

Product Launch Formula Case Study: Lisa Parmley

ProductLaunchFormula.com

Hosted by:

Jeff Walker

With Special Guest:

Lisa Parmley

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Jeff Walker: Hello, Lisa?

Lisa Parmley: Hi.

Jeff: How are you doing?

Lisa: Pretty good!

Jeff: You said your product is a test prep product?

Lisa: Yes it is. It is a home study course in the technology field.

Jeff: Okay. So this is a test that people are taking to qualify for some certification or something along that line?

Lisa: Yeah, exactly.

Jeff: So, once in a galaxy far, far away, I took the GMAT, which was to get into graduate business school. Then there's the GRE, and the LSAT to get into law school. For high school kids there's the SAT and the ACT. So your test is along that line except it is for a more professional certification type of thing, instead of for getting into a school?

Lisa: Yes, exactly.

Jeff: So I'm looking at your information here. Your launch specials were based on the fact that you were running low on audio CDs, so you were offering everything except the audio CDs for a reduced price?

Lisa: Yeah, and that was all true. It's hard for me to order all the audio CDs. It's expensive, a thousand dollars, and I know that my sales go down a little at the end of the year, around the holidays, so I didn't want to spend a thousand dollars on the audio CDs. I wanted to sell a bunch so that I could then replenish my inventory. I was being honest in coming out with that special.

Jeff: How many CDs are in the course?

Lisa: Three.

Jeff: Excellent. So basically what you did was that you came up with a legitimate, truthful reason. And when you get right down to it, no one ever has to do a promotion, so what you did is perfectly honest and ethical. There's absolutely nothing wrong with it and it's great. I also like the fact that you decided to do a

product launch to make some money and also to fund your next batch of inventory. I love that you were doing it for a couple of different reasons.

So you had a list of about 1100 people... let me ask you, is this test given year-round?

Lisa: It is, yes, it is all year round. It takes people a long time to study for it, so somebody might buy it this year but they might not get to it until next year.

Jeff: So what was the very first thing you did?

Lisa: Well, the very first thing I did was I sent out a hint, like you said in your Product Launch Formula course, about two and a half weeks before I had the promotion.

I added in my social proof, like you suggested, about how I had so many people request information and had over a thousand people sign up for the list.

Then what I did was tell them how many people had signed up and were interested and had taken my course and passed the exam, and that I wanted this year to be "their year". I just hinted about a special I was going to have for people who were holding off on purchasing. And that was the first hint.

Jeff: And we were getting close to the end of the year, so people are starting to think about the next year, especially since there's a timing cycle where they have to study the information before taking the test.

Lisa: Yes.

I was hoping to get them excited, get them looking forward to something, and to remember that they signed up for information about the test, so hopefully they were still interested in taking it.

Jeff: Now, had you been publishing to them fairly regularly before?

Lisa: Well, what I do is, when they sign up, when they opt-in, they get a free report that covers the basics of the exam. I also send out emails. I send out a lot at first, then it kind of trails off to the point where I just send out a few a year. But I know some of those people had signed up maybe two or three years prior to this, so some of them probably hadn't gotten an email from me for about six months

Jeff: So then, was there any reaction to that hint?

Lisa: No, I didn't get any reaction.

Jeff: That's typical. That's very typical. So what was your next step?

Lisa: So in the second step, I wanted to get people to sign up for a special notification list. I guess that's a sub-list?

Jeff: Yes.

Lisa: I wanted to do that since I don't usually send out many emails to these people. I didn't want to badger them with five or ten emails in a week. I felt scared to do that, so I had them sign up for a special notification list.

The next couple of emails I sent out were to get them onto that new list. And I think if I were to do it again, I think I would send out more of those, because I just sent out two. Again, I didn't want to send too many emails at once.

Jeff: Gotcha. So did that email basically send them to a web page?

Lisa: It did.

It sent them to a web page with an opt-in form. And I had a little over a hundred people sign up, probably about 120 people.

Jeff: Now, how did you try to entice them to sign up for that sub-list?

Lisa: Well, I just hinted at the special and didn't give away the details. So I talked about the pass rate for the exam, I put in some testimonials from people who had just recently passed, and...

Jeff: Did you say something like "we've got a special coming up, and if you want to hear about the special, you need to sign up here?"

Lisa: Exactly.

I just told them to sign up for the pre-notification list and we would send them information on the special as soon as it became available. And then I gave them the URL to sign up.

In the second email, instead of giving testimonials, I did like a "Frequently Asked Questions."

I had questions such as "Will this work for me?" and "Will I be able to get a job in the field?" and things like that. I had three "Frequently Asked Questions" and then I put the sign up for the pre-notification email.

I just sent those two emails.

Jeff: But in the future that's one thing you will do differently... you will probably send at least one more email encouraging people to sign up for the sub-list?

Lisa: Yes, I think so.

I'm sure I could have gotten a lot more people to sign up. Both times I sent an email out I had about 60 people sign up for the course.

Jeff: Oh, really?

Lisa: Even after I sent them out, I still had people sign up, so a lot of them must not have been reading their emails right away.

Jeff: A lot of times people don't.

And what was the timing on that? Your launch date was on November 9th. So when did you start getting people to join your sub-list or announcement list?

Lisa: I sent out the very first hint October 28th. Then the following Tuesday I sent out the first email, and on Friday I sent out the second email.

Jeff: So the first email encouraging them to join your sub-list was on Tuesday, and then you gave them three days or four days until the second one. Then on Friday you hit them again?

Lisa: Yeah.

Jeff: If you saw 60 people subscribe each time, I think that a third mailing would have done well. Because what will happen, generally, is when you start to see the numbers drop off, for example if you did 60 and then the next one only got 20, then it's starting to lose its effectiveness. But say you went 60/60/60, you do another one!

Lisa: Yeah, I could have done four!

Jeff: Yeah, well, if you did another one and it only got five or six or ten subscriptions, then you probably exhausted the usefulness of those announcements. But since you got another 60 with that second email, then a third one would have probably done well.

But still, you had great results!

And I think I stressed this in the course, every single time I do one of these launches, I look back and say, "Oh, I could have done this, I should have done that. I did this wrong."

You are always learning, and you never get it perfect.

Lisa: Well, yeah, that's the beauty of it. You can improve upon it next time.

Jeff: Yeah, and the other beauty is that you can do a whole bunch of things completely wrong and you still come out good. There's just so much power in these launches, so much going on, that you can afford to make mistakes.

When I launched Product Launch Formula, it was a spectacularly successful launch. However, as I look back, there are several things I did completely wrong. And Mike Filsaime just did his big launch and, I don't know, he's probably up to about \$900,000 now. I guarantee you there are things he's wishing he did differently.

It doesn't matter if you make mistakes. If you get the basics right, you're like a steamroller.

So, you've got people on the sub-list, and what did you do at that point?

Lisa: Well, from there, I put together a plan for what to tell people.

I had things like the objections, such as who should not purchase the course. I told them about the offer. I explained that we had less audio CDs than everything else and the audio CDs were actually printed out on transcripts anyway, so they weren't going to be missing out on any of the information.

I did not tell them the price just yet. I kind of made it sound like we were putting together the finishing touches for the special offer, and that I was going to send them more information as soon as we got it together. And this is what they actually got as soon as they signed up, as a welcome message.

So I made them wait. I sent out an email on that next Friday.

At that point I had come together with my special offer and sent it off to the 120 people in an email, again explaining about the audio CDs. I came up with exactly how many sets of those packages we had, and I told them the price.

I also told them the exact date that the special offer would begin. I had it set up for Wednesday, November 9th at 10 A.M., and told them it would last until that Friday or when the number of sets I had were sold out.

On Tuesday morning I sent out another email and I again told them about the price. I made the price a little lower, saying, "I think you will be pleasantly surprised at what we've decided to do." I was offering the audio list package for \$497, so it was \$150 off the low price quoted already. And I got a lot of people excited about that email I sent out Tuesday morning.

I kept checking my webpage, because I also gave them a URL that was a countdown page. I couldn't believe how many of those people kept going and looking at it! It was one of those pages with a timer on it.

Jeff: That must have been reassuring!

Lisa: It was, yes, because before that I didn't know if anybody was even interested. So I was pretty excited!

Jeff: Cool!

So your product in its standard form has 3 CDs, and then it has some books and some printed transcripts?

Lisa: Yes. It's mostly books, and then there's also a little testing software CD. I also added things like checklists and a little lesson plan. It's a pretty big package. It's about 11-12 pounds.

Jeff: And so the special that you offered was basically the normal package, but it was missing some of the CDs. And what is the normal selling price for your product?

Lisa: It's about \$650, and I was selling it for about \$500 for the special.

Jeff: So the day before, when you told people you were going to drop the price, that was when you were dropping it from the \$650 to the \$500.

Lisa: Right.

Jeff: What had you told them before that? You said there was a special coming up and you were hinting at the special. Then when they joined the opt-in list, what did you tell them in terms of the package? It sounds like the day before you gave them something else in addition to the special. Am I missing something here?

Lisa: Let's see. There was the auto-responder they received when they signed up, and I told them how we didn't have as many audio CDs. That was the first time they heard about that. And I told them we were putting together the finishing touches on the special offer.

Then that Friday I sent them another email and again explained that we had less audio CDs and we couldn't sell those by themselves. I told them how many sets we had without the audio CDs, and that the special price would be at least \$100 off of the regular price of the product. And that's when I also told them about the date and time.

And then Tuesday morning was my update right before the launch. I told them they'd have a pleasant surprise, and that we were going to offer it for only \$497. They would get \$150 off.

Jeff: Okay, that's good. So basically you tell them we've got a special coming up and you've got them thinking it's going to be \$550. Then at almost the last second, the day before, you say it's only going to be \$500. Good, good.

And really, that's a form of reciprocity. You've got them expecting one thing, and it's almost like a gift even though you're not really giving them anything other than the ability to save some money. But it still creates some reciprocity there, which is very powerful.

Lisa: Yeah, I remembered in your course somebody else had done that so I planned to do that.

Jeff: That's great!

So now you are at 24 hours to go. You send out that notice and people start hitting your page and checking out your timer. You are starting to see some activity, and you're watching your logs. You're seeing people hit that page, and you're starting to feel a little bit better about everything.

Now it gets to be Wednesday the 9th, which is your launch date. You get up in the morning--hopefully, you weren't up all night writing a sales letter like I usually do before my launches! What was it like before you hit that 'send' button? How did you feel?

Lisa: I felt pretty exhilarated. I was pretty excited; because I had checked the stats again and noticed how a lot more people had been looking for that page. Even the hour before I put that page up, people just kept looking at it. So they were really watching to see what was going to happen there.

Jeff: Excellent! And then you basically replaced that countdown page with that sales page. Did you send an email at that time?

Lisa: I did. I sent the launch date email which just said that the offer was available and gave them the link again. It was just a real short email.

Jeff: Great! And what happened then?

Lisa: I sent it out and about two minutes later I had the first order, and I sold seven in the first hour. So at \$500 each, that was \$3,500 in an hour.

And the sales page was really long, because I have a 15-20 page sales letter normally. I just took that one and added a little to it. It was pretty long. I know

most of those people didn't read it because I'm pretty sure many of those first seven orders were in the first 15 minutes! It was pretty exciting!

Jeff: Wow! That is exciting! I've gone through it a bunch, and I never get over being excited at launch time!

Lisa: Yeah, and if I could add a few more zeroes to it, I'd be even more excited! Next time!

Jeff: Right! And it will absolutely come! That's the one thing that everyone I have talked to who has done a launch, every single person, has at least one more launch already planned. They often have two or three more launches planned.

You know, I had people who did \$3,000, and some people who did over \$100,000. Yet for every single one of them, all their reactions were the same.

Sometimes, like you said, they were exhilarated before they hit that 'send' button; some of them were nervous. I'm usually nervous. I'm nervous that the shopping cart won't work or something! Every few minutes I'm putting in test order after test order to make sure that thing works!

But, congratulations on a fantastic launch... that's awesome! So \$3,500 in the first hour, and you only had a limited number of sets available?

Lisa: Here's what I did next... I sent an email Wednesday evening because I wasn't sure everybody would be glued to their computer for this. Also I thought since there are a lot of people who work, they might not look at it until evening.

I just sent them another short email about how we were officially launched, and I actually told them how crazy things had gotten at the beginning. I told them it was a good thing that things were slowing down, so that we didn't sell out immediately.

And I reminded them how many people were signed up, and that it was only a limited number. I actually said less than only one in every three people who signed up could get this offer due to the scarcity. And I also talked about the 30-day guarantee. Then I sent that out.

By the time that next email had been sent out, a total of ten had been sold, so that's \$5,000 worth. So, really, that first hour was the big time for me, and it slowed down after that. But I still made a lot more that day than I ever had before.

Jeff: So, you made around \$5,000 in that first day. And then it sounds like you sold out that second day?

Lisa: I think I sold only \$7,500 worth, but that was about 15, probably. I had about 20. So I didn't sell out, but I got pretty close.

Jeff: Great. Did you pull it down at some specified time?

Lisa: I did, because I had also said we would either sell out or that I would pull it down that Friday at 6 P.M. That's what I ended up doing. I pulled it down Friday at 6:00.

But I did send out a few more emails, like Thursday I sent a reminder. I talked about those who had already purchased the package, reminding them that they were going to get it ASAP.

Jeff: That right there, addressing the email to the buyers, is a form of social proof. That's great!

Lisa: It all works great, just like you said it would!

Jeff: That's what everyone keeps saying, "It does exactly what you said!" And it's funny, when people are looking at Product Launch Formula and thinking about buying it, one of the biggest objections people have is that it will only work for Internet marketers and if you're selling an Internet product.

Of course, the people that say that are wrong. It works better in other markets because no one has seen these techniques before.

Lisa: Yeah, I'm sure none of these people had ever seen this stuff before, and they got pretty excited about it. They're all professionals, definitely a professional crowd, and it worked.

Jeff: So, do you have plans to do another product launch?

Lisa: Well, the nice thing about this course is that it needs to be updated on an ongoing basis.

So as soon as I need to send out the updates for my course, which will probably be in the next couple of months, I'm going to do a relaunch. I think that will be the perfect timing.

Jeff: Right. That would be ideal. Absolutely. And you can just do the countdown; you can do the scarcity thing. You know, "In our initial run, we've only got x number of things."

Would these be past buyers buying new ones? Do people take this test once, or do they have to get recertified?

Lisa: No, they just take it once.

Jeff: So how do you think this launch impacted your relationship with your list?

Lisa: I think it improved it.

I know I didn't damage it because I did the sub-list. That was mostly what I was worried about.

A lot of what I sent the main list in the two emails I sent them was information about a pass rate for the exam - I had never really put up before.

And it was a pretty high rate, so I think that probably helped. And by just answering Frequently Answered Questions, I can't imagine anyone getting upset that I sent them that.

Jeff: Right. And that's been everyone's reaction that I've asked that question of. Almost everyone has said it has improved the relationship to the list; a couple of people said they didn't think there was any impact.

Now it doesn't sound like you sent an email to your main list when you launched.

Lisa: I didn't. I was thinking that I probably should have done that, too.

Jeff: That's one thing I would have done. Generally you hit your sub-list, and frankly, the way you did it was all pretty compressed. It was all within a very short period of time that you did it. It was a total of about 12 days.

Again, no criticism because this is a great launch you did, you did \$7,500 of an existing product--this is what we have to dwell on here, it was an existing product. You were going along doing your everyday business, and I have no idea how much you normally sell, but this sounds like a lot more than you normally sell on an everyday basis. Then just out of nowhere you created an extra \$7,500 in sales.

That's spectacular! The only thing I see, I probably would have hit your main list again. You already knew this and you said this. You probably would have hit the list with another opt-in, maybe a few more days later to try to get them to opt in to the sub-list.

And then right at launch day I would have sent an email to the main list saying, "We're launched, you might have heard we have a special coming out, and it's good to go. You're going to save \$150. Go here for the whole story."

Lisa: Yeah, I'm sure I would have sold out if I had done that.

Jeff: Which is fine. You know next time you'll do it.

Did this increase your interaction with your list? Did you get any comments, questions, feedback?

Lisa: I got quite a lot of comments from the sub-list. I know when I sent out those couple of emails I did have a few people unsubscribe from my main list.

But a lot of them might have purchased another course since the last time I had sent them an email. I probably hadn't sent them an email in six months. They might've passed the test on their own. I just don't know. I think it was more of a reminder for those people that they were signed up for this and didn't need it anymore.

Jeff: You can't ever let a few unsubscribes impact you. If you're seeing mass droves exiting your list, well then that's another thing.

And in that interaction with the sub-list, did you gain a greater appreciation for objections and hot buttons?

Lisa: Oh, I definitely did, and after going through your course, one of the things I needed to do was completely redo my auto responder for when people do sign up. And I did that. I made it longer, I added in a little more interaction, and I get people asking more questions now that I've updated all that.

And I put in a little more personality, too! Before, it was pretty plain. So, I think it sells!

Jeff: Awesome! So in that feedback and dialog you had with the people on your sub-list, did you get any ideas for new products or add-ons, or new things you could do to your product?

Lisa: I have a few that I'm thinking of implementing for the next update and one thing I definitely need to do is to come up with some more back-end items. It's been really hard for me to come up with anything. I'm sure it's always like that when you're in the market, rather than when you are outside of it. You can see millions of ideas for other markets.

I am definitely going to send out a survey. I think now that I have built a little more interaction with people, some of them would fill out the survey for me. I'd like to get their ideas on what else they might want and ideas for updated products. Then I'll try to launch that, too.

Jeff: Excellent. That's what gets me excited when I talk to people who have done a launch. Sure, it puts a nice surge of cash in your pocket and no one minds when that happens.

However for so many people I've talked to, it's revitalized their relationship with their list. A lot of times it just revitalizes their whole business or the way they feel about their business and the way they feel about the prospects and the customers.

Lisa: Yeah, I think it definitely had that effect on me, especially with my relationship with them. I even put in more of an auto responder series after they purchased. Before, I think I just had two emails that I sent out, and now I have five or six. So I know it has helped, too.

And I guess it has helped with my attitude towards my list. They're not just buying something and walking away, because I actually do want to build up a relationship. Maybe I can sell them something else and they will refer other people to me, something like that.

Jeff: That's fantastic! I love hearing that.

Lisa: It's definitely been a good choice to buy your course.

Jeff: Well, thanks. I appreciate that.

Lisa: Oh, those were awesome!

Jeff: Well thanks. I poured my heart and soul into it. I didn't have a summer. I spent hour after hour down here in my basement editing videos and re-recording over and over. I'd think, "Oh, I've got to add this, I've got to add that!" So it's really good when you put so much effort into it and then people have results with it.

Lisa: And I've also realized the power of a list, and how you can get \$7,500 when you need it. I have started some other websites that kind of relate to this topic, but geared toward different people, so I started collecting their emails, even though I don't really have a product just yet, but eventually, I might.

Jeff: Right. I don't know if you were on my SixInSeven.com list or ever heard anything about that...

Lisa: Yeah, I was on that.

Jeff: You know, I created that in 2003, and one of the big reasons I did it was that I wanted to start to speak at some of these seminars. The reason I wanted to speak at the seminars was that I saw that as a way of being treated as an equal by some of the people I wanted to get to know and mastermind with.

The reason I started that list wasn't to make a bunch of money, but in the end, it made me a small fortune last fall.

So, people often ask me what they should do when starting a web site or a web business. I say, "Throw up a site, any site whatsoever, and start collecting names. And then you'll figure it out."

You can never go wrong starting a list. The worst thing that happens is you just send nothing and it withers up and dies. You haven't lost anything, so what?

So that's good, I'm glad you said that. I'm glad you're doing that!

Lisa: I signed up for your SixInSeven.com list ages ago, and I still remembered who you were when you started sending emails again. Isn't that a one-week auto responder?

Jeff: It's actually about 3 or 4 weeks, but it sort of withers away and dies. So what happened was that a lot of people joined that list from 2003 to, say, early 2005.

And in early 2005 I decided I was going to do Product Launch Formula. That was basically after talking to John Reese, and him telling me, "You have to do it!" Then I talked to Yanik and he said, "Do it!"

John says, "You've got to do it because I want to promote it." And John has the ability to sell a huge amount of product. I knew John would sell \$100,000 of product. So I knew even after giving him half of that, it was an instant \$50,000 as soon as I had that product done. And I also knew if John promoted, I could get everyone else.

I decided I was going to start doing that product, so I started working on it in the spring, like around April. So I said I'd better get this SixInSeven list revved back up. I was on one auto responder series, and I wanted to move it over to AWeber. I love AWeber. So I used that move to AWeber to revitalize that list and start mailing it again.

Lisa: Oh, yeah, that's a good idea.

Jeff: So I started mailing it in April, got it moved over and started mailing it, not super regularly but regularly enough so that people knew who I was.

At that point I knew it was going to be August when I launched, so I gave myself four months to get that list warmed back up. It's really not that hard to get a list warmed back up, and yes I lost some people in the move over. But the majority moved over and double-opted into my new list, and I started warming it back up.

You just have to think ahead a little bit when you do something like that. It turned out it was late October by the time it launched, so I had six months of publishing to them.

Lisa: Would you say you got 75% of them to move over after all that time had passed?

Jeff: I think it was more like 50%.

Lisa: That's still pretty good.

Jeff: Yeah, because they had to double opt-in. And there's another thing, too. In 2003 I started building the list. In 2005 I asked them to move over. Well, some of them went 20 months without getting published to. When I got 50% to move over, you have to remember that at least 25% of those email addresses were no longer valid.

People change their email addresses often. It wasn't like I got 50% of those names to move over, but I bet you I got 75% of the "live" names to move over.

So I was pretty happy with that move over, and of course I did the classic mistake when I launched... I don't know if I ever made this public or not--but on the day of my launch, October 21st, everyone in the world was mailing about Product Launch Formula. There was just about only one Internet marketer who didn't mail, and that was me!

I actually forgot to mail to my SixInSeven list!

That just goes to show that everyone makes mistakes! It was just so busy and so crazy that I completely forgot to mail my list! That was one of the mistakes I made during the launch of Product Launch Formula.

Lisa: Well, I'm sure most of them had heard about it from somebody else.

Jeff: Right. That's true.

Okay, I wanted to ask you one more question. It's sort of the obligatory question.

For someone thinking about getting Product Launch Formula, especially someone who is selling in a different market other than Internet marketing, since that's where you're at, what would you tell them?

Lisa: I would tell them they should definitely invest in it. A lot of people are so wary of spending their money, but that's really the only way you can make more money! Otherwise, you're just in the same place.

I learned so many valuable things from that course, and not just with product launches but about marketing in general. I definitely would recommend it.

Jeff: Fantastic! Thanks a lot, Lisa, and please keep me up to date on your next launch. I'd love to hear about it.

Lisa: Thank you for inviting me to talk about it!