How to Design Your Coaching Program in 48 Hours or Less

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Perhaps you've tried to create a coaching program in the past. Maybe you got 90% of it designed, but then just as you were about to launch it, you remembered something that you had forgotten to include. And so you went back to the drawing board to figure out where to put the overlooked piece.

Each time, you've been delayed for three months to a year. And now, you've done that so many times, you are convinced that it's impossible for you to do it at all, because you know that as soon as it's ready, you'll find some other flaw in it.

And after all, it wouldn't be fair to launch a program as important as this until you knew what the other 10% was, would it?

I'm going to show you that you can create a coaching program in 48 hours, and by the time you finish reading this article, you'll know how to make it "on the fly."

Are you ready?

If so, let's get started!

What is a coaching program?

A coaching program is a course of study through which you teach your customers how to accomplish what you've promised them. In it, you provide training materials, action steps for them to take, and an opportunity for them to interact with you personally, and on a regular basis. There are a variety of ways to do this, but all of them include the ability for them to ask questions and get feedback from you.

Coaching differs from an ordinary information product in a number of ways, not least in the fact that the material is *not* downloaded all in one go. Instead it is drip-fed to your customers as and when they are ready for it.

What do your customers expect?

This may surprise you.

They don't expect to get everything on the download page.

And, of course, you're not going to give them everything in the teaching, either.

They will have to ask questions. That's the interactive part.

And so if your program is missing five or ten percent of the whole for any reason, including that part that you used to discover only at the last minute, then it doesn't matter. That's because if you don't have it, you can put it in the first time someone asks you about it.

You're losing money

So you need to launch the program and make the sales, because if you don't, then you're losing money – needlessly.

For example. Let's say you have a $500/month coaching program and it runs for six months. That's $3,000 in revenue.

What if you sold only two new clients each month? That would be $6,000 altogether. If it takes you six months to finally get your program up, then $6,000 x six months = $36,000.

Are you're going to leave all that money on the table because you don't have that last five to ten percent?

So just launch it. Let people enroll, and then teach them as they do.

You need to have a list

There is just one thing that you must have in place before you can get started. You need to have a list of people to whom you can send an email message. The promotion of any coaching program assumes that you do.

This may seem like a chicken -and-egg problem; that you can't have one without the other. But truth is that without a list, you can't know what people want, and so it's pointless to create a coaching program in any sort of detail until you do.

If you just guess, then the best you could hope for would be to get about 50% of it right; whereas if you build your list first, then all you have to do is ask those who are on it what they want to learn, and then modify your program accordingly.
If you don't have a list, then you need to start building it today. The next six months will come and go, whether you do anything about this or not.

Where will you be? Will you have a list, or not?

Five essential steps

There are five steps that you must follow to create your coaching program, and you can do them in just two days.

Step One

The first thing you need to do, if you want to create your coaching program as quickly as possible is to *outline the coaching program*. Even though this step will take you longer than all the rest of them, it will save you time in the long run. That's because you need it in order to sell it.

It's very difficult to do so without it.

You can sell your coaching program just from that outline.

To create the outline, make a list of all the steps someone would need to learn to accomplish what your coaching program will teach.

Add to the list each of the additional things someone might need to learn.

Let's imagine you create a list of 30 of these steps, things and ideas.

Organize them into natural breaks, and then create different subtopics. From the 30, you'll probably be able to identify five or six core subjects that challenge everyone who replied.

Now break each of the core topics into five or so sub-topics to teach each week. Then cut the specific challenges from the information in your document that people sent you and paste them under each of the specific topics you identified

If you're doing a 13-week coaching program, for example, then you will probably need another six or seven topics, but you'll only need 10-12 lessons. That's because it may take you longer to teach the topics than you had originally planned.

Since you are teaching this as you go along, rather than pre-recording it, you need to keep the time that you spend on any one lesson down to no more than one hour. That's because some people will attend the group sessions during their lunch break.

Another possibility is that you may be tired, or you don't want to teach for such a long time. Less can be more. It'll be better for you and for them.

You must remember, too, that there's only so much that they can take in, too. It's quite all right to spread a lesson over a couple of weeks. That will give you the flexibility to slow down and not try to cram it all into such a short time.

You can add more weeks, if necessary. That's a nice gesture for clients. But if you don't try to teach too much in a given session, then you won't need to add additional time to cover the material. Instead, assume that you will go over, and then limit the number of topics in your program.

If, for example, you did finish your 13-week program in 10 weeks, then you could give three bonus sessions.

You could decide what the content of those sessions would be by asking those who were in the program what they would like to learn next.

You could say, "We got through things a bit faster than I expected. But I want to give you your money's worth. So I'd like to do some bonus topics for the next three weeks. What would you like them to be?"

This approach demonstrates customization par excellence.

When you add a session, be sure to put in some more foundational material for the bonus topics, an essential part of any program you teach, because people who aren't getting the results they want usually don't have the basics in place anyway.

Even when you ask people about their level of skill, they usually overestimate where they are, and that's why they're not getting the results they want. They think they're advanced because they've bought a lot of products and studied them; but they don't realize that the framework, the part they really need, is missing

What will you teach each week?

- Week One – Give an overview. Explain the whole program in enough detail so that they know what to expect generally, but leave the details for another session.
- Week Two – Give them the foundational material they need for your niche.
- Week Three – Give them the remaining foundational teaching they need to get started.
- Week Four –Begin teaching on the first topic
- Weeks Five to Ten – Teach one topic each week until you finish the material. You can cover the gaps in-between at the end, during the unplanned time that you included earlier in your outline.

I teach from a one-page outline. If you know your topic, then you'll be able to do the same thing. Don't try to do it from memory. If you write it down, then you'll have it forever.

It will take you 45-60 minutes for each session; that is, to cover the five to seven subtopics that you listed under each of the core subjects. Make sure that you deliver great value every time.

Another way to create your outline is to use the feedback from the initial clients who sign up for your coaching program (of course this will take more time than just writing an outline up front. I recommend starting with a quick outline the way I just taught, then once you have clients, adapt it based on their needs.)

Here is how you would do that:

Selling one-on-one coaching

To sell one-on-one coaching, you get on the phone with someone who then tells you what he or she wants. This selling method is appropriate when you are going to work with an individual, but it doesn't really work for a group.

You talk to this person until you understand the problem he or she wants to solve, and then you decide *on the fly* how much time it will take to teach that material.

Now you're ready to tell the person what he or she has to do to sign up.

Before you send the payment instructions, you also want to schedule your first session with the customer, because it's not worth your time to outline an entire program of one-on-one coaching until that person pays for it.

You'll probably know the main topics you want to cover, but you really don't need the detail right now.

Selling group coaching

If you have a list of a few hundred people, then you send them an email that says something like, "I'm in the process of starting a new coaching program, and I want to make sure that it's exactly what you need to be able to help you with your [the problem they want to solve in your niche]. What are your goals for the next three to six months? What are your three biggest challenges?"

The challenges they tell you they have are the basis on which you will create your coaching program.

It's very easy to collate the replies that you get. Just copy and paste them into a master document. Then you'll have it all in one place when you get ready to create your program.

After you've received the feedback, then you can edit out the stuff that doesn't matter

For example, if 25 people write back with three challenges each, then that's 75 altogether. There will be some overlap, and so you may end up with 30 things people want to cover.

Then alter your outline from there.

<u>Step Two</u>

After you have created your outline, then you're ready to create the homework assignments. You'll need one for each week. Besides the interaction, homework is another thing that makes a coaching program different from an information product.

Be sure to provide as many assignments as you think are necessary for people to get all of the value you intended out of your coaching program.

Another way to look at this is to consider the homework assignments together. If someone completes all of the exercises, then will they get the results they were supposed to get because they were in your coaching program? If not, then revise the homework. Results are the biggest difference between a product and a coaching program.

That's because a product forces you to implement everything on your own. But a coaching program says, "Here are some action steps. When you've completed them you will have achieved your goal."

You have to ask yourself what assignments collectively will give them the proof they need to convince that they understood the lesson for that week.. By just doing the homework assignments in the coaching program, they sould get the results you promised

Step Three

It's a good idea to give your customers some additional information beyond just the teaching and the homework, and to do so every week. And so the next step is to collect or create whatever you need for your program.

For example, you could give them a link to a blog post by someone else – one that teaches a topic better you can.

Or you could provide a PDF tutorial, recommend a book by someone else, or link to an audio recording that you've done that does a good job of teaching on the same topic. Far from being redundant, this approach can give your customers an added perspective.

If you've already created it, then just upload it to your server.

It's better to avoid attachments because some email clients don't handle large files very well, or may routinely strip them out altogether. Instead, send them a message with a link in it.

Another benefit is that you will have a master document that contains everything in your program. That will make it really easy to teach it or something similar to it another time without redesigning it. Instead, you'll be able to reuse what's appropriate for the new program.

You don't need a lot of supporting material, but that little bit extra in each lesson adds value to the total package

<u>Step Four</u>

Now you're ready to determine the interactive part of your coaching program. And it's because of this characteristic that you don't have to have everything set in stone before you do it. That's part of what makes it coaching.

Remember that it was the uncertainty held you back in the past. Now that you know how to handle that, there's no reason to let it stop you this time.

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Email access

Email access is one means of interaction that you could have with your customers. Through it, they could ask you questions. Some coaches use tickets, but that method lengthens the time that it takes for your clients to get the feedback they need.

Which would you prefer to use if you had a problem?

One of the factors that makes my program unique is that I give my clients unlimited email access. This is something that a lot of coaches avoid doing.

Of course, I could limit the hours during which my customers could email me, or even the days of the week, but it wouldn't make any difference. But, I probably wouldn't answer them until the next day anyway. And most people won't expect me to work on the weekends, regardless.

Or, I could limit the number of emails that someone could send in a week; but, in five years of coaching, I've only had one person abuse that access. In practice, it evens out. Some ask more questions; some less.

If you allow people to send you an unlimited number of emails, then the volume of messages that you receive won't rise, but your sales will.

There are, however, a few disadvantages.

Answering emails, as opposed to tickets, can be a bit cumbersome. Sometimes messages get lost. Spam filters are better than they used to be, but they're not perfect. Your better customers will know that if they haven't heard anything from you for a few days, then their message or yours probably has been lost. When that happens to me, I just resend it.

I used unlimited email solely for one coaching program. That meant that all questions and answers were handled that way. You may feel more comfortable with this approach if you lack the confidence to do a live call (discussed later).

Forum access

Another option is to give clients forum access. Forums can become a kind of mastermind group, though you must make it clear that that is what it is. These can be especially beneficial, particularly if the forum remains open to every customer forever. Over time their questions will probably be answered there by someone else. There are people who love to help others, and they do a good job at it as well.

When a new person signs up, you can direct them to the forum to find an answer before they ask their questions.

A forum could limit the need for you to comment as much as you might if you were being emailed all the time. The only thing you should do, however, is to visit it periodically to make sure the information is correct or to clarify something that's been said.

Or, you could just say something simple such as, "Great answer!"

You can also encourage those in the forum to develop relationships. Some of them will want to do this, and that gives them added value to your program.

The success of forums, however, depends on a critical mass of people. This really isn't possible with a small group. It's all too easy for the conversation to die. There need to be enough people contributing on a regular basis to keep it going.

And it's for that reason that you don't want to offer customers email access to you as well. If you do, then instead of looking for answers in the forum, people will ask you, which will defeat its purpose.

You can position your coaching program so that the primary way your customers get help is through the forum. Then you can suggest that email is available; but only as a last resort. It's there if for some reason they can't get what they need through it.

In all probability, if someone asks a question via email, you can still answer it in the forum. That will encourage people to look there, rather

than writing to you, and that will save you from having to saying it more than once.

Private blog

You could give your coaching clients a password to a private blog. Then only those people in the program could comment.

This is easier to do if you don't have the tech skills necessary to create a forum or you don't want to outsource it.

If you use a password, you could give them all the same one. Rarely would anyone give it out because the people on the blog are paying for the privilege. And if it did happen, then you could just change it and email it out to the honest ones and cancel the other person.

You'll also need to set your page so that the search engines don't index it.

You could avoid using a password altogether by simply give your customers a link. Then, if too many people were to find it, then you can put a password on it later.

Group call or webinar

Since you'll probably doing the sessions live anyway, you could give your clients access in the group call or a webinar to ask questions. And, of course, once you've recorded it, then new clients would get the lessons pre-recorded in the future.

Your weekly coaching calls are the opportunity for them to get their questions answered. And if you create one or more related coaching programs, then you can put everyone on the same call and answer questions about all of them at once. This enables you to leverage your time.

It's possible that you'll be asked something that you don't know. It's no big deal. Just admit it, and then tell them that you'll get an answer for them later. If you ask them if that's a fair approach, they'll all agree that it is.

Many people will not attend the live sessions. After the first few weeks, most will just listen to the Q&A as a recording, and only come to the live session when they have a specific question.

Video

You only need to use video on the calls if people need to see what you're doing.

One good reason to avoid it is that it adds another level of complexity to your program. And the more complicated it is, the longer it will take you to launch it.

Delays cost you money.

Another problem is that video requires a lot more bandwidth to send and receive, and more storage space than audio. This may not seem that important now, but as you create more products, the need for it goes up dramatically. You may even require a dedicated server, which would add to your costs.

Video also has to be hosted by someone. Although you could use a third-party service, you would then be at their mercy if anything went wrong, such as a problem with their site.

Telephone

By using just a telephone, it makes the weekly call easier for the average person. Although they may have a computer, they may not have access to it at the appointed time. Not only that, but telephone access enables them to participate wherever they happen to be: at lunch, or anywhere else that's away from home.

This method is also effective for on-on-one coaching. You can offer a substantial discount to that person if he or she will give you permission to use the sessions in the future with other customers.

This is especially true if you're asked to train someone in something for which you have no program. This happened to me one time. I told him what my normal rate was, and then gave him a much lower price in exchange for his agreement to record all the sessions. This enabled me to be paid to do the training; and then I was free to package it later into either an information product or a coaching program for others.

In the end, I used it as the core of one of my programs.

Any time you record something, structure it for future use. Get permission from the client, and then give him or her a discount in exchange for it. Everyone will agree to your request.

Access combinations

So you're probably wondering by now if these different types of access can be combined.

As I already suggested, forums and email together are counterproductive. If you use the one, you don't need the other, and the two together may actually prevent forums from working at all.

Email access and group calls work together well. There's no real reason for you to eliminate email access either, until you get to the place where you're spending too much time on it.

It's probably not a good idea to base your long term program on a one-on-one approach. Instead you should use a group. However, individual coaching can command higher prices. In the beginning you'll have more time than clients, and so you'll be able to do that for a little while regardless.

You could also offer a certain amount of group time with a limited number of hours of one-on-one time.

For example, in the 13-week program I mentioned earlier, you could offer an hour or hour and a half of one-on-one, with an extra three hours, *if they felt they needed it*.

That's how I position myself.

And you can be generous with your time, too. If your customer needs more, then you can give it. Only about seven percent will need all of the time you offer.

It's unethical, however, to make the offer, but never give it. If you have marketed your program with it, then you need to give it if they think they need it. You could even stretch it out to five or six hours.

If you do plan to offer one-on-one time as part of a group program, then I recommend that you schedule the first session as quickly as possible, when they're they are getting to pay for it. That will give them time to do the homework and be ready for your individual call the next day. If you take advantage of their enthusiasm immediately, then you increase their chances of success with your program.

Tell them, "the next group call is on . . ., but I'd like to do your one-on-one call tomorrow. What time will you be available?" and then set up the appointment

Then, say to them something like, "I'm going to give you some homework to do tomorrow before the group call. If you we do our one-on-one call tomorrow, will you have a couple of hours tonight to do the homework? Great. I need you to do it first."

Go on to say something like, "As soon as we get off of this call, I'll send you the agreement with a payment link. After you make the payment, I'll send you the homework assignment so that you can get started and be finished before our call. That way you can get the most out of our time together. How does that sound?"

They will all say, "Yes."

When the call ends, what will they be thinking about? They'll realize that they need to make the payment so they can get the homework finished before you quit for the day. Otherwise they will be unprepared for the call the next day with you. It'll be a waste of their time, and they won't be prepared for the group call and they'll be a whole week behind.

I've had prospects dither; and I've had to ask them, "Are you sure you want to be behind? Do you want that to happen?"

They'll say "No." And then they'll make sure that they do it.

If they're serious, they'll do it. Push them.

If you get them motivated to do the work today, they'll pay today. If they pay, do the homework, have the call with you, and then get on the coaching call, they will get more from you over the time than if they wait.

If they wait, two, three days, for one thing, then the next, and then the next thing, they're already losing interest. You have to get them solid results right away when they're really excited to work.

Step Five

There are a lot of ways to do deliver the coaching: Webinars, teleseminars, telephone, private blog, or a forum. Essentially, all the ways that you use for interaction could also be used to deliver the lessons. You could even use some third-party delivery or membership software and give it to them a bit at a time.

But, I like to keep things as simple as I can. And so I use email and deliver it with an autoresponder. It works just as well as a membership site and enables me to use just one platform, instead of several.

If you're tech-savvy and want to use a number of different systems together to get a little bit better performance, then that's fine.

For myself, the first time I deliver it, I set up my autoresponder with a follow-up email campaign, and then use them to send out the lessons. I'll use broadcast messages to say when the calls will be, what the telephone number is, and the access code.

I prefer the followup approach because at the end of the program, all I have to do is change the timing of the emails. The first time I run it, the first lesson is sent on the same day as I receive the payment, but as new clients come on the lessons are sent automatically at the appropriate time. This means that on whatever day they sign up they'll get a lesson every week on that day.

Then I go back to my master document. I split it up into the number of separate documents that are needed for each of the weeks in the program: One for Week 1, one for Week 2, and so on. I also include links

to the homework assignment and the supporting material in the master document.

Then I just cut and paste the material and links needed for that week into the new documents and physically upload it to the server. If you do this every week, then you won't have to do it again unless you revise your program.

After each group call, I either use the link from my recording service or download the file to my computer and then put it on the server.

I substitute the placeholder for the main topic with the five subtopics, and a link to the recording into the document for Week 1. That means that it has links to the MP3 recording and the support document, and the homework assignment.

I usually include a personal note; just a paragraph of two with a statement such as, “If you have any more questions, then let me know.”

It’s not unusual for people to fall behind. So I say so right on the document. You could do this at about Week 5. “I noticed that a few of you are falling behind on your assignments. Please let me know where you are. I may need to slow things down.”

If several people tell you they’re really behind, then he’ll email everyone and ask them if it’s okay if you skipped a week. Everyone will say that it is. By then, they’ll want an extra week. This will give you a lot of flexibility.

Convert the Week 1 document to a PDF. Your document software should do it for you. If it doesn’t, find something online. There are free ones.

You could use Create PDF from adobe.com if you wished. Then send a link to that PDF via the autoresponder. The advantage here is that if anyone loses it, then, you can just send the link to them again. When someone new signs up, you can just cue up the lessons.

Putting it all Together

Let’s review the 5 steps:

1) Outline what you are going to teach in the coaching program
2) Plan to incorporate homework lessons
3) Think about adding additional components to the program
4) Determine interaction method, for example: email, forum, skype, telephone, etc.
5) Decide how you are going to deliver the coaching itself: webinar, telephone, email, etc.

It is easy to get mired in these decisions.

You can spend 3 months outlining your coaching program, then another 3 to decide if you want to offer homework assignments, then another 3 months to decide how you want to interact with your clients, and so on.

Or you can make 5 minute decisions for each component, launch your coaching program, see how it goes, then make changes in the future based on what works well and what you don’t like so much.

I am a big believer in taking action and taking it fast.

You really can design your coaching program - and create an automated coaching program in 48 hours -

Simple decide you will.

Then outline your coaching program. Do that this afternoon.
Then in one sitting, decide steps 2-5.

Write it all down.

That is a description of your coaching program!

It might look like this:

Name of Coaching Program
List 12 things clients will learn:
1)
2)
and so on

12 Home Work Assignments

Email Access

Telephone Coaching

Then assign a price to it.

That is your coaching program.

Now all that's left is to enroll clients and actually deliver it to them once they enroll.

Yes, that seems really simple.

And it is.

It is practically the same process I have used for almost every coaching program I have launched in the past.

And you can do it too!

I also recommend my book, Anyone Can Coach. It teaches you the entire process from A-Z, how to decide what to coach, how to outline it, how to deliver your coaching, how to write a sales letter, even how to get traffic and find prospects for your coaching!

You can get it on amazon here: My Coaching Book

To your success in building your coaching business!

-- Sean Mize