



How to Prelaunch Your Courses

WITH GEMMA
BONHAM-CARTER

ABOUT GEMMA

Gemma Bonham-Carter is a Digital Product Strategist who has coached hundreds of students through launching and growing their businesses with online courses, memberships, and digital programs. She believes in simplicity and balance and teaches her clients to build scalable, sustainable digital businesses with a long-term vision and effective strategies that don't rely on 24/7 posting or social media fame.

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[00:00:08.110] - Liz Stapleton

So you're going to launch your new course and you know you have a winning idea, but the truth is you never know for sure until someone is willing to pull out their wallet and pay you. In today's episode, you're going to learn how you can get paid for your digital product before you create it.

[00:00:22.840] - Liz Stapleton

Hi, I'm Liz Stapleton and welcome to the Blogger Breakthrough Podcast. In today's episode, I'm sharing course creation gold shared with us by Gemma Bonham Carter during the 2021 Blogger Breakthrough Summit.

[00:00:34.420] - Liz Stapleton

If you want to be able to listen to her entire 2021 Summit session, be sure to listen to the end of the episode to find out how you can do that. Let's dig in!

[00:00:43.570] - Liz Stapleton

How, if you haven't read the course, how do you sell it? Let's start there, kind of as an overview and we'll dive deeper into kind of the details. But like how do you sell something that doesn't exist yet.

[00:00:53.510] - Gemma Bonham Carter

Yeah, so that's it. So let's like, I'll zoom out for a sec before I'm sure we can get into more specific strategies. But the idea behind what we like to call pre-selling is that it's all well and good to think. "OK, I'm going to go create a course about this thing that I really love talking about and teaching." But you don't actually know if people are going to be interested in paying to learn about that thing.

[00:01:24.730] - Gemma Bonham Carter

You might think it's the best idea in the world. Your audience might have zero interest, and sometimes it's hard for us to really be in the shoes of our audience and really understand where they're willing to part with dollars. Right? And actually invest in a course or a program. So the idea with pre-selling is that before you've gone and recorded videos and made workbooks and invested in an online course platform and all of those things, if you can do really proper validation of your idea in the form of pre-selling, you can feel so much more confident about now spending the time in creating that program.

[00:02:08.440] - Gemma Bonham Carter

And so, with market validation...Like one of the things that a lot of people seem to do is they think, "OK, I'm going to get beta testers and I'm going to get people to beta test my program." And that's all well and fine. And beta testers might give you some great testimonials or something like that or point out some things that you might have to fix.

[00:02:28.910] - Liz Stapleton

That you didn't realize were there.

[00:02:30.080] - Gemma Bonham Carter

Exactly. But it's not true market validation unless somebody is paying money for that product because anyone will be a beta tester, like, "You're going to give me something for free!"

[00:02:40.940] - Liz Stapleton

Having a paid beta tester is whole other game.

[00:02:42.500] - Gemma Bonham Carter

Yeah, but if you can get people paying for that, for that program, then that's really you're really then able to say, "OK, I actually have something here. People are actually willing to pay money to learn about this topic. So let me go further and actually create this program." And so with pre-selling, you're going to have crafted what I like to call an offer prototype.

[00:03:05.090] - Gemma Bonham Carter

So you have your course offer all mapped out. You know exactly what each module and lesson would look like. You know, the workbooks that are going with it. You know, what bonuses would be included,

how you're going to deliver it. All of that is mapped out ahead of time. But then you're not going and creating it. You've crafting that offer, and then you're going to put it out to your audience and say, "OK, here's what this is going to look like."

[00:03:27.230] - Gemma Bonham Carter

Here's the, sort of, you want to be realistic about the schedule. Like if this is going to be a course that's dripped out over eight weeks, so that you can stay on top of delivering the content in a way that's going to work for you. And you can kind of, maybe, be a week or two ahead so that you're not feeling too stressed. And launch it!

[00:03:47.270] - Gemma Bonham Carter

Do a launch and get people to, you know, whether that's like social media, via email marketing, using webinars, like whatever it might be, and have a sales page and get people to purchase knowing that the course starts on October 1st, November 1st, January 1st, whenever that start date is, and you actually run through it with the first time with those founding students. Almost like in a live way. Like you can prerecord all the stuff and drip it out but it's kind of like...

[00:04:15.500] - Liz Stapleton

You can answer their questions.

[00:04:16.820] - Gemma Bonham Carter

Exactly. And that's really like the zoomed-out version of why you want to presell, because how good is it going to feel to get 10, 20, 30 students to pay you to create that program that you kind of have an idea around?

[00:04:31.550] - Gemma Bonham Carter

And then when you've come to the end of creation, you've gone through it with your first group of founding students. You've got some great testimonials there. Now you can package it up, launch it again, rinse and repeat your launch and just keep making sales over and over and over, without having to go and create new lessons or new workbooks or whatever.

[00:04:49.740] - Liz Stapleton

And you might add a bonus here and there. Sure. But...

[00:04:52.070] - Gemma Bonham Carter

Exactly.

[00:04:53.090] - Liz Stapleton

So from a timeline standpoint, how far from sort of the end of your launch, or cart close, would you recommend the start date be?

[00:05:02.570] - Gemma Bonham Carter

Probably, I would say. You know, give yourself a solid week or two to recover from your launch before starting, and I wouldn't go any longer than three to four weeks out, like I can't really see people being pumped up a month later.

[00:05:20.690] - Gemma Bonham Carter

If you leave it too long, you're just losing that momentum. I also get worried that you might have some people may be asking for a refund because you've kind of left it too long and they're second-guessing the investment.

[00:05:32.960] - Liz Stapleton

So it might be like during your launch, once you get the first few sales, start working on lesson one so that you can get a little bit ahead.

[00:05:39.470] - Gemma Bonham Carter

Totally.

[00:05:40.340] - Liz Stapleton
OK, got it.

[00:05:42.200] - Gemma Bonham Carter
And actually, I should say, because I get this question a lot, people say, well, "What happens if I only sell like two spots? Do I have to then carry it out and deliver on it, if I really didn't get the numbers I was hoping for?" And there's a couple of things to think about before making a decision. One thing is like, well, how big is your audience?

[00:06:03.740] - Gemma Bonham Carter
Like if you have an audience that's five thousand, 10 thousand people and you made two sales. Yeah. That conversion rates bad. We're not going to go ahead and like, see this through because it's just the idea hasn't been proven well enough. But if you have an audience of like 20 people on your email list and you've got two sales? That's actually a really decent conversion rate and you should probably run with that and then also concentrate on growing your audience and growing your email list. Right? And maybe do that in tandem.

[00:06:34.070] - Gemma Bonham Carter
So if it was option A, where you have a big audience and you only made a couple of sales, honestly, it's not that big of a deal to just give people a refund and just say, "Thank you so much for purchasing. I really appreciate it. Unfortunately, we didn't get the volume we were expecting for this round. So we are going to go ahead and give you a full refund." You can be extra nice and be like, "Here's an extra downloadable that we have that we just wanted to send your way as a thank you." You know, just like kill them with kindness and nobody's going to care. Like, you're the only one who feels any kind of way about that.

[00:07:08.930] - Gemma Bonham Carter
They're going to be like, "Oh, OK. Well, too bad, next thing"

[00:07:10.850]
Yeah, I think it's sort of the impression you leave with them is you're open and honest and you take care of your customers and your people. So when down the road they're going to feel comfortable purchasing with you again.

[00:07:20.270] - Gemma Bonham Carter
Exactly.

[00:07:21.080] - Liz Stapleton
OK, hopefully this episode has helped ease some of your anxiety of building your first or fifth digital product. And you will want to learn even more from Gemma Bonham Carter. You can get access to her entire session as well as all the other 2021 Summit sessions for just \$19. Head to bloggerbreakthrough.com/podcastdeal to get access. Be sure to join me next time when we dive into the secrets of clickable versus savable Pins with Carly Campbell.