John: Hey, everybody. It's John McIntyre here, the Autoresponder Guy. It's time for Episode 61 of the email marketing podcast, the McMethod Email Marketing Podcast, where you'll discover a whole bunch of stuff, really cool stuff, that's going to ... I hope you just make more money in your business.

Today, it's going to be the 5 Pillars of Building a Course That Sells with Frank Visciano from Udemy. Udemy is a website that allows anyone, young or old, experienced or new, or anyone, to create a course. They have some great software that they use. You can go and create an information product on your own, do an eBook, do a video course, things like that. That's fine, but you can also do it on Udemy. They've got a ton of great features in this offering, including some analytics, which if you're doing videos, will tell you which videos are performing well and which aren't because you can look at the engagement on each video. It's a really cool piece of software.

I didn't bring Frank on today to talk about Udemy specifically, though Udemy is obviously a big part of it. I brought him to talk about what sort of courses work really well because here's the thing. Udemy has millions of customers, so Frank here, he manages the content. He's the content director. He manages the supply side of the marketplace. This is all the courses that people are teaching. He sees all the courses that come through, and he has a great idea of what works and what doesn't.

That's why I thought I'd get him on, we'd talk about the 5 Pillars of Building a Course That Sells, 5 things that you need to focus on whether you're going to do this course on Udemy or another site like it, like CourseShare or your own website. However you're going to do it, you need to focus on these 5 things. We're going to talk about these. Very interesting stuff. The show notes for this episode of the email marketing podcast, go to the themcmethod.com/61.

This Week's McMaster's Insight Of Week is this: Make the initial memory more vivid using mnemonics, emotions or drawings. Telling stories is a perfect way to do this. That's from Michael Smith. Michael, how you're doing well today. McMaster's is a paid-membership community that I have. I'll tell you a bit about that in a second. First, I want to explain this a little bit more. Michael posted a thread in the forum about ... I think it was a scientific study on mnemonics and how the brain basically processes information, how you can leverage some of how the brain works in neuroscience to get better results with your marketing.

The idea is let's say I'm learning a language. I'll use Thai as an example because I'm in Thailand. One of the characters doesn't look anything like a chicken, but the representation with the letter is a chicken. When I look at this letter, then I think chicken, and then I think "Woah." The letter's got a bit of a beak, a bit of a pointy part, which could almost be a bird's beak. In my mind, I look at that letter, and then I think "Chicken with a beak." Then I look at this little pointing thing in the letter. What that's creating is a bit of story, or a mnemonic as they're called, a word picture in my head of what that is. Next time I see that letter, I'm going to think "Chicken", and I'm going to be like "Oh, that's what it means."

The equivalent of doing this with emails is telling stories. Instead of just saying "Empathy is important. One of the best things about marketing is you've got to have empathy." It would be much better to tell a story about a time when I met someone for the first time. "We met at bar, as you always meet people, and they spent a whole bunch of time, just asking me questions, getting to know me. I was really surprised because most people just want to talk. Whereas this person just really got to know me, asked me lots of questions and really tried to understand where I was coming from, how I thought. It was really enjoyable.

Then when they started sharing more about themselves after that, they shared it in the context. I was very obvious because I was a marketer, so I could see they were sharing what they felt and what they thought about the world in the context of what I'd just shared. I really felt that they had a lot of empathy for me, for what situation I'd been through. They really understood me. That's a great example of how empathy is important. It makes me feel understood. It makes me feel loved. It makes me feel appreciated. That's why empathy is important.

That's why you should buy the McIntyre Method because you're going to get a template that allows you to go and fill in the blank template. Go and survey your people, your prospects. They fill it out, and you're going to be able to get some great insight into who they are, what they do, and what they care about. You're going to develop this empathy, and you're going to make them feel understood and appreciated. Guess what? If they feel understood and appreciated, whose product are they going to buy?"

What I did there is I told a story. This was just completely on the fly. This is not an email. It might be a bad example, but completely on the fly. That was the story. I let into a pitch for the McIntyre Method. Instead of saying ... The classic thing is facts tell, stories sell. Instead of saying a fact, like empathy is good, tell a story about how empathy did something for me in my own life. Then link that to a pitch for the product, which is that you need empathy, but how do you do it? You need surveys. How do you do surveys? Use my survey template.

Speakers, conference presenters do this all the time. Instead of just getting up there and running off a list of facts ... The good ones anyway ... They will get up there, and they will tell you a story, and then give you a punchline. Jesus did this. This is why religion ... Religious leaders do this. They have an idea of something, such as you should care for each other. Then they'll tell a story about the Good Samaritan and different things like that, parables.

What you want to do is you want to use parables to talk about your product. Instead of telling people why your product is awesome, tell a story and then lead into. Use that as a parable for why your product is the best. This is a little bit hooky. It's a bit hard to explain sometimes. You can actually learn about this in Stories That Sell, which is one of the products you get when you join McMasters.

Quick note on McMasters. It's a paid-membership community. You get the McIntyre Method, Stories that Sell, Pages That Convert. Basically a whole bunch of video training, which is going to help you learn how to write emails, learn how to tell stories in those emails, learn how to create landing pages and this kind of thing. It's all organized in a very straightforward format. There's also a forum, where you can ask questions. I'm in this forum every day. I reply to every thread, so you get direct access to me and access to the other members in there as well, who all have traffic, who all are trying to set up an order and just want to make more sales. Very simple. Would love to see you in there.

Reviews. Reviews help spread the word. If you're enjoying this or if you're getting a lot out of it, and if you've got some good results in your business, I'd love to hear about them. The best place to let me know about those results and spread the word is to go to iTunes, search for the McMethod Email Marketing Podcast, leave me a review. Send me an email too to john@dropdeadcopy.com or john@themcmethod.com, and let me know that you've left the review. I'd love to hear from you and find out where you're at, what's going through your own life.

We've got one list of questions, then we'll get into this final interview with Frank Visciano. How do you weave a story into professional services B2B emails? This is a good question because B2B can be be a little bit ... People think it's a lot more serious. You can't tell stories. You can't be too flippant because you might come across as unprofessional, but the point about stories isn't to be unprofessional or to seem like you're casual and flippant. The point is that stories are just how we communicate as people.

If you go to a business conference with a business speaker, if he's a good speaker, he's going to be using stories. He's going to be telling stories about this and that and, like I said, the parable thing. He's going to be telling parables and running into a punchline. Doing that over and over and over again. Can you do this with B2B emails without coming across as unprofessional? Of course. You can come across as professional. Basically, think about it. You're not selling to businesses. You're selling to people, whether it's the CEO in that business or it's someone in the marketing department or whatever department. You're selling to people. What you really want to figure out is who are these people? What do they care about? What's the sort of things running through their head? What stories could you tell them?

Then you just write an email with a story. Still make it professional. Obviously you've got to write for the audience, but don't be afraid to tell stories. Try it. Tell a story about an experience that maybe your person's had over and over and over again. Maybe there's so much competition in this industry that they are so sick of getting hounded by boring, drab emails about people's [inaudible 00:07:39] spamming emails. You're like "That's why we don't do that. We actually talk about stories." You can tell a story about the stories.

There's a lot of different ways to do this. I'm going to take a little while to actually frame this up into a big thing, but the main thing I want you to get is that you can ... Can you write stories for B2B? Yes. Can you do it without being unprofessional? Absolutely. Best thing, just give it a try. Worst case scenario is you make a few mistakes, then you try again and try again and try again.

That's it for now. Let's get into this interview with Frank Visciano and talk about the 5 Pillars of Building a Course That Sells.

It's John McIntyre here, the Autoresponder Guy. I'm here here with Frank Visciano from Udemy. Frank is the director of content partnerships at Udemy. What he's doing over there is he's basically managing and taking care of the supply side of the marketplace. These are people who are are buying courses and selling courses. He's working with all of them to make sure that there's tons and tons of courses available, so that when you or I go to udemy.com looking for a course on paid traffic ... I just started a course on Udemy on that last week ... A course on anything ... That the course is going to be there. That's what he's doing.

What I want to do is bring him on today to talk about the 5 stages to building a course that sells. That's a bit of hook there we've just put together right now. The idea is that because Frank has seen so many different courses, that are going through Udemy, he's got a very good grasp of what works and what doesn't. As a business owner or as a marketer or a freelancer, when you sit down and you want to create a course and information products, you can create some of that lifestyle, that automated income, there are some things that you should do and some things you really, really shouldn't. That's what we're going to be talking about today: how to basically build an awesome kickass course. We'll get into that in just a moment.

Frank, how are you doing today, man?

Frank: Good. Good to meet you, John.

John: Absolutely. Nice to meet you too, man. Good to have you on the show.

Frank: I'm very glad to be here and excited to talk about online courses and Udemy's marketplace, some of my favorite things.

John: Cool. Before we do that, before we talk about that stuff, give the listener a bit of a background on who you are and what you're doing over at Udemy and maybe a bit of a quick background too on what Udemy is as well.

Frank: Yeah, absolutely. The very quick version of Udemy is that we're an online education marketplace. We focus primarily on on-demand video-based education content. Basically, online courses that anyone in the world, anywhere, can teach and anyone in the world, anywhere, can consume. We've got, at this point in time, about 9,000 instructors of all different types teaching 16,000 courses that range from digital marketing, as you mentioned, to office productivity to yoga. We're even programming.

They're teaching those courses to about 3 million students in 190 countries around the world, so a big diverse marketplace that's growing very quickly. My particular role is to focus on the supply side. I work with instructors, whether they're individuals or universities, digital publishers, NGOs, non-profits. You name it. Anyone who is an expert can teach on Udemy, and my job is to help make them very successful in doing so.

John: Nice one. I'm curious. What sort of capacity do you work with these guys? Are you giving them tips, giving them advice on what to do and how to market the course? What goes into it? If I'm to fire up a course on Udemy, obviously I've got to create the course and put it together, but what sort of other stuff, what sort of other challenges am I going to have on Udemy to get it up and running?

Frank: The truth is that the recipe for success on Udemy does vary. We think of our role as basically to be Sherpas for you guys as you go through the process of creating your course. That means first things first understanding what your objectives are, understanding where you're starting. We have folks that come to us, like Pearson or Finch, who are big publishers who have lots of content everywhere. For them, it's a question of translating their existing content into something that's optimized for Udemy and that's going to do well in the marketplace.

We also have individuals who are freelancers or just experts in their own profession, who are passionate and want to share that expertise with the world, whether because they want to help a student in India or Uganda learn their topic that they're just really fired up about or they're somebody who actually wants to monetize that expertise and make a lot of money selling their course on Udemy. That person is going to need a lot of different resources. We help you start and figure out exactly where you're starting, map your course through the production stages, introduce to a community of thousands of other instructors, who are doing this right along side you, and then ultimately just get your course polished up and ready to move in the marketplace.

This is, at the end of the day, an eCommerce marketplace that's competitive, and we want to make sure you're successful in that. Once that's all done and dusted, the nice part of being a part of the community is that you get to learn from all of the tricks and tactics that are working for those thousands of other instructors. It's our job to distill that information down and deliver it to you in a way that's actionable.

John: Fantastic. One thing I just want to point out here for the listener is that this applies ... What we're going to talk about is it obviously applies on Udemy, but the reason why I think this is interesting is I think a lot of this applies to just building courses in general, whether you're putting them on Udemy or another site like it or just on your own website. That what makes a great course that's really going to sell, really going to help people and really going to be successful and make money is that there are some fundamentals here.

Let's get into that. Let's talk about these 5 stages to building a course itself. The best way to do this is we can just work through the stages. What's stage 1?

Frank: Stage 1 in the process, when you're looking to build a course, in particular an online course, is the planning stage. I think there are a couple of different dimensions that go into the planning stage that often get overlooked. They come back to bite you in the behind later in the process when you're in the marketplace.

The first thing that I think about, whether you're thinking about a free course that you just want to get a ton of traffic on or a paid course, the bottom line is your course is your product and your students are your customers. You need to approach the planning phase in exactly that fashion. Think of this as the early stage brainstorming of launching a product. The first question you have to ask yourself is who is your audience and what value are you going put in front of them?

One way I like to think through this is if you were to be an old-school marketer and you were launching a consumer product out into the market, the first thing that somebody would tell you is "All right. What's your positioning statement?" This gets into how you think through your topic selection for your course. If you just go in and you're relatively flat and simple about it, you could say I would like to teach Microsoft Excel. That would get you started, but if you want to be truly successful, what you need to do is you need to put together a positioning statement that marries the topic you want to teach, the attributes of value that the course is going to deliver and the audience that you would like it to serve.

The way to think of extending that "I'd like teach Microsoft Excel course", would be to say "I would like to teach Microsoft Excel to busy working professionals with no prior experience, who would like to become advanced users of pivot tables for the accounting function." That is super specific, but what it also means is that the value proposition that you're going to deliver to a very specific audience is the first thing that you set on the table before you take another step down the process.

John: What we're talking about here is like a unique selling proposition, where let's say I'm Joe Smith and I go to Udemy. I'm looking for an Excel course, and I happen to be in that target market. I'm going to be looking for a course that caters specifically to me. If I can't find one, then I'll just pick any old one, but if I saw a course with that tag line, or that positioning statement as you called it, it's an absolute no-brainer to take that course. This is just a fundamental strategy of marketing. You have to do this not just for products, but everything that you do.

When you try to connect with the marketplace or connect with the person, the more specific you can be about who you are and what you do and who you serve, the better the results you're going to get.

Frank: Absolutely. For that for that topic that I pointed out, Microsoft Excel, that happens to be one of Udemy's most popular and successful topics. One of the pitfalls that we see is when people think about online courses the instinct is to be as broad as possible and as generic as possible, so that you appeal to a wide audience, but in practice, in any competitive marketplace, that's a real good recipe for getting lost in the shuffle. We always recommend that before somebody actually starts to tackle their curriculum and actually map out their course, they have a really clear, specific understanding of who they are and who their audience is and how they want their course to deliver something to.

John: This is partly why ... I go around calling myself the Autoresponder Guy. That was something that I put together ... It was about a year ago. I realized that I was doing all email marketing for people, but instead of just being a copywriter ... There's tons of copywriters out there ... I'm going to be the Autoresponder Guy and position myself as just that guy. I was just going to do that. I was still going to do sales letters and other advertising stuff, but I was going to position myself as the Autoresponder Guy.

Since doing that, since holding myself in and going really narrow and tight, everything has really taken off because people get it. It's a really simple message that people can pass on. My advice to anyone whether it's for a course or just in their business, niche down. Go real tight. This podcast is a good example. I call it an email marketing podcast, but really it's just about marketing. Today, we're talking about courses. I don't always have to talk about email marketing or autoresponders or anything like that. I can talk about anything that might appeal to someone who might be interested in autoresponders, which is the entire sales funnel.

Niching down doesn't necessarily mean that you have to keep your focus really tight. It's more of a marketing statement. I think it's really important.

Frank: Absolutely. I actually love the idea of course creation as a part of your marketing podcast because at the end of the day creating an online course is becoming an inter-globe pillar whether it's a personal or a professional content marketing strategy. It's a way to grow an audience. It's a way to grow your personal brand. It's a pillar of your overall marketing strategy. You might be an individual or a company, but we have a lot of different use cases, where we see folks using courses to do customer education or courses to do partner education.

In fact, that was how I founded Udemy. I was working for a startup and I was trying to figure out a more efficient way to deliver partner training online. When you think about it that way and you think about this is a piece of your content strategy, then it makes a whole lot of sense that you need to focus and be very specific as you approach it.

John: It's very much like Dan Kennedy, some of these old-school marketers talk about it, where you want to go and write a few books because if you can write a best-selling book in your market, in your niche ... This is the same thing as creating a course on Udemy or any of these different things. You're positioning, you're selling and then you're making money, but you're also positioning yourself as the authority in that industry.

Frank: Absolutely. It builds your own credibility and it builds your audience around that topic, so it makes a lot of sense.

John: What's number 2 in the 5 stages?

Frank: Number 2 in the 5 stages is production. For a video-based course, obviously this is going to look and feel very different from if you were building an in-person course or if you were building another one. What I would say is that for Udemy's version of quality, which is all about an online on-demand experience where students can take the course anywhere, the things to think through here ... I put basically 3 main things to pay attention to.

One is these are video-based courses, so while you may have a lot of different additional supplementary material (links, spreadsheets, all different activities, quizzes, things to drive engagement), at the end of the day, the first most visible version of quality is the quality of the video and the quality of the audio that you're putting in front of your customer. You want to make sure that that's nice and crisp. It's absolutely possible to get exceptionally high quality video from an iPhone or just a smart phone generally these days. It can be done if you pay close attention to how to do it. Actually, on our site, we have lots of recommendations on how to do it on the cheap.

You can also get great quality audio from a pretty inexpensive mike and a pretty inexpensive setup, but one of the things that we see very highly correlated with engagement is just the crispness of production quality. The one other thing that I just add in there, when you think about production, is the world is changing very quickly. The idea of an online course wasn't something that really existed very long ago and certainly wasn't something that was in the common vernacular for everybody to consider doing for themselves.

The idea of mobile-enabled and mobile-optimized online courses is the next step. Udemy has an iPhone and an Android app. Actually, about 30% of our course consumption happens on mobile. When you're actually in the process of doing the production, whether you're doing that in your basement on the cheap or you're working with a professional company, making sure that you're thinking about your course as something that's going to be this dynamic, ongoing, living breathing thing that is going to grow up and start to be increasingly consumed on mobile, we'll help you think about it a little bit differently.

John: I've got a course right now. It's a video course. It's not on Udemy, but the quality of it is ... I basically got a point and click digital camera and put in on a little stand ... It's called the McIntyre Method.

Frank: Yeah.

John: Put it on a stand and sat down by desk and just recorded a bunch of videos on email autoresponders and how I do them. There was no special mike. There was nothing high tech about it. Back when I did that course, I wanted to get it out as quickly as possible, almost just so I didn't stall. I just got it done. Quite a lot of people seem to get a lot out of it, but it seems like what you're saying is that if I took the time to really get some high quality audio and high quality video on there, the results would be even better.

Frank: I think that's right. What we see is that having a crisp production doesn't have to be expensive, but it does improve the overall student's experience. When you think about this in the context of putting a course out into a marketplace that's really competitive, having that crisp production is going to help drive your conversion. Having a good solid student experience, where the student feels like they actually got good value out of it, both the content, but also the experience, is going to drive repurchase.

Investing a little bit upfront pays big dividends on the back end. My guess is making a little bit of polish investment on the production up front could be really valuable.

John: I have a friend ... I've never used it myself. He has ... I think it's a Samsung S2 or S3. I find this stuff fascinating, but he had a lab mike ... You know those tiny little mikes you clip onto your shirt. From what I hear ... I haven't done this myself yet, but I can plug a little lab mike into my iPhone, fire up the video app and get the high quality videos with great sound. Is that correct?

Frank: Absolutely. We actually list on our site the latest and greatest mikes that we at Udemy are using, but also our instructor community is using. Those range from ones that could cost $50 to ones that could cost $1,500. You can get great quality in all of those different scenarios. It's all about setting up the right environment and just making sure that you're doing a good job of being crisp on it and exporting it correctly. A good resource is some of the knowledge-based articles on udemy.com. There's also a community of folks. This doesn't have to be expensive; you could definitely do it on the cheap.

John: What's the link? I'll have a link in the show notes of this, but just in case no one goes to the site, what's a link to some of those articles? Is it udemy.com/knowledgebase?

Frank: Yeah, if you go to udemy.com/support, you'll be able to find some of those. That's the main hub. The other place you could find it is there's a Facebook group called The Udemy Studio. That's where 20,000 Udemy experts who are creating courses simultaneously, all talk about the best tools that they use to create their courses. They'll tell you the cheapest camera you can get, the best bang for your buck, same thing for audio.

John: Fantastic. That's planning. That's production. What's stage 3?

Frank: Stage 3 is polish. For us, what this really means is starting to think about how your course is going to be presented in the marketplace. At this point, you have basically planned your course. You chose your topic, and you made sure it was differentiated. You built out your curriculum. Based on that curriculum, you produced your course. You've got great audio, great video. You've now assembled it into a course.

What you need to start to think about is what's the marketing copy look like? What's the face of this course to the market? This is where if you spent time upfront on that marketing positioning statement, you have a really good sense of exactly who your intended audience is, who you want to take your course and what they're going to get out of it. That will flow very naturally into the personality and copy you reflect on the actual landing page. It will help you think through what course requirements you have, what learning objectives you might want to communicate to the audience.

I think having a very polished landing page is important, particularly again on a marketplace, because it's where people will make their decision of whether or not they want to purchase your course. We actually spend a lot of time working directly with instructors to help them polish that landing page, both to be optimized for the student experience on Udemy, to draw traffic from external SEO through Google and other different channels.

John: What we're really talking about here is the sales page on the Udemy website. What are you finding? Our course creators, are they writing these sales pages themselves? Do you have recommendations for copywriters? How in depth are people going? Are they writing say 1,000 words or 2,000 words on the course page? What makes this work really well?

Frank: It's a great question. Most of our instructors will create their own course landing page. They'll create the course description and the instructor bio that are the 2 anchor elements for your course landing page. The main ingredients that you want to have in your course description to make it a really successfully converting one are basically all those elements of the value that you're providing.

Who are you as an instructor? Why are you a credible expert on this particular topic? Why is taking a course from you going to be something that's actually exciting and valuable to the student. Next thing is what's the topic and what's the use case for the skills that you're going to get out of this topic? That's linking together the learning objectives that the student's going to have. What are they going to be able to do at the end of this course that they couldn't do beforehand?

A lot of online course creation is about developing a course that delivers on a skills acquisition goal for many students. They come to Udemy, or come to an online course, to learn something concrete that they can put to work. What is that concrete thing that they're going to learn? Having a sense of what the added bonuses are that are a part of this course? Are there extra quizzes? Are there live sessions with the instructor? Is it a community of students that are all debating topics? These are all important attributes to mention.

Then having your course requirements laid out in advance. Is this an advanced course or a prerequisite of taking another particular course is important? Is this for dummies, for everybody who can go ahead and take it right from scratch? If you map out all of those things, you may be looking at a course description that's somewhere in the 300-1,000 word range. I think that's fine. You want to be succinct. You want to be crisp about really the value proposition, but you also want to recognize that some people will find your course through search, so having a good amount of copy there doesn't hurt you too much, in terms of SEO traffic.

John: That sounds straightforward to me. What's stage 4?

Frank: Stage 4 is publishing. What I would say is publishing and polishing to me are very linked. At Udemy's marketplace, we happen to have a quality review process. We make sure that every single course that's submitted to Udemy gets feedback from real live individuals. We give you feedback on the overall structure of the course. We make sure that you're doing some core things, like differentiating, selling at production, establishing and exceeding expectations and polishing your overall copy and your product.

The one thing that we think about in the publish phase is your online course should be a living breathing thing, so when you put this out there, you're going to get feedback whether it's from Udemy or it's from your students. When we think about the publish phase, it's all about iteration. What are you learning from your students? Are you surveying your students? Are you getting great feedback from them? Are you learning which lectures are the most useful and the most engaging and which lectures maybe could use a little bit of work?

It's all about iterating and honing your product as something that you want to improve over time. One of the nice things about an online course is it should be really dynamic. You're going to get a lot of information from your students. Make sure you feed that back into your course to make it more powerful, better converting, better selling over time.

John: What's some of those things? Let's say I put a course up there, and it's been up for a little while, and it's all going pretty well. What sort of indicators am I going to get? Are these going to be blog comments? Are people going to be emailing me? When they do, do I have to redo the entire course or will I redo a video? How will I get the information from the customers? Then how will I actually apply it into the product?

Frank: It's a good question. In the Udemy eco-system, we give our instructors some pretty powerful analytics about what their course engagement looks like. We will tell them exactly which lectures had the highest engagement rates, where lectures are, where there's dropoffs, how students are doing on quizzes and aggregate, all things like that. Those are pretty powerful. The other thing that we do is we set up a pretty transparent system for student communication. That includes student reviews.

If I were to think about the 3 main places that you should be looking as an instructor to try to make your course better, it would be listening to reviews ... What are students saying after they've taken your course? On Udemy, you'll see that in a very transparent way. If you're doing it elsewhere, survey your students after they have completed a lecture or completed the entire course. Find out what worked and what didn't and react to that.

The second place is looking at trends in engagement or patterns. If you find out that in a 10-lecture course, lecture 3 and lecture 9 have 4 times the engagement of the rest of them, maybe you should actually take from that feedback, that you should create a separate standalone course on those 2 really high-value topics. Dig deep into those, for instance. Alternatively, if you see that lecture 2 has a really high drop-off rate, think about tinkering with it. Do some AB testing. Do some thinking around a slight tweak with how you present the topic. See if you can actually drive engagement up overtime.

Last place that you should definitely be looking is in your course dashboard experience. What are the questions that students are asking? What questions are they asking you, either via email or inside the course form? What are they asking one another? Use those questions as an indicator as to what they care about? Try to steer your course in that direction.

John: Fantastic. It's sort of like plans for a tree that's growing.

Frank: Exactly. If you're an author and you publish a book, it's pretty hard. That's a little bit set in stone. It's very hard to iterate on a book that's out there. If you have an online course, this is something that you can really craft and evolve over time, especially if there are new changes that are being made to your course or to your topic. You create a course on digital marketing, that course is stale tomorrow. That's part of why Udemy exists, to have a very rapid high-pace of courses that fill those needs of skills gaps that are moving quickly.

You should think of your course as something that can also be a part of that. Add new lectures over time as new hot topics pop up. If you started an email marketing course a couple of years ago, but now there are different digital marketing channels that are relevant and exciting, evolve your course so that it walks that path.

John: I love this. What's stage 5?

Frank: Stage 5 is promotion. Whether it's Udemy or anywhere else online, I think the reality of any self-publishing platform is that being a content creator, and definitely being a course creator or an instructor, are not spectator sports. While we're proud of the fact that Udemy is a big marketplace ... We have 3 million students today all over the world who are taking courses. You can definitely carve out in a very passive way a slice of that traffic.

If you want to be your most powerful instructor, you're going to need to be both an instructor and a marketer. This means being out there, creating blog posts around your course topic, driving some traffic, fiddling around with other channels, maybe posting some of your videos on YouTube as a fun old way to actually drive traffic to your course. This is all about being out there and being an active marketer, making some noise so that your brand starts to get there and gain some momentum.

John: Is this something that people should know before they come to Udemy or is this something that Udemy can help with, in terms of promotion and giving people a map of how to actually promote that course?

Frank: The nice thing about Udemy is it's a pretty flexible platform. As I mentioned, we're working with some folks who are doing this for the first time and have no audience and other folks who have been doing it for a long time and have tens of thousands of YouTube or Twitter followers. They have a natural built-in audience.

The nice thing about the community is we have those folks and we have everybody in between. Part of our role as Udemy, as the platform, is to distill down what's working from all of our best partners and help equip you with those. We actually have a woman on our team, Danielle Lesley, whose day job is to just find great tactics that are new and fresh and work and deliver those to our new instructors. You don't have to know it in advance as long as you're hungry and excited and willing to test out new things. We can help you find the recipe that is going to work for your specific content, your specific audience and your business model.

John: Absolutely. That's great. Fantastic. We're right on time here, but before you go, I wanted to talk a little bit about Udemy specifically. One thing I find really interesting here is that all of this can be applied to just setting up an eBook or a course on your own site. The problem, though, is that, especially for someone who has never done a course before, is that's going to be very challenging. You mentioned analytics. That sounds fantastic. There's a lot of different things that Udemy is going to make very, very easy and very simple. I really liked that.

I'm curious. What sort of numbers are people seeing on Udemy? If they set up a course, what can they really expect from it? How much money are they going to make? How long will it take to do it? All that sort of stuff.

Frank: Some good questions. As you might imagine with a big audience on the supply side, it's a broad range. Just to give you a bit of a sense of a spectrum of what a course looks like and what success looks like on Udemy, the shortest course is 30 minutes. The longest course is 130 hours. The average course is probably in the 2 to 4 hour range. It's mostly based in video content. For that average course, I'd say ... There are free courses on Udemy. There are also courses that are $1,000. That average course is usually priced somewhere in $70 to $100 range.

When you actually think about what success means for instructors, we're pretty proud of the fact that there are instructors who have done extraordinarily well on Udemy. We have over 50 instructors who have made more than $50,000 with their courses. Our top instructor has made multiple millions. The average instructor on Udemy has made a little over $7,000. There's definitely some real money that can be made.

At the same time, if you wanted to create a free course, you just want to get your message out there really broadly, we're more than happy to be a platform that helps you do that in a very quick, efficient, scalable way.

John: Very cool. We're right on time here, Frank. Before we go, though, give people a heads up. Where's the best place to go if they want to get more information on Udemy and maybe even sign up and create their first course?

Frank: Absolutely. We're firm believers that anyone can be an expert and anyone can teach online. Democratizing education from the supply side is going to be the future. Whether you are creating your personal brand, trying to build a course as a part of your content strategy, I'd definitely encourage you to come to udemy.com. In specific, if you're looking to potentially create a course, go to udemy.com/teach. No matter what you are an expert in, if you can dream it, you can teach it on Udemy.

John: Love it. Fantastic. Thanks for coming on the show, Frank.

Frank: Thanks a lot, John.