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How to Pick a Topic for Your E-mail Workshop or E-course

By Shery Ma Belle Arrieta

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The most frequently asked question I receive from people who want to create and develop their own e-mail workshops, e-courses or tutorials is how to pick the most suitable topic to develop.

Julie D. Raque is a business and personal coach who runs Matrix Coaching Services (<http://www.matrixcoachingservices.com>) and she once asked:

"...In day 1 of creating a workshop, you instruct us to pick a topic and then develop an outline. I have brainstormed several topics that I know in the long run all will be workshops. What I need help is in deciding which one to pick.

"Here's my dilemma — My first thought is to pick a topic that will be somewhat easy for me to do. It being my first workshop, I didn't want to choose a difficult topic. Is this the right thinking? If so, it narrows it down to 2 topics. Following that decision is another one to make...how long to make the workshop. Do certain lengths of workshops work better than others Meaning, does a 3-week workshop (one lesson per week) work better than a 12-week workshop?"

When you're only starting out in developing your first e-mail workshop, picking which topic to work on is the first of the many decisions you will make along the way.

If you came up with a long list of possible workshop topics during your brainstorming session, you might end up confused and undecided of just what you want to develop first.

It's always best to ask yourself:

- ~ Which topic are you most comfortable with?
- ~ Which topic can you develop quickly?
- ~ Which topic do you have contents or resources available already?

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~ Which topic do you think will be in demand and will generate immediate interest?

It's not wrong to pick the easy topic and develop it first the same way that it's not wrong to pick the hardest topic either. Instead, ask yourself which of the topics you came up with will create the highest level of interest or response in your niche.

You can also do a quick survey on your site visitors or e-zine subscribers. Give them a list of topic and ask them to cast votes. Give them an incentive to vote. Offer a gift after they respond to your survey. Do a random drawing at the end of the survey and award a prize — an e-book, a freebie, a special report, special access, etc. — to the winning respondent. Based on their votes, you'll have an idea of what e-mail workshop topics will be useful for them and profitable for you to develop.

However, if you decide to create the easy topic first, you can use it to your advantage: use that easy topic to generate interest for the more difficult topics you will develop into e-mail workshops later.

What about workshop length or duration?

Generally, it's best to conduct e-mail workshops no more than 4 or 5 weeks. You have to take into consideration how many workshop participants you can take in one run and how much time you will be able to devote to guiding and being available to them.

The length of your e-mail workshop will depend on your topic and outline. Unless you want to offer an intensive and in-depth course that could stretch for 12 weeks, it would be better (and easier on you and your participants) to offer shorter workshops that you can conduct anywhere between 3 to 5 weeks. Break down a big workshop into smaller workshops, or make your workshops progressive (e.g., beginner, intermediate and advanced e-mail workshops on the same topic). Your participants can take the succeeding workshops if they're interested to learn more.

Shery helps you create profitable e-mail workshops, e-courses and tutorials. Her e-book provides a blueprint on how you can set up e-mail courses and increase your subscribers from 0 to 200+ in 48 hours! Visit <http://EmailWorkshopsHowTo.com>

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Tip # 1: Target Site Owners & E-zine Publishers

Create your free e-mail workshop that promotes your business, products, services, or affiliate links and then offer it to site owners and e-zine

publishers that complement your e-mail workshop's topic.

Explain to them how your e-mail workshop can add to their site's or e-zine's perceived value. If the products you're promoting in your e-mail workshop allow you to offer an affiliate program (e.g. products or services you are selling through Clickbank), then tell site owners and e-zine publishers that they can customize the product links in your e-mail workshop to reflect their affiliate ID.

Tip # 2: Breathe Life into Old Articles

Turn old articles into a free e-mail workshop. Gather them and find a common theme. Four to six articles can make up one e-mail workshop. Insert your promotional text in each module and sign up for an autoresponder account. Sign up for one that will allow you to set the delivery intervals of your e-mail workshop modules.

Here are some places where you can get free sequential autoresponder accounts:

- <http://www.followingup.com>
- <http://www.informationbyemail.com>
- <http://www.rapidreply.com>
- <http://www.parabots.com>
- <http://www.getresponse.com>

Tip # 3: Pitch Your Goodies to Solid, Targeted Leads

You need leads -- names and e-mail addresses --

and what better way to get those valuable leads than from the e-mail workshop you've set on autopilot? With your e-mail workshop on autoresponse, you'll be able to keep track of people who requested your e-mail workshop.

Keep their e-mail addresses because you can e-mail them your sales pitch later. Each time you e-mail

them, remind them why they're getting it from you. Mention the free e-mail workshop they took only a couple of weeks ago, but also give them an option to opt-out of your update list. Give them a reason to stick around, though -- another free e-mail workshop in the works, a free e-book, an exclusive report just for them.

If you don't have many articles written yet, approach someone who has written many articles and strike up a deal. Offer to turn his old articles into a free e-mail workshop wherein you can both promote your products, services or affiliate links.

Tip # 5: Create a Mini-Course Based on Your E-book

Have you written an e-book? Do you want to drum up some sales? Create a free mini-course based on your e-book and then put it on autoresponder. Your mini-course can be based on one or a few chapters in your e-book. In between the lessons, insert promotional texts -- endorsements, excerpts, blurbs -- that can convince people to buy your e-book.

Tip # 6: Offer Free-to-Try Modules

If you offer a fee-based e-mail workshop, consider making available one or two modules as free-to-try modules. This way, people will be able to decide if they want to take the entire workshop for a fee.

In your free-to-try modules, insert promotional texts for your fee-based e-mail workshop. You can even promote your sites, e-books, e-zines and other e-mail workshops. Even if they don't sign up for the fee-based e-mail workshop right away,

you can put them in your contact list -- they are your leads -- and you can later contact them about your products and services.

Remember Tip # 3? Yes, you can add these people

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in your list of solid, targeted leads.

Tip # 7: E-mail Workshop Today, E-book Tomorrow

Create an e-mail workshop first, offer it for free or for a fee, then compile it into an e-book later. You'll have two products to bring you profit. Offering something in two different formats, an e-mail workshop version and an e-book version, will give people two options.

Not everyone can devote time to an e-mail workshop so an e-book version of it will work for them. And there are those who like to take advantage of receiving feedback from other people in an e-mail discussion setting so the e-mail workshop will be a better option.

Shery is now profiting from her e-mail workshops using Tips # 2, 3, 6 & 7. She'll be using Tip # 5 soon, and she's looking for a few good e-zine publishers, site owners, and content writers to partner with so she can put Tips # 1 & 4 into action. She wrote the only e-book on creating profitable e-mail workshops and it's at <http://EmailWorkshopsHowTo.com>.



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