Tips for Combining Coaching, Courses and Memberships

When your subscription product features coaching, and courses, and a membership, John Lint has what could be the best membership software for you.

James Schramko and John Lint

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to JamesSchramko.com, my podcast. This is episode 964. Today, we have our special repeat guest, John Lint. How are you going?

John: I'm good. How are you?

James: Good. Welcome back. I know you've been on here a lot. And we've had a little gap in between your last call and now. But it's always good to get you back and to stay fresh. And I've got something on my mind that I really wanted to bring you on to talk about. So I like these fly-on-the-wall discussions, because as I'm thinking of things and going through things in my own journey, I know that my audience are most likely interested in what's on my mind.

I know this because they tell me. They're like, Hey, what have you seen lately? What are you doing? So of course, you're in charge of kleq.com. And that's spelled K-L-E-Q.com. Highly brandable. Once you know it, you'll never go back. Right?

So a couple of things. Firstly, I've been digging in deep into my Kleq installation. And that's where the new home for my membership is going to be. I've already established the main sort of framework for it through your help, John, we've had some discussions. One of the biggest things on my mind is how to arrange my content in a more modern way than the way I had it.

How James used to arrange his stuff

So I'm just going to give a little overview for our audience about the way it was, what I'm seeing in the market, what we're hearing about a lot. And then the discovery that I had when I spoke to you last time. So here we go.

What I did when I started out is I used to have information courses. I had a product, I did a warrior special offer, I had a product up there on Clickbank for a while there. And then I sold it on my own cart. And it was a one-time fee. And I essentially gave people - the background of it was when they purchased, I wanted to give them updates and upgrades.

So I ended up making this little membership area for them. And then I started doing webinars and stuff where I'd record information and put the recordings in there. And then I kept updating the product. And all of this was a one-time fee, and we're talking about 2006, 2007. Then I realized, I'm insane. I'm creating so much value.

And then I started promoting other people's forums. Now back in the day, this is before Facebook groups, I just gotta give context. So I started promoting people's forums as an affiliate and earning recurring income. So then along comes 2009. And I thought, You know what, I'm going to create my own forum. And the idea was, forum.

I think this is around the time Ryan Deiss was talking about his sort of membership site stuff. There was a couple of big time expensive solutions. I can't remember the names, but there were these membership sites, you could pay like 10 grand, they were like these super beasts with...

John: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

James: Do you remember some of the names?

John: There was also Stompernet that came into the scene at some point.

James: There were all these big memberships. And so I was interested in the membership model. I liked recurring subscription. I wanted a place to put my forum and to discuss things, and I created some content.

Now, I started with a partner. And after four years - I think it was four years, yeah - four years or so of partnering but not feeling like it was equally balanced, it was a bit out of kilter, I reined that in and I said, You know what, let's adjust this or make it right. And then we couldn't come to an agreement.

So in the end, I just started my own community. And when I did that, it was time for me to take my individual products, of which I had many, I had like 10, 11, 12, and put them all in. I just rolled them all in.

I said, Right. I'm going to put all my products in. Now, I was using back then, it was like BB php or something. And then I upgraded to, it was vBulletin. And then I went to XenForo, right, I did this in leaps. Sometimes I could import it. And in this case, I started a fresh install. I ended up with XenForo, which has been good for a long time. It's been a good forum tool.

Why are you doing it that way?

But when I showed you around it, you said, Hey, man, why are you putting products in a forum? And I'm like, Yeah, that's a good point. It was convenient, right? I'm not a technical person, but I would just put the video, and then people could comment under the video. I liked that aspect. And I liked the fact that I had a community. These are big important points here.

I had content. I had a community, and I was doing coaching. The thing that really changed the game for me was in the last five or six years, I started offering private coaching. I offered it to everybody who was a member at the time, which in hindsight, I should not have done for more than, say, a year, because I ended up creating a bit of a situation for myself.

And then over the sort of most recent period, I ended up having a level that's somewhere in between what used to be SilverCircle and what my membership is, and those people come on a weekly group call, the same way SilverCircle used to do. And so that group, which is currently called Intensive, they get the weekly call.

So they're getting a high level of coaching, they're getting some content, they can have access to it all, but I don't think they're there for that. And they definitely like the community of each other, but maybe not the whole community. But I feel like this is the future for me, this is where I'm going, that product line.
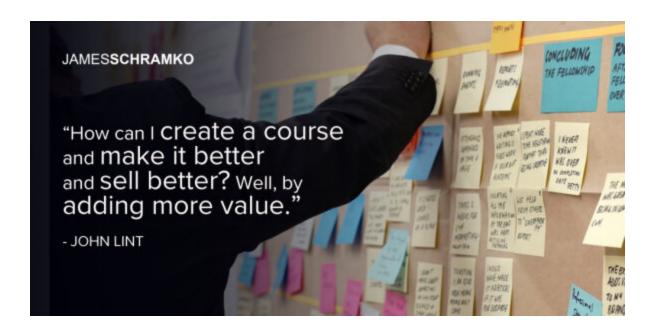
An emphasis on private coaching, via chat

So in the new installation on Kleq, K-L-E-Q.com, I am putting an emphasis on the private coaching. Now, you've showed me how to do that using a simple chat with push notifications. Let's just talk about that one feature to start with.

John: Yeah, so basically, it was very much inspired from what you are doing, right? So for me, it was, you and I have been working for the past five years or more. And, you know, obviously, I was always looking about what you were doing. But from my perspectives and thinking, Okay, well, if I were to do it in the new way, or in a different way, as part of Kleq, how would we do it, right?

So yeah, talking about the private chat is basically a way to - and it was also, just for background perspective, like, I come from the online course perspective as well, creating master classes, premium products like that, and then enhancing the sales of those big master classes and premium products.

And one of the ways you do that is by adding those elements that you've talked about, which is community and adding community, two-week online course will increase the value of it, adding some form of, for example, group coaching via, for example, weekly calls, that adds value to your course, adding private chat adds value to the course.

JAMESSCHRAMKO

"How can I create a course and make it better and sell better? Well, by adding more value."

- JOHN LINT

So it's all of these elements, how can we enhance the experience of a user? And also, well, how can I create a course and make it better and sell better? Well, by adding more value. So what should I add to a course? Well, one of the things I can add, if I want to, is, for example, give some private coaching inside that course.

And that's why we call, in Kleq, you can add different kinds of pages to a course, for example. So of course, you can create a course page, which is content-based. But another type of page that you can create is what we call the private chat page. What does it do? Well, it allows you to offer a private chat experience inside that specific course.

And in Kleq, you can have as many courses as you want, which technically means you can have as many private lounges, private chat areas, in as many courses as you want. It's up to you how you want to structure it, right? So that functionality then allows you to - the user comes, they just see a chat, they only see the chat with you, you as the administrator, you see the chat with everybody.

So everybody goes to the same place, that one page, but you as the administrator, you see everybody who has access to it, and you can chat to everybody, that makes it easy. But the user, he only sees you, the coach. So he's safe, he can talk openly about his or her problems. And they have that private coaching experience.

Then, of course, you combine that with the web notifications that we have enabled inside the members' area, web notifications are basically, you're using your browser, on your desktop or laptops, and we're talking about desktop devices. And let's say someone replies in a private chat, boom, there's going to be a notification that tells them, Hey, James just replied, right? Or James liked your comment, whatever, in that private chat experience.

The mobile aspect of the feature

That allows them to come back to the site, and re-engage and participate again in the experience. Now, if you take the mobile app that we also offer as part of Kleq, which is a native app…

James: Which I've got and I recommend.

John: Yeah, native app, obviously, iPhone and Android and iPad, and all that. Then you also have, of course, that private chat experience on your phone on the go. And all of those notifications also are native notifications. So they would pop up on your phone saying, James replied, and you as the coach, you'll know, Okay. I've just got a question, right? So now you know when you need to answer and do all of those things.

Do your private coaching in your own terms, but you get notified and you get that experience wherever you want, whether on desktop or on your mobile phone. So that is basically private chat. It's an excellent way for you to tease maybe a membership program that does a strategy that a lot of people can do.

A platform for whatever customer experience you choose

You can offer a course that is a high-value course, high-ticket item. You can tell them, as part of that, you get six weeks of coaching. And then if they want to continue with the private coaching, then they can upgrade, for example, to the membership plan, which is recurring. So that will basically avoid the situation that you were on in the early days, James, where you're kind of stuck about, Well, now I'm doing private coaching forever if they only paid one time.

So it's up to you to think about how you want to do it. But it can become part of that recurring product that now you're creating. So now you have that masterclass, big-ticket item type of course, or low-ticket item, whatever, you have those seeds elements of a membership site. And now you have that recurring income type of product as well that you're building at the same time.

And now, ultimately, little by little, you're now forming that ultimate online business that you need to have to be able to have those different price points, to be able to have that burst of sales for that to basically make the courses but also the recurring income, that peace of mind that comes with recurring income, you have that as part of your business.

And all of that, of course, the goal for us was, we want to do all that, we want to offer all of these experiences, and we want to make it easy, and we want to make it customizable. So if someone wants to have 10 private chats, 10 different private coaching with maybe even different coaches, you can in that one installation, one website.

The two common approaches

James: That's the goal. That's the goal. Because what I'm seeing is, there's really sort of two camps. There's people who have - they're using course-focused software, a lot of the membership platforms out there, or the course platforms, they're very course-focused, they might have a light chat somewhere, but generally not.

And usually, they're just putting a sister Facebook group, that's the standard IM way, course and Facebook group. That sucks, right? Then the other one is like the forum-based ones. So you can have a membership and forum. So there's platforms out there that are very social-like, but they're not that good at the structured courses.

What I'm seeing is, I'm opening up and showing people the backdrop of my membership, which I'll do in a moment on my phone. They're like, Oh, my God, so you've got all the course stuff, and the forum stuff, and the messaging. Because a lot of them also use Voxer, right? So imagine this, you got the course, you've got your Facebook group, you've got your Voxer, this is just too many platforms, it doesn't make any sense.

And then you've got your software for landing pages, and then you got your shopping cart, and then you got your website, then you got your hosting. It's like, that's bullsh*t. Seriously, too much.

What James's membership will look like

So finally, there's just this one place. So I'm going to just open up my phone, I'm going to see if I can make the camera focus on it.

But in my new version of James Schramko, it's going to have the Members' forum. So that's where the members can talk to each other. That's the community aspect that I'm actually really strong with. Then there's the Sounding board. And this is going to be for the people paying a little more, right? The standard membership will not have a sounding board.

The Sounding board is where they can one-to-one chat with me. And they can come to a call every single week with other people in that level, and bounce ideas around and get help. Then there's Playbooks. This is my new version of content. This is the way I'm going. I want short, bite-sized frameworks, super easy-to-follow frameworks that I've been using over and over again.

This is, essentially, I'm going to bring my info products into the shortest possible version, or replicate my life book, my own personal notes, my hacks. And then the last one is Training. And that's of course, when I've done AMA calls or recorded events from my live event, that's sort of the older content. So that's it.

I only want four tabs, I want to make it really easy to use. And you can see, this is on my phone. Because I have a lifestyle business, I want to be able to answer questions on my phone, I want to be able to dictate, I want to keep an eye on stuff. I want them to be notified when there is things happening that relate to them because it brings them back. Not because I'm after retention or churn, that's the byproduct. I'm actually after them getting great value and having a fantastic return on investment.

"There are platforms pushing the community aspect. There are platforms pushing the course aspect. There are lots of people gluing all sorts of stuff together. And that's a mess."

- James Schramko

Where everything's under one roof

So I'm excited about this. But I think the big point here is, there are platforms pushing the community aspect. There are platforms pushing the course aspect. There are lots of people gluing all sorts of stuff together. And that's a mess. Kleq is the one place where you can have your courses, your community, your coaching, all there under one roof.

You can also set up the pages, the campaigns, you can collect the money, it does everything except for that email integration thing. You still need to bring along an email system, and that's okay, I'm using Ontraport. But you could use ActiveCampaign or Infusionsoft or whatever floats your boat, whatever you've probably already got, it just plugs straight in deep.

I'm only noticing now, some of these other people out there in the market are just starting to go for deeper integrations because they've realized, unless you have a true hand-in-glove relationship, you're just skimming the surface. And in 2022, when we're recording this, this is episode 964, email is still very, very important. So you have the perfect solution combined with your email.

John, you're a wizard, I appreciate it. And I'm excited about bringing in my first users. So at around about the time of recording this, I'm inviting a couple of people to come in, have a look around my new membership, give me their feedback, and then tune it. And then going forward, I'll end up rolling all of my memberships into this new solution. It's still going to be on JamesSchramko.com. And I'm very excited about it. So yeah, it's fun.

John: Yeah, very cool. Very cool.

James: And also, this is something really important. I don't think people realize this, but you open up a call, is it every single week?

John: Yeah, every single week, yeah.

James: Every single week, you open up a call for Kleq users to get on a call with John, the founder, who cares about your success, and ask him questions. Like, show him what you're working on, ask him strategy, ask him tactics, ask him what he's seeing across all the accounts that's working well. And he helps you. The level of support is off the charts. And it's an amazing solution.

John: Thank you.

James: So great job. Thanks for all your help. The big message is you can completely customize - and I've enjoyed that too - you've helped me customize the way it looks, the way that I display it. It can be done an infinite number of ways, which is why it's good to get on a call with John, come to that training call, and ask him for suggestions and then just do what he says, because he knows how this works.

John: Thank you.

James: Thanks, John. And until next time. That's kleq.com, K-L-E-Q.com. Check it out, and go to the weekly trainings. It's an awesome platform.

JAMES**SCHRAMKO**

Optimize your business strategy with James's help

CLICK HERE