

**million  
dollar  
micro  
business**



How to turn your  
expertise into a  
digital online course

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**WILEY**

**Part I**

**How it  
begins**

# 01

# Start small

Often it's not coming up with an idea for your first digital course product that's the challenge; it's choosing just one. People I work with constantly tell me about all the different, sometimes overlapping courses they're going to create. I've shared my first steps already, so you know I started three completely different businesses while trying to discover what I really wanted to do. But I gained traction only when I finally picked just one, starting small and allowing it to grow and evolve.

You've picked up this book, which means you're already interested in online courses and have probably been looking around at them. Maybe you've listened to some podcasts and heard some success stories too. My goal with this book is to persuade you that it's possible to create a million dollar business based on your existing expertise and to show you how to put it all together, ready to launch it out into the world. But I don't want to give you a bum steer. I don't want you to think that when you go live with your gorgeous new website the dollars will come rolling in so thick and fast you won't be able to count them.

Overnight success is possible, but my gosh it's rare. What a digital business does is it allows you to scale and leverage, and it absolutely accelerates your success, enabling you to reach your goals way faster than anything you'll see in a traditional business.

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I was talking to someone who runs a course teaching people how to do gorgeous hand lettering. She put everything together in under a month, launched it out into the world ... and got 23 people to buy her product. She was devastated. She'd wanted 100 people for her first course launch. Where that particular goal came from I don't know, but let me tell you, 23 clients for a brand-new online business is something to happy dance about. Once you've started, you can take that experience and build on it.

A digital business gains traction and compounds fast. When you first launch, people who don't buy will at least know about you. Thanks to social media, word spreads rapidly, so, from your first year's performance, if you maintain consistency and keep showing up and adding value for your audience, you'll continue to grow month on month.

If you're looking at how to begin, my advice is to start with what you know. Ask friends and family, 'What do you think I'm best at?' If you're going with what you already know, your credibility in that area is probably already established.

So start small. Your business, like the chapters that follow, won't stay small for long!

# 02 Personal branding

What follows may trigger some resistance, because if you've never put yourself out into the world before in a big way, man oh man it can be scary! Building a digital business through content marketing and a personal brand is the most effective way to accelerate your growth and reach your goals faster.

'Online' can prompt the misconception that the transaction isn't as personal as shopping in a traditional bricks-and-mortar business. Actually it's more personal. In order to buy from you, your prospective client needs to:

- know you
- like you
- trust you.

You will be able to achieve this so much faster if you step forward and own your expertise rather than hiding behind a brand name. If you never want to show your face and be the one talking about your business, then I suggest creating an online course may not be for you.

You may create the most valuable product that the world absolutely needs, but if no one ever sees it, you've totally wasted your time. The way for your products to be seen is for *you* to be seen. It's time to step into the light.

We all feel like we're not good enough in some way. Everyone is unique, but having hang-ups is far from unique. So rather than let it stop you, embrace what makes you uniquely you. This shift in perception can sometimes take time. I know that when I first became a franchisor I had an idea in my head of what a professional woman looked like and decided that was the image I should project. So I marched into Portmans womenswear store and bought a suit and some terribly uncomfortable high heels and practised being more 'professional'. Thankfully, gone are the days when we needed to 'look the part'. That was the old way of doing business. You're now more likely to find the wannabes in designer clothes and the successful ones in jeans and a t-shirt.

A few years ago, after a long day of speaking on stage, I went to the end-of-conference social event to chat with the participants, but soon had to excuse myself and go home. I wasn't overtired or feeling unwell; the problem was my feet were killing me! Trying to look the part meant suffering excruciating pain. I would never show up for an event in flat shoes because I thought it looked disrespectful, and I didn't want the organiser to think I didn't care enough to 'dress up'. But that night I vowed that henceforth I would always wear clothes I was comfortable in. Now I wear an array of gorgeous flat shoes that I can literally bounce around the stage in and have standing conversations for as long as I like! Embracing who you are and what clothes you're comfortable in will always help you perform better. You may *love* high heels—all power to you (and your feet). Just go with what's right for *you*.

The clothes we wear do matter. As a projection of ourselves, they affect how people perceive us when they make that initial snap judgement. We may as well let people judge us on who we really are, because we're going to be judged anyway. I love colourful clothes and wearable art.

I'm sure some people will see me and think I look like a ridiculous walking rainbow, but others will think how wonderfully colourful and happy I look. Attract (or polarise) your audience by showing up as you really are. You'll be much happier for it, because your clients will be people who are attracted to the same vibe.

Having a personal brand doesn't mean having no privacy. This is one of the most common objections I hear. When we think of personal brands, we may think of Instagram influencers flooding the world with selfies and model poses. By 'personal brand', I mean showing up as yourself, allowing the world to see the massive value you offer, and not dimming your light.

Decide now, as you embark on building your personal brand, what parts of your life you're happy to share and what parts you'd prefer to keep private. What works for someone else might not work for you. It's up to you to decide how much of yourself you want the world to see. Back in 2016 I had to deal with a cyber stalker. The experience totally shifted my relationship with the internet, social media and how much of my life I shared. I am very open and will share pretty much everything about my business and happily answer anyone's questions. I make myself readily available online to talk about business and some of my hobbies. I have two children but they're rarely in my social media. You won't find a tour of the inside of my house, or where I'm on holiday until I've left the location, and you'll very rarely see me sharing my experiences with friends or family. My social media is for business and I am very purposeful about that. People buy my expertise, and they need to know I have credibility in that area before they do, but at no point in our transaction do they buy *me*. Building a personal brand does not mean you need to show your personal life. It means you can decide which parts you're happy to share so your clients can get to know you, leaving everything else for your wonderful private life.

For example, I show all around my office; my dog frequents my account because she's always at my feet; I share what I'm working on and what roadblocks I come up against so I can also share how I overcome them. I

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share my goals and sorrows where they relate to business, but not the rest of my life. Your clients don't care about that. They care about how you can fix the problem they're trying to solve and how equipped you are to do that.

I've talked about the merits of starting small and starting with one thing. This is easier not only for you but for others too. If family, friends and colleagues want to recommend you, you want to make it as easy as possible for them to do so. This means understanding exactly what it is you do and who you do it for, so you need to communicate clearly and explicitly who you serve and what you stand for.

When people speak about you when you're not in the room, what will they say? The personal brand you've crafted and projected—that's what will do the talking for you.



# 03 Time management

Perhaps the seed to start your own online course was planted long ago, or maybe it's a new idea. Either way most likely you're not someone with a surfeit of time and no idea how to use it.

'I'd love to do this. I just don't have the time' is the number one objection I hear. In reality, you have time for everything that's most important to you. We're all time poor because we humans always want to do more than the time we have available, so we find ourselves in this perpetual cycle of disappointment, running faster and faster as we try to do everything, yet our goals keep eluding us.

To master time you need to spend it doing the things that bring you the most joy and the most money, and either outsource, automate or simply eliminate the rest. I talk a lot about this in my book *One Life: How to Have the Life of Your Dreams*, where I recommend a structure to time audit your life. Many of us fall into the trap of spending far too much time on the things that don't matter and not enough time on the things that do.

Spending time on packaging your knowledge and expertise and creating an online course is such a good use of your time. It will help other people with what they seek to learn, while also returning a financial reward and helping create a legacy for you. But it's not enough that I believe it for you. You have to believe it yourself so you prioritise this work and get it done. And when you hit the mental roadblocks, your belief must be strong enough to help you push through beyond your comfort zone because you know it's worth it. If it's not worth it to you, then you'll never have time for it, because something more important will always come up. Your most important value will always hijack your time.

## Overthinking

Hello there, my overthinkers and perfectionists. Yes, you need to put great thought into what you're going to do and how you're going to do it, but there's a line beyond which you have to say f\*#k it and just go and do it. No more thinking. Time for action.

At the beginning of this year, clients of mine finally launched their first six-week course. They'd been planning it for over a year. About six months before they launched it was clearly ready, but there was always something else that needed to be revisited, a delay on getting filming done or a worksheet that should be revised. When they launched, they had students join their program from their first webinar, and they were understandably ecstatic. That win gave them confidence to go on and relaunch. They grew quickly, and now they're racing ahead with their online programs and building a healthy revenue stream.

That money could have been flowing in six months earlier, though. Now, when it comes to creating new content for their courses, they find the time and get it done because they know they can do it and they know it's going to yield a positive result. I want you to know that now. Take action and launch. Don't waste months—in some cases, years—while finding excuses not to take the action that's going to deliver the result you want.

## Finding time

It's not all mind games, of course. There's still the very real barrier of the massive commitments you have in your life already and the challenge of how you can practically carve out the time to pursue this new adventure. You will find you can get it done in a limited time. You just need to choose your path of stolen moments. I'm a batching fan. In fact, to write this book I took myself off to a far-away place and set myself up alone with no distractions so I could focus solely on the writing. It works better and faster for me if I can get into the right frame of mind and go all in, which is why I record my courses in one hit. I put myself in that zone and I go for it. I may feel tired, self-doubt, scared, even bored, but I am committed to the end result, which is so much more important to me than any mood that washes over me while I'm working on it.

The alternative is stolen moments, which may be your only option if you can't or don't want to bail on normal life for a week. This means carving out small, batched moments when you can be super purposeful with your time. If this is real for you, if you're determined to get this done, you need to allocate at least 30 to 50 hours to getting your first online course and business ready for the world.

Grab your calendar and block out the time now, whether it's a full week or a four-hour block every Tuesday afternoon for the next few months. Put it in your calendar and then protect those times. Don't let anything get in the way. Treat the time with as much respect as you would an appointment with your child's orthodontist with a non-refundable appointment fee.

Later I'll show you what to do to ensure that the time you spend is purposeful and conscious and gives you the maximum return. There's no space here for procrastination. In this limited time you must get in and get a result. Then, in a few months' time, you'll have your prize, a fully launched online program.

You have to be conscious and committed in how you spend your time, or your whole life will end up being filled with the unimportant.

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Every time you make a time decision, you're reinforcing what's most important to you. Every time you say yes to something, you unconsciously say no to something else. You can do absolutely anything, but not everything. What can you say no to in order to free up the time to create something epic? If you want to achieve your goal, you have to sacrifice the time needed to put in the work and make it happen. It's not like a traditional business, where your goal may take years and years of slogging away, and bucketloads of cash to fund. Stop overthinking it and take bold action now in pursuit of your dreams.

# 04

# Overcome your fear

Before you even begin creating an online business, you have to overcome your fear. You can read this book and run through all the technical ‘how to’ steps to get you started, but more than anything business is a mind game. And online business differs significantly from traditional business in that you are putting yourself out there at the front. There’s no brand to hide behind. It’s you, your expertise, your thought leadership.

You’re streaming live online, sharing your thoughts and ideas around making a positive impact in the world. It’s great, but there’s no getting around it—it’s scary. It’s very easy to fall into the comparison trap and not feel good enough, to be so concerned with the judgement of others that you feel paralysed, afraid to step into the light and share your gifts with the world. Fear is the number one barrier that holds people back from achieving their dreams.

You’re reading this book because you’re attracted by the vision of building a million dollar business with a few staff, and making a big impact in the world, while still having the space and time to live a great life outside your career. All the tools you’ll need are available to you, but you have to want that vision badly enough that your desire

outweighs the fear you'll inevitably feel when you push through beyond your comfort zone to do things that you've never done before.

One of the best solutions to overcoming fear that I have learned is what Tim Ferriss calls *fear setting*. The link to his original TED talk is at [milliondollarmicrobusiness.com](http://milliondollarmicrobusiness.com).

Here's a simplified version:

### **1. Fill in the table that follows with everything you're afraid of**

When you think about creating your course and sending it out into the world, what is it you're afraid of? For example, you're spending all this money on getting the business started. What if it doesn't work? What's going to happen in the world down the line? What if you put it out there and everyone thinks, 'She doesn't know what she's talking about'? What if you put it out there and nobody buys it? Write down every single fear you have. Go to town—include them all!

### **2. Out of all those fears, what is the absolute worst thing that could happen?**

I want you to go all doomsday here! Let your imagination run wild. Next to each of those fears, write down the absolute worst-case scenario for what you think could happen.

### **3. How would you recover from the worst-case scenario?**

Imagine it has actually happened. In reality, the odds of every fear coming true are very, very slim and the potential upside is way more likely than the potential downside, but just in case the very worst should occur, and every single fear comes true, think about what it would take for you to recover from that to be exactly where you are right now. You'll find that often even the worst-case scenario is not that bad, and is certainly not enough to stop you from chasing your dreams and stepping into your new online business.

Whenever I feel like fear is holding me back from doing something, I think of the absolute worst-case scenario. My fears might go something like:

*What if nobody buys my new program?*

*What if people think I'm an idiot?*

*What if I waste all of my money?*

*What if I waste my time?*

Then I look at how long it would take me to get back to where I was at the start. Usually after a failed business experiment it takes a month or two to recover and return to normal. I think I'll take that risk.

Let me tell you, all business is an experiment, whether you're new to the game or have decades of experience. You may look at people who seem to model your version of success and imagine they have never taken a misstep, but that just doesn't happen. We never cease to evolve and learn and take risks. A successful business is a beautiful experiment where you either win or learn.

So work out the absolute worst-case scenario if you were to go ahead. Could you deal with that situation? When you get comfortable with the worst-case scenarios and know how you'll recover from them, you are absolutely unstoppable.

#### **4. What's the potential upside?**

This is the fun part! You allowed your brain to do the catastrophising; now imagine what it would be like if it all turned out to be easy. What would it be like if all your dreams came true? What would life actually look like for you if you made seven figures a year, had a small, loyal team and did meaningful work that matters? It's a beautiful feeling when you prove to yourself that you can do something you've only ever dreamed of. If you're committed, it's not a matter of *if* but of *when*, and how many lessons you'll need to learn from failed experiments before you get there!





It's totally natural to feel nervous and apprehensive at the beginning of an exciting new journey. Of course you don't know what you're doing—you've never done it before. The only way to figure it out is to actually do it. Keep reading, and I'll show you how.



**Action step**

Complete the fear-setting exercise.