Free Download

Sell Better! 9 Pricing Strategies for Your Online Courses

This is an extra resource to go along with the original article:
What to Know About Creating Online Courses for Your Membership Site

What's the best price for your online course? If you've done a little research, you might notice that pricing for many online courses varies dramatically from one place to the next. One course might cost you $10 on Udemy or $999 through an instructor's site.

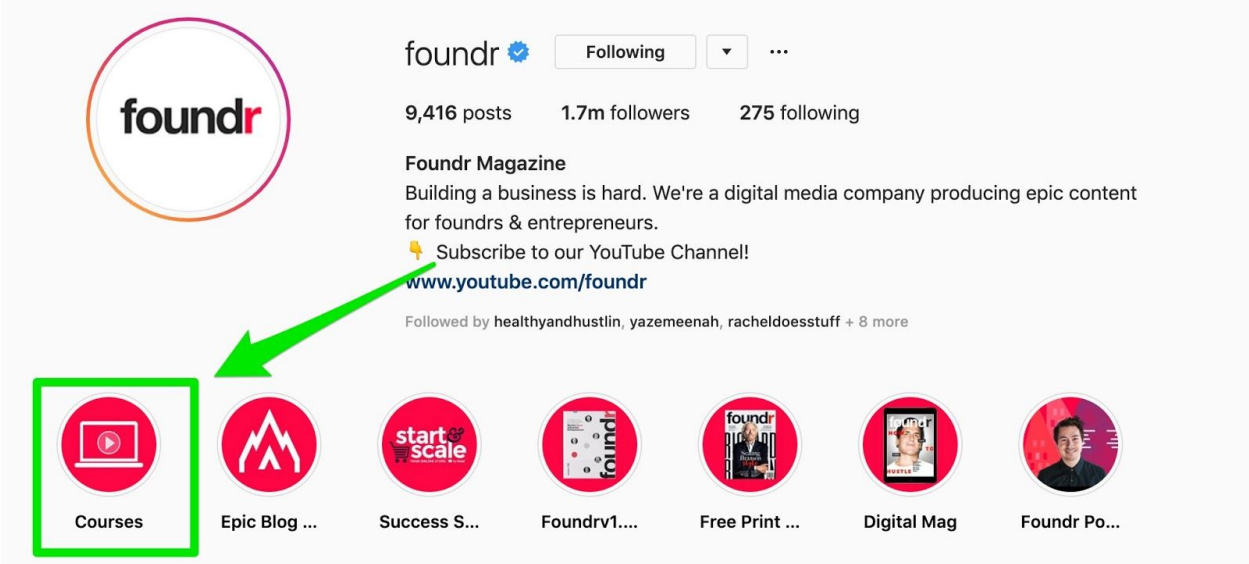
If you're planning on selling your online course through a marketplace, you may not always have control over how much you charge (sites like Udemy often set the fees for you depending on several factors). But in some cases, you get to set your price, especially if you're self-hosting your courses.

So what should you charge? You don't want to price so high that you scare potential customers away, but you don't want to go so low that you're not making a sustainable profit. Here are a few tips for pricing your online courses for maximum sales.

1. Create Some Free Content

Yes, create some free content if you can! People love it, and it's great for capturing leads.

Mini-courses in the form of short videos are the perfect example for this, as you can quickly post a video to social media for free promotion — Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook all have "stories" that feature heavily on your user's feeds.

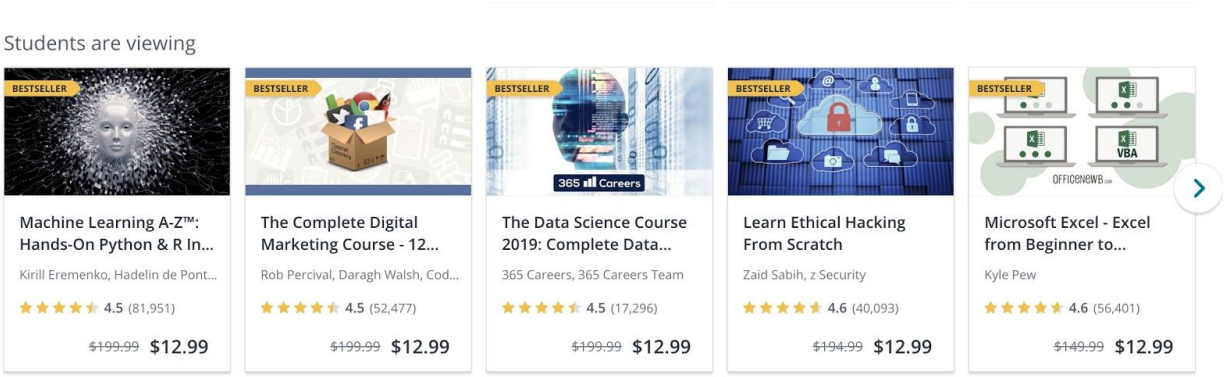


Not only do free mini-courses help create buzz for your brand, but they can be used to promote paid courses at which your audience might otherwise scoff. If they watch the mini-course and are intrigued, they're more likely to buy into your $999 course.

HubSpot Academy is the perfect example of this, as they use their free courses (which are very short) to promote other content and, of course, their paid products.

2. Sell Your "Free" Content On the Marketplace

Another option is to take your free content (or add to it and repackage it a little) and sell it for $12 on a site like Udemy. The goal here isn't to develop a massive course and then charge next to nothing for it.



You want to save the "big" stuff for a higher price tag. But if you're already creating free content, why not sell it to a third-party and get paid for it?

3. Choose Low-Pricing Options to Reach the Highest Number of People

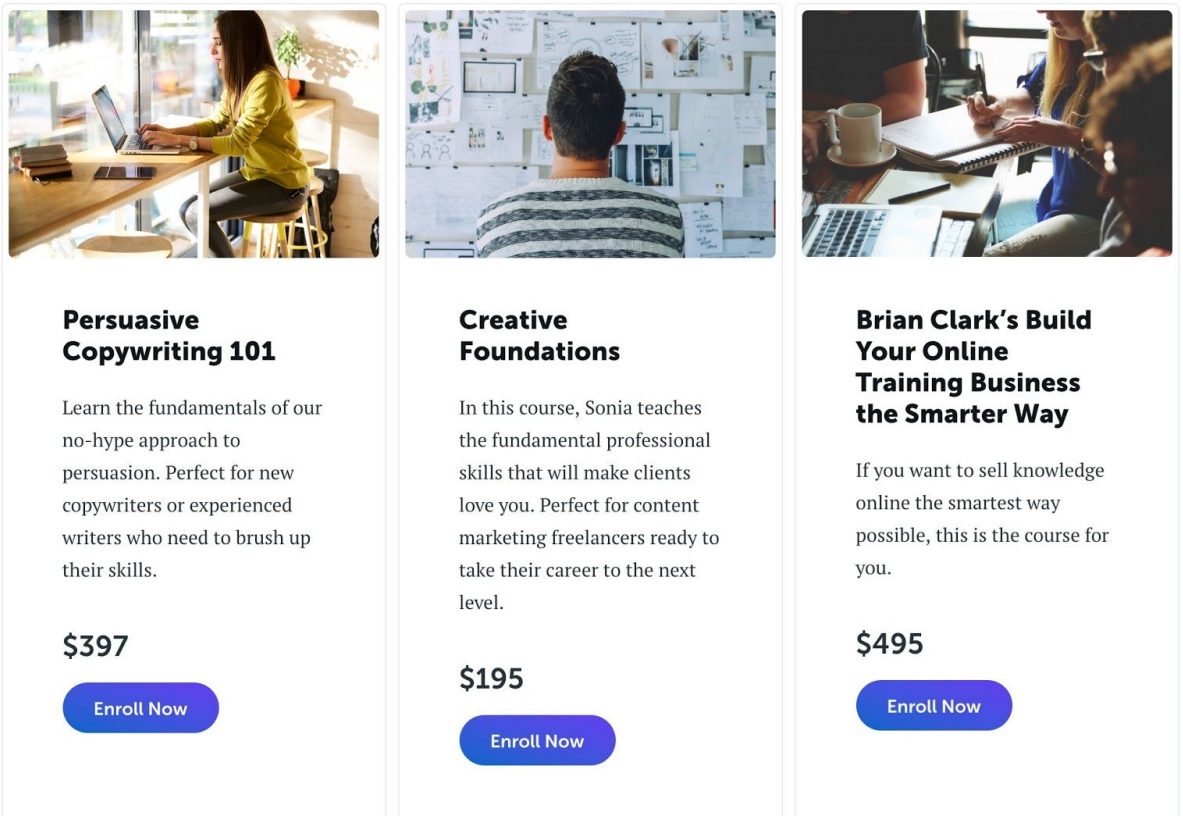
If your goal is to sell your course to the highest number of people possible (in other words, you just want leads), go with a lower price — free, $12, $19, $29, etc. When there's less of a barrier to enroll, you'll likely get more sign-ups.

DON'T lower your prices if you're not sure your course will sell! If you've put real time and effort and expertise into creating a great online course, don't sell it for $12 because you lack confidence. Only price it lower when the content itself is being used more for lead gen than for educational purposes.

If you're worried about profit margins vs. production costs, consider creating shorter courses for lower prices or supplementing your more expensive media (video) with cheaper media (worksheets, Google Docs, etc.).

4. Create Tiered Pricing for Your Content Based on Effort and Expertise.

Tiered pricing is a great way to cover all your bases. Copyblogger, for example, offers three different pricing structures for their premium courses:



Their foundational course is $195 while their "masterclass" hosted by copywriting expert Brian Clark is $495. They're saying, "Hey, we'll give you valuable content, but you're getting what you pay for."

Likewise, you should save your "good content" for a higher tier price, but don't be afraid to offer something less intensive at a lower cost.

5. Choose High-Pricing Options for the Highest Revenue Potential

Having a $2,900 course may be a hard sell. Even Masterclass, which pays celebrities thousands of dollars to teach their craft, doesn't charge that much! But some people do. And other people pay for those courses.

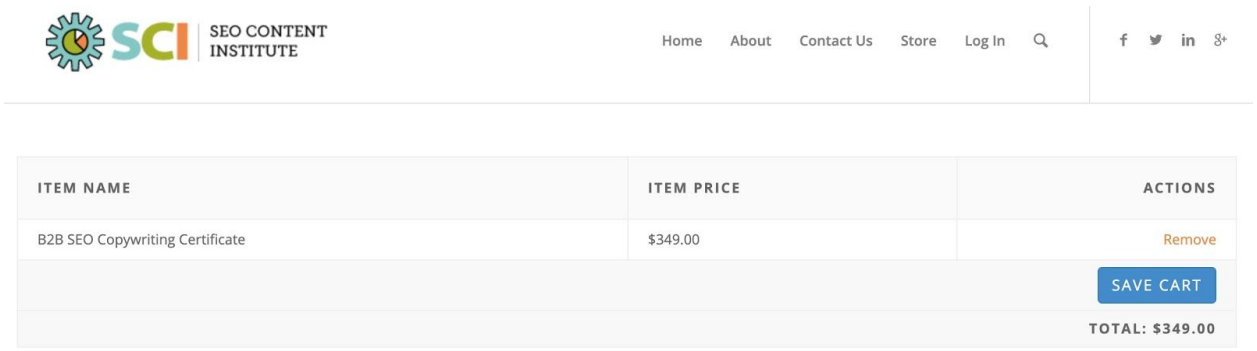
When you price higher, you may sell less, but each sale becomes more valuable. You'd only have to sell ten courses at $3,000 to make $30,000. If you have the expertise and something of real value to offer, don't hesitate to offer it at a high price.

Here are some situations where your courses might need a higher price tag:

- **High(er) production costs** — if you're dedicated to filming with the best equipment in the best locations, with the best actors or instructors out there, you can charge a premium price.
- **Proven track record of success and/or well-known name** — if you're well known in your industry, and you have a history of people paying high prices for your services, there's no reason to doubt that you can't get the same for your courses.
- **You're hiring the best of the best** — Maybe it's not you, exactly, but you're bringing in the "big guns" for your courses. Slap on that price tag!
- **You've got a lot of valuable content** — Is it a "conference in a course?" If you have a plethora of high-value content jammed into your coursework, then don't be shy about charging what you're worth.
- **You want to market your course** — It takes just as much effort to sell a low priced course as it does to sell a high priced one, so you might as well sell high.

6. (Optionally) Allow Users to Pay for High-Priced Courses in Installments

If you're concerned that not everyone will pay thousands of dollars for your course or that the price tag may scare away potential students, consider offering installments. For example, SEO Content Institute offers a B2B SEO course for a one-time fee of $995 or a 3-month installment plan of $390.

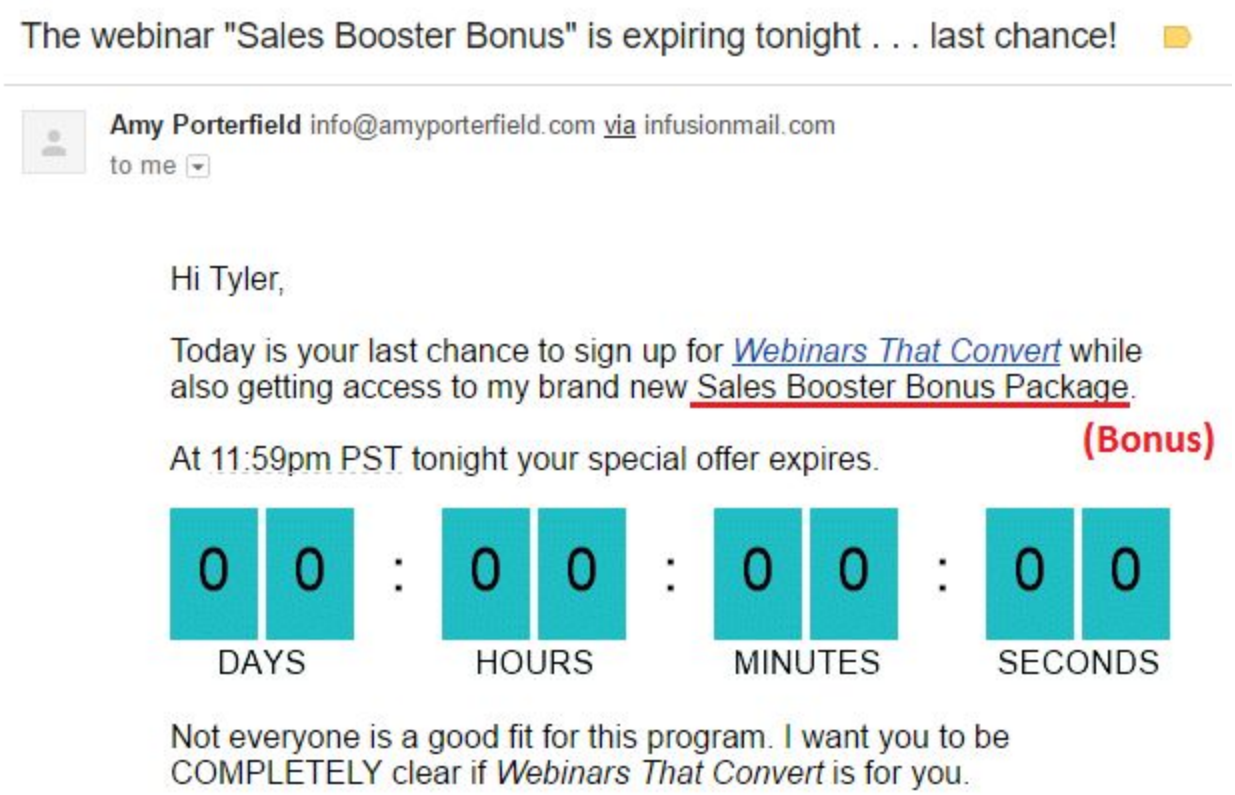


Not only does a lower monthly fee make it easier for more people to take your expensive course, but it also grants you more revenue. You'll notice that 3 monthly payments of $390 add up to more than $995.

7. Reduce Prices Temporarily for Sales or Deadline-Driven Events

Deadlines create a sense of urgency, which can drive sales. If you charge high prices for your courses, you can always temporarily lower them for a rush sale or lower your prices for an “early bird special.”

For example, Amy Porterfield, a successful entrepreneur and online course creator, used this technique when launching her course Webinars That Convert. She offered a “Sales Booster Bonus Package” as a bonus resource, but only to those who purchased her course before the deadline.



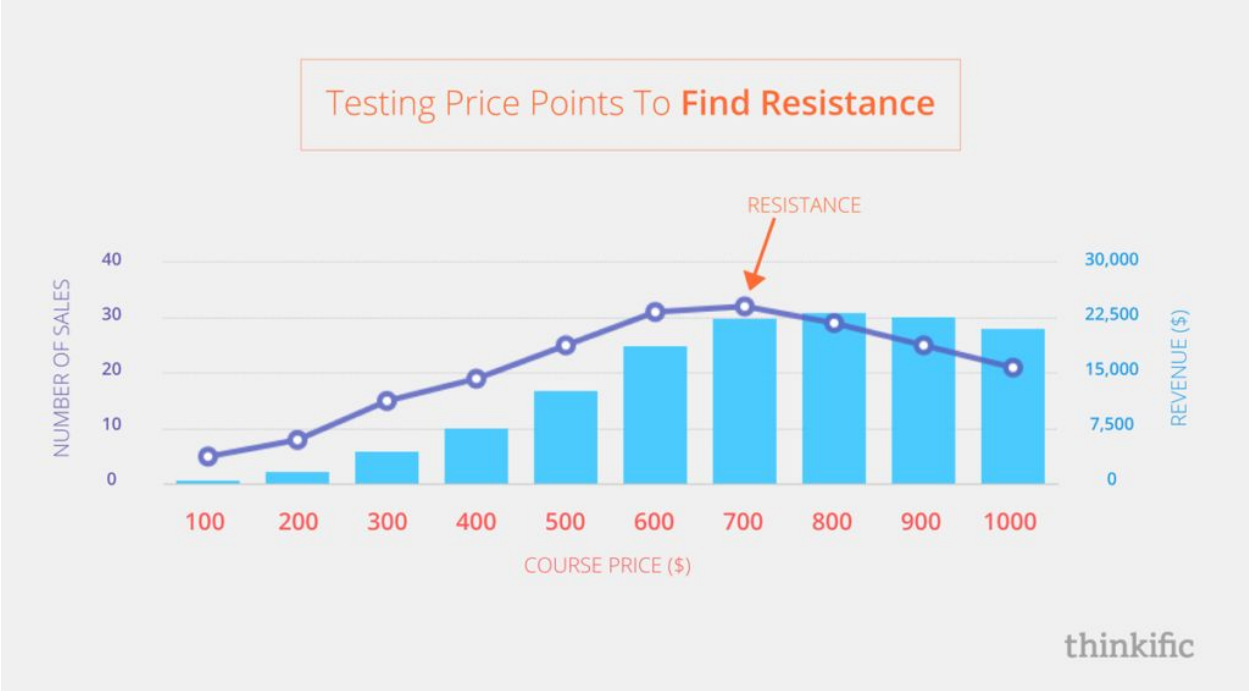
8. Use a Production-Based Pricing Strategy

If you want to avoid overcharging or undercharging for your courses, you can always utilize a straight-forward, production-based pricing strategy.
Calculate a price that represents a high return on investment for the learner – 10x is a good rule of thumb – and then figure out how to produce the learning experience at a cost that provides a strong rate of return to you.

9. Test Different Price Points

Finally, don't be afraid to test out different price points. Yes, this takes time to do and will need to be adjusted before, during, and after your course launch, but it can be a great way to determine the optimal price for your course.

Starting with a lower price (but not too low — e.g., $29 is a good place to start) and gradually increased your price over time until you get to an optimal selling price. You'll know it's too high if your sales rate slows noticeably or drops dramatically.



The optimal price for your course will depend on your specific business objectives, but the goal is to find that sweet spot of revenue generated and the number of students enrolled at each price point.

member(dev)

Need Help Building a Marketable Membership Site?

If you're stuck on how to create and market your membership website, we're here to help.

Get a free project quote today.