

G LegacyEdTech

The Digital Coaching Toolkit

Prepared by LegacyEdTech

COURSE CREATION PLATFORM VS. COURSE MARKETPLACE



A course creation platform is a digital tool used by businesses to build and sell their online courses directly.

This means the course creator sells the course through their own website or platform, maintaining control over the student experience and data.

In contrast, a course marketplace is a website that hosts a catalogue of courses from various instructors. Examples include Udemy and Skillshare.

While marketplaces can offer exposure, they typically limit earning potential due to commission payout structures. Creators only earn a percentage of revenue, and they often don't receive student email addresses, which hinders future marketing efforts.

Existing customers tend to spend more frequently than new ones, making the inability to market to previous students a significant drawback.

The source recommends choosing a course creation platform over a marketplace for adding scalable and sustainable revenue to a business.

ALL-IN-ONE PLATFORM VS. SPECIALIST PLATFORM

An all-in-one platform includes essential features needed to run a profitable online business. The source identifies these essentials as website creation, email marketing, and digital product creation (including the ability to create and sell online courses).

These platforms are considered a good fit for business owners who prefer simplicity and managing everything in one place, accepting that they might miss out on some customizations or features.

A specialist platform, on the other hand, lacks the full website and email marketing functionality of an all-in-one but excels specifically at course creation, student experience, payment processing, and product delivery.

Specialist platforms leave room and budget for users to choose other specialist tools to build a custom tech stack that meets their specific needs.





HERE IS A DETAILED LOOK AT THE TOP COURSE CREATION PLATFORMS REVIEWED:

- Teachable
 - Type: Specialist platform.
 - Curriculum Builder: Uses a block-based editor for lessons (video, text, embeds, PDFs) within sections. Features a classic sidebar view for students, showing a clickable outline next to the active lesson. The source considers its curriculum builder best in class for its simplicity, customization, and the clean student experience.
 - Payment Processing: Strong, automatically handling and remitting US sales tax and EU UK VAT.
 - Limitations: Analytics dashboards and the sales page builder are described as limited, with fewer block types and customization options compared to other platforms. A workaround is to build sales pages on a primary website and link to the Teachable checkout pages.
 - **Pricing/Value**: The source notes that Teachable has increased prices while decreasing plan functionality in the past year, making it harder to argue that it offers the best value. If you are currently happy with Teachable, sticking with it is suggested, but new users might consider other options.
 - **Disclosure**: The reviewer previously worked full-time at Teachable for four years and was a paying customer before and after employment.



• Thinkific

- Type: Specialist platform.
- Similarity: Often debated against Teachable as they are similar platforms.
- **Curriculum Builder**: Courses are built with chapters housing individual lessons. Users select a lesson type when adding a new lesson. Features the classic sidebar view for students.
- Advantages: Offers lesson types not available on all platforms, such as assignments, surveys, and more customizable quizzes. Switched to a one-step checkout flow in 2022, which reduces buyer friction compared to the previous two-step process. Improved its payment processor (t-commerce) to collect and remit sales taxes for US and Canada-based buyers. Users should check help articles for country support.
- **Pricing/Value:** A significant selling point is its pricing. Offers a free plan that allows full selling of an online course with no added transaction fees. While some features are on paid plans (Start or Basic), all plans include unlimited courses and unlimited students. Described as straightforward and value-packed.

• Kajabi

- **Type**: All-in-One platform, currently the number one pick in this category.
- **Comprehensive Features**: Allows selling online courses and digital products, creating a full website, publishing a blog or podcast, running a community, selling services, and building an email list all in one place. The price point offers significant value if most features are utilised.
- **Course Creation**: Curriculum builder uses modules and lessons. Each lesson can feature video, audio, or neither, with additional information added using a Rich Text Editor. Downloadable resources can be attached, and comments enabled/disabled.
- **Student Layouts**: Offers a choice between two layouts: the classic sidebar "Momentum" and "Premiere," both customizable.
- Advantages: Good choice for those valuing simplicity and managing everything centrally. Being well-established, it has a wide ecosystem of third-party specialists and service providers for support (templates, VAs, site builders).
- **Limitations**: Simplicity can mean constraint. May not offer the exact desired functionality for advanced site customizations or email automations if a specific vision requires it.

- Podia
 - **Type**: All-in-One platform.
 - Alternative: Presented as a more budget-friendly alternative to Kajabi. Its price point can even be comparable to some specialist platforms.
 - **Focus**: Known for its simplified, minimalist platform. Allows creating a basic website, publishing a blog, creating a community, and selling courses and digital products.
 - **Email Marketing**: Offers an email marketing add-on called Podia Email, which makes it a true all-in-one experience. Pricing is tiered based on features, while the email add-on is based on subscriber count. Users could choose another email marketing platform if Podia Email lacks necessary features.
 - **Strengths**: Simple user experience (UX) and friendly pricing are highlighted as major strengths.
 - Limitations: The minimalist features might feel limiting for some. The course curriculum builder has sections and lessons, but only five lesson types. While the lesson editor has improved (allowing video and PDF), it still lacks quizzes, assignments, or gamification, which could be deal breakers. The student view is very minimal with limited customisation options for the white sidebar and background. The website builder is also very basic. Recommended if simplicity is preferred, but not for customization or advanced features.

• Thrivecart

- Type: Specialist platform.
- **Origin**: Initially built as a checkout platform, which the source still considers excellent and highly customizable.
- **Thrivecart Learn**: Introduced in 2021, this feature allows users to create and sell online courses entirely within the platform.
- **Curriculum Builder**: Allows adding modules with individual lessons. Uses a block-based editor to customize lesson content (embedding videos, adjusting fonts, colours).
- **Quirk**: Does not natively host files or videos. Users need to host videos elsewhere, potentially requiring a second tool, often available for under \$5 per month.
- **Student Experience**: User-friendly and similar to other platforms, with highly customizable fonts and colours.
- **Pricing/Value**: Popular due to its one-time lifetime price point, which is considered unmatched in value. Even purchasing the recommended Proversion and the optional Learn Plus add-on can be comparable to or less than one year of a typical subscription to other platforms. This value makes it a top specialist pick despite its quirks.





Systeme.io

- Type: All-in-One platform.
- Alternative: Another budget alternative to Kajabi or Podia.
- Value Proposition: Considered the best budget course creation platform. Offers a free plan that allows selling one course with no transaction fees.
- Course Creation: Curriculum builder uses modules and individual lessons. The lesson builder is flexible with many blocks, which some might find overwhelming but offers many options.
- Limitations: Does not currently offer customisation of course colours beyond a drop-down menu, although custom branding is on their public roadmap.
- Ease of Use: Despite having many features, it was found to be easier to learn than anticipated. The interface is not as modern as some competitors. Recommended as a solid choice if looking for a free platform.

Feature / Platform	Teachable	Thinkific	Kajabi	Podia	ThriveKart	Systeme.io
Ease of Use	✓ User- friendly	✔ Drag & drop	✓ All-in- one, clean UI	✔ Simple & in	✓ Very beginner- friendlv	✓ Minimal learning curve
Course Builder	Ves Yes	Ves	✓ Yes (advanced)	Ves Ves	Ves Ves	Ves 🗸
Sales Pages	✓ Templates available	✓ Customizabl e	✓ Funnel builder	✓ Basic customizati on	Prebuilt sales pages	✓ Funnel builder
Email Marketing	▲ Basic (limited)		✓ Built-in automation	✓ Email campaigns	⚠ Not native (integration)	✓ Built-in autorespon der
Community Feature	Basic comments	Student discussions	Full community space	✓ Live chat & comments	X Not available	
Membershi ps & Bundles	Ves 🗸	Ves Yes	✓ Advanced tiers	Ves Ves	 ▲ Basic only 	Ves 🗸
Built-in Payments	✔ Stripe, PayPal	✓ Stripe, PayPal	✔ Stripe, PayPal	✔ Stripe, PayPal	🗸 Stripe	🗸 Stripe
Affiliate Program	Ves Yes	Ves	✓ Advanced	🗸 Built-in	🗸 Built-in	✓ Built-in
Landing Pages / Funnels	🛆 Limited	⚠ Add-on required	✓ Visual funnel builder	✓ Sales pages only	✔ Full funnels	✓ Funnel + automation
Mobile App	✓ iOS & Android	⚠ Not native	✓ Full- featured	X Not available	× Not available	X Not available
White Label Option	▲ Paid plans only	✔ On Pro plans	🗙 Kajabi- branded		Custom Custom	✓ Branding removal
Free Plan Available	✓ (limited features)	(basic features)	X No free plan	🗸 Free plan	🗸 Free plan	✓ Free forever plar
Pricing (Starting)	\$0 – \$59/mo+	\$0 – \$74/mo+	\$149/mo+	\$0 – \$33/mo+	\$0 – ₹499/mo (INR)	\$0 – \$27/mo+
Best For	Beginners launching courses	Educators & coaches	Coaches building a brand	Simple storefronts	Indian coaches/sel lers	All-in-one solopreneur s

COMPARISON REVIEW

Here's a comparison table highlighting key features of Teachable, Thinkific, Kajabi, Podia, ThriveKart, and Systeme.io, specifically tailored for coaches and educators looking to sell online courses and digital products

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PLATFORM

The key takeaway is that there is no single "best" course creation platform; different options suit different businesses.

The recommended method for choosing is to create a needs assessment. This involves listing any must-have features that are important. Begin by deciding if an all-in-one or a specialist platform is needed, and then get more specific about other requirements.

Once a list of needs is ready, comparing platforms becomes easier. We suggest using a comparison tool or starting one or two free trials based on recommendations.

After working with many course creators, the reviewer believes most won't find one "right" tool, but rather the one that "feels best" at the moment. Testing and trusting your gut are encouraged.



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