whole thing of how to set up an ad, run an ad, build a list with an ad, do this, all the mistakes to avoid. Of course, people are going to buy that thing. And because it's an advanced thing and it's quite a sophisticated problem, you can charge pretty high for that.

And that's the other thing. The topic you are choosing is the problem big enough. Is it a sophisticated problem? So it's important to realize that that problem needs to be big enough and sophisticated enough, maybe even a little bit more advanced to solve it. That's something that I was really thinking about, the more specialized the thing is often the higher you can charge.

And obviously you want to be in a niche where you can charge higher prices. You don't want to necessarily choose a niche where you are literally limited to low ticket offers because people just aren't going to spend more than that to solve that problem.

So look at the problem you're solving. Is it a sophisticated problem? Is it something that people are already spending money on to solve? Is it a big problem? Is it like an urgent thing that people are like, oh, this is such a pain, I just need to get this solved, right? You're going to have a much easier time selling it then.

The other thing is to sell something that is Consistent, like the topic that you're selling, it needs to be able to sell all the time, not only in December or only during exam time. So it can't be like a time sensitive thing that only happens during this one month of the year, because then you can only sell one month of the year.

So the topic you choose should be ideally consistent. There's constantly people coming into the market and there's constantly people buying things like this. Say your topic is helping mothers with their birth using like hypnobirthing, for example, and that's the course helping mothers have a pain free, beautiful birth using hypnobirthing or whatever it is.

And what you know about the market is, woman Are always giving birth. They are always giving birth. They are never going to stop giving birth. Like ever, we can be sure of that. There will never be a time in this world where women are not giving birth. And there's constantly women maturing in age and then wanting to have babies that will never end.

So that is like an, a topic that you can sell that for. Ever really, and you can tell it all the time because people are constantly going to be giving birth. So that's an example of it being consistent. There's always new people entering the market. There's always people wanting to look for help in these things.

And here are some examples for niches that generally have this like consistency. There's the health market where it's like losing weight, nutrition, exercise, all of that stuff. People are constantly wanting to lose weight. Feel good in their bodies, be healthier. All of those things.

There's always going to be people like that. Then there's the relationship industry, which is like finding a husband, your lover, like meeting people, like building whatever it is, and they're always going to be people wanting to deepen their relationships. So that's going to be a consistent thing.

People are always going to be wanting to find their husbands, their loves of their lives and whatever. So like that for sure is a consistent one. And obviously business is of course one as well where there's always going to be people building businesses, needing to learn how to do stuff in business and things like that.

Look for something that is, a topic that is consistent language. For example, people are always going to be learning languages. So that's an example straight up for a teacher. If you are a language teacher, people are always going to have to learn languages. So that's consistent, right?

What I have seen though in quite a few of my clients and students is they choose a topic which is like how to like how to pass this one particular exam and then they only have to write this one exam at one point in their life and then after that they don't have to think about it again and the exam only happens in like November of the year and then they build their whole course around this one exam.

Helping people pass that exam, which it works. I've seen it work really well, but then they can only really sell it around that time of the exam. They can't really sell it outside of that because people aren't interested in learning outside of that. That's not consistent. And that does limit the earning potential when your topic relates to a specific time frame.

All right. And the last thing is to think about necessity versus luxury. So obviously within this economic climate, everyone can tell that we've got inflation insanely on the rise. And it's like people are going on about us being in a recession and it's a very intense time.

People are being squeezed. They're not able to save as much money. Groceries are getting super expensive all around the world travels becoming more and more expensive. Like prices have just gone up dramatically after COVID which we all kind of knew was going to happen. Let's be honest. So when you are choosing your niche and your topic for your signature offer, this thing needs to be looked at from a lens of, is this a necessity versus a luxury?

So necessity is people have to do this thing. It's a must. they need to do it. They're going to spend money on solving this problem because they need to solve the problem. Luxury is, if I had some extra money, I'd like to do this thing.

Because I enjoy it and it's like a hobby and it's fun and it's something I'm passionate about or whatever.

But that's when I've got some spare cash. I'll do it. So obviously as we come into a world where there's less and less savings and people are being squeezed a little bit from the economic climate. People are going to be investing on things that are more Necessities versus luxuries.

So an example is an exam. So in the Netherlands, I often use this example, but in the Netherlands, when you're an expat, you have to pass these exams in order to get your residency permit, your permanent one, or a passport. So a lot of expats come to the Netherlands, and they want to then get the passport or the residency.

And they have to pass like a bunch of exams to do it. Now they and I'm an expat in the Netherlands, so I can talk about this from experience. But it's really a necessity. I had to do these exams; you have to do the exams in order to get the things you want to get. So that's something that all of the expats are spending money on solving.

All of them are paying to get Dutch lessons and there's some Dutch courses that are like 4,000 euros to learn how to pass these exams. And people are dropping dollar for that because it's a necessity, like they have to do the exams. They don't know how to speak the language.

Like they, they stressing about it. And so people dropping dollar dropping time to get this thing to pass these exams, it's not much of a choice to that, right. Whereas a luxury would be like learning Dutch for travel or as a hobby or things like that, if you positioned your offer around just learning Dutch for travel or as a hobby, and you just taught travel Dutch or even though that wouldn't really make sense because when you travel, you're not going to really learn Dutch, let's be honest.

But let's say you are an expat in the Netherlands and there's an offer that's positioned to them as learn Dutch as a hobby, so you can make friends, which I guess people would spend money on it, but it's like more of a luxury, right? That positioning of that offer is really more of a luxury kind of thing.

If I've got free time and I've got free cash, like I'm going to go and spend money on learning how to speak Dutch. Just because I want to speak Dutch when I'm

buying groceries or whatever. Because obviously there's people that are going to want to do that, but if you positioned it around like passing an exam and getting your citizenship and this and that.

And people are going to need to spend money on that versus it just being a hobby. So just something to think about when you're choosing a topic for your signature program. Is this a necessity or is it a luxury? Do people need to pay money for this thing?

Or do people just do it when they have free time and free money? Is it a nice to have versus a must have? So it's obviously better to go for something that's a must have and try angle it so that it is a must have. So obviously with languages, you can learn languages for millions of reasons.

A lot of those reasons are nice to have reasons, but there are a few must have reasons, like they have to do it to get a job and they have to do it for this exam, maybe positioning your offer and the topic and the thing you solve is for something that they have to do versus something they just would like to do, if that makes sense.

Hopefully I explained that properly. And then a little bonus point is that when it comes to who you are creating your course for, so this is the niche, right? I know I've been talking about the topic you choose, but obviously the niche and the people you serve with that topic is very, very important, right?

And that forms the foundation of your businesses, your dream client, your avatar, who is the person you are. Working with solving these problems for your niche. Now, those people should have buying power, okay? You want to make sure that the niche and the people you are solving this problem for have buying power.

Remember you are building a business. You're not a charity. Okay. And I'm not being like insensitive when I say this, just hear me out. You're in business, right? You need to sell stuff. If you don't sell stuff, you're not going to make money, you're not going to be in business. And that's like the foundation of a business is to sell stuff, solve a problem, make money all of that stuff.

And it does seem like it goes without saying, but I've seen this a lot. So I'm just going to talk about it. When your offer is solving a problem for a niche that hasn't got the means to invest, to solve that problem, you're going to see a bit

of flames. You're going to struggle to sell that thing to those people because they don't have the means to invest.

They don't have money. To pay for that thing. And it's an important thing to think about. I'm just going to talk off the top of my head. I don't know if this has ever happened, but for example, creating a course on how to find a home or a job as a homeless person. Okay. I don't know if anyone's ever done this, but this is an exam, an extreme example.

So of course, it's an amazing thing to help someone who really, truly needs it. They're in a dire position. They need help. But do you think someone who is homeless without a job is in a position to invest in a course or a program that's going to help them solve that problem? It's very unlikely, very unlikely.

They are in a state of survival. They are literally trying to find their next meal. That's the only thing that they're thinking about is where can I get the next roof over my head? Where can I get my next meal? That's it. They're not in a space where they're like, oh my gosh, cool. Let me go invest in this program.

And grow myself and become a better person necessarily. Because they're in survival mode. Of course, if we would all be in that position, we'd all be in survival mode. So selling that offer to that group of people is going to be like drawing blood from a rock. It's just going to be very painful.

Very hard. Doesn't matter how good you are at marketing and sales, it can be very hard. Another example is like, helping refugees learn a language in the new country they're in. And I think this is amazing, and I think it's needed, but maybe, they're not the exact group of people you want to be positioning your offer for, and I'm not saying they don't need that help, and I'm not saying that you shouldn't help them, but just listen to me.

You are going to be of more service to these people if you can have a business that makes money and makes profit, because when you have money, you can pour that money into charities, you can put that money into places where, it actually helps people. And when you have more money, you have more time. And then you can funnel that time into charities, and you can literally go to these places and teach people right there and then in front of them and have groups and do little language things in this. But it doesn't form the foundation of your business.

That is what you do, on the side of your business to fulfil you. To make you feel like you are impacting and helping and serving the people who are in need. Which I think is amazing. But you're not going to be able to do that. If you can't put an oxygen mask on yourself and make your own money. You have to be able to make your own money first, and then you can go help other people.

So if you're choosing, if you want a business, then don't create your offer on something that is, just there to help people and not to make you any money. Because then you're basically a charity or an NGO. It's a different vibe, right? So the most empowered thing you can do is make money and then go invest that money to help the people you want to help.

Don't solve a problem for people who just do not have the means to invest to solve that problem. You are more in service of those people. If you make money free up your time and then go and literally help them. So remember to focus your topic and who you help on people who have buying powers.

So for example, instead of saying like refugees to help learn a language, maybe you helping expats learn a language there, they've moved over to the country for work. That's so common in all sorts of countries where people fly there for work, they're in corporate, they've got these jobs, they're getting paid salaries. They need to learn the language.

Those are the kind of people who have buying power, they can spend to invest on that thing, to solve that problem. And then when you make money, go and put it into things that make you very, very happy and passionate and that philanthropic side of you that you just really want to serve and help people, go and do that then.

Okay. I hope this was insightful. It was quite juicy and yeah, I think it's really important to think about all of these things when you're thinking about the offer that you want to sell. And your signature program does form the foundation of your business and your niche and things like that.

So you do want to put a little bit of thought behind, what is the thing you're solving, who you helping and all of that. All right. Hope this was great. And I hope you have an amazing day and I'll chat to you again soon.

Bye.

Thanks so much for listening to today's episode. I have an amazing on demand training that will show you my proven strategy for launching a course or group program online and filling it with students.

So you can drastically increase your income and impact without trading all your time for money. You can hit the link below and register for free, and you'll get access to that training immediately.

I appreciate you so much and I can't wait to connect with you in the next episode. In the meantime, go create a business and life you love.