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**SPEAKERS**

Zoe Hawkins, Jo Wheatley

**Jo Wheatley** 00:03

The Coaching Crowd podcast is for compassionate courageous leaders, HR professionals and high achievers.

**Zoe Hawkins** 00:10

People who are passionate about helping others to find alignment in their lives through coaching, and do a thinking of training and developing as a coach. Hello, and welcome to the coaching crowd podcast with me, Zoe Hawkins and my friend and co host, Jo Wheatley.

**Jo Wheatley** 00:26

Hi everybody. Today we are going to be talking to you about building a signature coaching programme. And it was suggested by a member of our coaching crowd group, and is often something that new coaches hear about when they are starting their business and advice that they're given from a marketing perspective. So today, we're going to talk about what it is how to do it, and hopefully you'll find it useful.

**Zoe Hawkins** 00:53

Yeah, and I think I might start with like, why, why would you create a signature coaching programme. And I think this really comes back to marketing, doesn't it and the ability to stand out in the market, which is a crowded market, like many markets are crowded, like the trainer market is crowded and the burger market is crowded, and yet there are successful businesses within it. And the thing about having a signature coaching programme is about differentiating yourself and your offer. And I think the one thing I'm sure he said this in other podcasts is that you don't sell coaching. Like if you try and sell coaching, very few people are going to know what you're talking about. What we sell as coaches is solutions to problems. And so a signature coaching programme helps your audience to know what problems do you serve? And which problems are you able to help with or maybe it's not a problem, but it's an aspiration, like which aspirations can you help with not all coaching goals are about having a problem, some are just about making things even better. And that is something that you can talk to. So the reason why you might start to position yourself with a signature programme is for an angle of differentiation in a market and having a clear message and a clear voice. It may also be about adding a new product or service to your suite of services. So something might be one to one group, that might be a particular training or a class a webinar or something that you want to serve, that looks more like a signature programme.

**Jo Wheatley** 02:30

And if the word signature tells you that it's something that's unique to you, it's something that when people think about you, they will think about your signature programme, it's something that you may be able to trademark so that it also positions it at a particular place. It's an authenticity. Well, it's an authority stamp rather than an authenticity stamp. And it just it starts to help to build your brand.

**Zoe Hawkins** 02:57

Absolutely, it helps to build your brand. And it helps to build a familiarity with who you are, in terms of what it is. I mean, it can be lots of things, you know, there isn't like a signature programme template that exists in the world that all coaches must follow. So if you take what I think of when I think of a signature programme, and this is probably because we come from the training space, I think of a signature programme, as there is an element of, let's say, pre recorded video guided content and an element of live a round a particular topic that enables the client to move through from a through to B and in doing so achieve the solution that they want to achieve. So that might be a course for example, that the client takes, but it can also be a totally live programme, that could be one to one. So you might have a bespoke one to one programme that has set phases that you lead people through. Or it might be a group programme, where each time you come together, it's designed around a particular theme, or a particular topic. And each of those themes and topics leads the client through to a specific result. So there isn't a thing that is a signature programme. Ultimately, it's about what do you have passion and energy to create, that you have knowledge and wisdom about that you can share that you believe will be valuable to your clients that you can package up into something that will make sense for them and that you will also love and enjoy facilitating.

**Jo Wheatley** 04:36

So building the programme involves having a vision. So you need to have a vision as to as you've described, so you know who your ideal client is? Where are they at the moment? Where do they want to get to? How do you want to play a role in supporting your client? What is the value that you can add to them and how will you offer them that value? And once you've got that vision And then you create your strategy for it. And we love creating things, creating programmes, offering solutions, introducing people to new things, designing high quality, content and experiences for people. And I think core to that is design something that makes you smile. You know, that brings you joy that you can talk about in that way. Because your signature coaching programme is likely to be something that if you're interviewed on podcasts, for example, it will be what you talk about. If you are doing a magazine article, it would be something that would be mentioned in there. So the name of your programme is really important. But when you're building the programme, don't let the name stop you. Because you could always change the name, you know, but it's actually about the experience that you're going to create. And what you're aiming for is that when people that undertake your programme, go away and talk about your programme, and they recommend it to others, and it becomes a thing in its own right. So a signature programme to me is something that becomes bigger than you. So as a coach, initially, you might start out and people will say, oh, you should, or you should speak to Joe, she's a great coach, you should get coaching by Jo was actually what might happen with a signature programme is oh, you should do the X programme, you know, so that the programme becomes that. So when we are though we had been training, coaching qualifications, lots of people offer coaching qualifications. And obviously, there's different content and different experiences that you can get with different providers. For us, though, the emotions coaching practitioner training programme for us is our signature programme because it is brand new content that has come purely from our heads is completely unique. And that is something that that we ultimately will be remembered for. But it's always been the core of our work. So when you are building a signature coaching programme, I think it requires you first of all to go deep inside, you know, what is it that exists in there that wants to be created, but also checking in with the reality of the marketplace? And what is it that there's a demand for?

**Zoe Hawkins** 07:14

Well, there's two strategies isn't there, there's the pre selling, sell it before you built it. And that is about you have an idea of the programme that you want to create, you've probably got sketched out like module by module or lesson by lesson or session by session, what that is going to look like and a rough idea of the different tools or techniques that you might bring to that. And then you go to market and you say, Hey, here's this thing, and maybe you do a beta launch, which is like a pilot, if you like, who's gonna join me, it's this price, and you recruit your cohort, and then you build it. And that's the way that we do the majority of our work. Or there's the build it, then sell it, which is more around, you have the programme, you've created all of the materials, you've done all of the marketing or whatever, and then you go to market and you sell it. And of course there is the blend of a little bit of both, you might create the first two modules, sell it and then have the rest created as you've sold it.

**Jo Wheatley** 08:11

Well, that's what that's what I pursued, because I shudder at the thought of selling something that isn't creative, because I know how much from our perspective how much work goes into the stuff that we create, like the depth of it. So it's not like off the back of a packet stuff. I mean, you know, there are so many hours that go into it. So that's why it creates a shudder. It does

**Zoe Hawkins** 08:32

it Yeah, it absolutely does. But you know, there are pros and cons to both aren't there because I think by by creating it all, before you've run the programme, you've obviously got the time and the space to look theory aid in in it. And then by pre selling it, you've then got a little bit of well, you have got a lot of pressure to have to deliver. And I think it is finding a happy medium with what actually works in terms of the time that it's going to take. And I would also say overestimate how much time it will take to build it things always take longer than then you think they're going to.

**Jo Wheatley** 09:11

Yeah, yeah. Yes, they do. Because it isn't, it isn't only the content of the programme. It says we're talking about it's the marketing of it. It's the refining of it, it's it's the brand so when we when we designed the emotions kitchen practitioner training, we wanted it to have its own brand because it because we see it as a signature programme of ours. So we saw that as distinct from, you know, our coaching qualifications, which are, you know, standalone, they deserve their own it deserves its own brand in its own right. But that takes financial investment. It takes a lot of time to work with a designer and go through that drafting phase and we've learned many times that in our enthusiasm we can underestimate the time that is that is required. I think

**Zoe Hawkins** 09:58

the other thing that comes up in terms of signature coaching programmes is the is the tech side of things. So if we cast our minds back to before we had our coaching training in the format that exists now we used to do in person training and everything was pretty much manual done by emails and stuff, running a signature coaching programme, you're likely to have, you know, some tech, if not a significant amount of tech involved in terms of how does the client purchase? How are they on boarded onto the programme? Where is the programme hosted? Are there resources that you want your your clients to be able to access in between sessions or beyond sessions, so, you know, investing in time and energy, and investing in a in a portal of some kinda, we use Kajabi, for to host all of our programmes. And that's been great for us. So you can basically allow some time and some energy to think about the client experience, I think that's what I'm talking about when I talk about tech, is how do you want the experience of this signature coaching programme to be because if you have a great programme, but it's a bit clunky, and the resources aren't really held anywhere, or they've really poor quality, then the programme might be amazing, but the client experience may not be amazing. So it isn't all about creating the content. It's about designing your client experience. And we have spent a lot of time and effort on our on our client experience and the onboarding, the off boarding, and we're always refining that. So it's not that you have to have that completely designed from the outset, it's about listening to your client feedback and making improvements as you go. So think about your programme, yes, in terms of the wonderful content, but also the experience that you want your clients to have.

**Jo Wheatley** 11:43

I love it when people are training to be coaches with us. And we can kind of see the signature programme, like we kind of hear it, we just we can see it and that the the coach themselves might not be able to see it, because they're so used to living in their world and through their lens, it's often hard for us as individuals to see what is distinctive about us, or what we can offer in a in a distinct and unique way. So I think often other people might actually end up telling you what they want you to create as a signature programme. So you may have been coaching for a while and you offer a generic, you know, six session package, and you talk about in a particular way. So sometimes you think, well, what's different about a signature programme? Not a lot to be honest, it is it is about how you talk about it, how you label it, but that is one way to do it is to get a focus group of people together, and for them to tell you what they would like to see in a coaching programme in a particular area. So you might have someone, for example, who was a, who was a fertility coach. So what would a signature programme look like around that? So, you know, niching, and signature programmes, I think are also very closely aligned. Yeah, and

**Zoe Hawkins** 12:55

there's the face that you have for your business. And there's the experience the client has. So let's take a one to one probe. And I think what you're saying there is, let's say you call it my fertility journey coaching package when you're talking at the angle of facility coaching, and what are they going to get from that, and you might list out all the different value points of you know, support with the emotional journey, you know, support with goals and objectives around life, you know, whilst in the fertility process, like whatever it might be, but you list all of that out. Now, when the client arrives for their first session, you've obviously got the framework of your coaching package, and they're together, you're going to, you're going to tailor that. So yes, they've bought what you've listed on the on the website, and they're going to want all of that, and what is the unique part to them, that you're going to have to adjust or building and you're going to still create that contract together around what that experience is, it doesn't mean that as a coach, you then have to push them through session 12345. And all those sessions have to be the same because for many clients, that's not going to work. It's not really how a coaching experience unfolds when you're in a one to one container. But you can still cover off the points that they have purchased. So I think there's resistance sometimes to a signature coaching programme because it can feel like well, it doesn't give me space to be creative with the client and meet their bespoke needs. So sometimes the signature programme might just sit better as a course or a programme that the client is led through that is about part of their journey. So when you're building your signature programme, also think about where does it fit in my ladder of services. So let's say you're working with confidence, but your clients may not have enough confidence to approach you for one to one coaching. So actually, maybe your signature programme is taking them from like a to b before they then do B to C before they then do C to D which might be your one to one services. So A to B might be around identifying your value used to help you boost your confidence at work, that might be a signature part of your programme. And then they might have enough confidence then to start to reach out for your other services. So it doesn't stand alone, I think is what we're saying. And you can see that in our business. So we obviously have this podcast that can help to lead people to find our coaching qualifications. And from doing coaching qualifications, they can come into our emotions coaching practitioner training, and from there, people might choose to join our business lounge, because they then become familiar with who we are, in terms of helping and supporting people with growing their business as well. So you want to have products and services that sit together and enhance your brand, they don't sit in isolation.

**Jo Wheatley** 15:44

Yeah, so it's a case of hey, you should come and join my signature programme, which is this and you will get X, Y, and Z. So it could be your signature programme that could be self guided, and it could be that entry point, you know, into one to one coaching to you, it might be that your signature programme is something that they have one to one coaching with you. And then they go into a signature group coaching programme, or it could be completely standalone. And so it was also talking about how your signature programme might be an off the shelf kind of solution, same as everybody, but it might also involve a tailored aspect to it too. But ultimately, your signature programme is what you get known for. And I would encourage you to get messy with post it notes and pens, and you know, and whatever else. And for us, it's always very much a drafting process. So we kind of get the idea of a programme, we just get a sense of it. So we get a sensation, but it's something that we want to create and produce. And we'll we'll know the area that we want it to be in. But often the final product bears not a huge amount of resemblance to what we had this felt sense that we would create. And obviously we have each other to be able to draft and refine and build on. And that's also why it off probably ends up looking different to to what either of our individual ideas might be. But it's also about bringing in, as we said earlier, our ideal clients into that process and, you know, just being able to say to people, hey, if I was to build, I'm thinking about building something like this, does this sound like it would resonate? You know, with any of you or if I was to build this programme, what would you want to see as the core elements of it, because that can help to give you a bit of, of confidence when you're creating that.

**Zoe Hawkins** 17:30

And the beauty of having a signature programmes, you can launch it, you know, you can you can actually then take it to market and design a launch campaign. Whereas when you're just talking about one to one coaching without that kind of signature essence to it. It is hard, it is harder to launch because you're talking at people at different stages of their journey. So really signature coaching programmes, packages, courses, help to refine it down and they support you in your marketing as well.

**Jo Wheatley** 18:02

I guess the analogy would be there are loads of different hairdressers. But once a hairdresser gets known for I don't know, back in the day, it'd be like the Jennifer Aniston kind of hairstyle. And you know, everybody knows if you want to get that hairstyle done, that's the place to go. So though it's just another hairstyle that that they could do at any time. They get known for that. And that's how they get the press coverage. You know, it's how they get the recommendations. So it's the nuances, isn't it of positioning really? Yeah, that we're talking about? Yeah.

**Zoe Hawkins** 18:35

So hopefully today's giving you some ideas and inspiration for you to get your creative juices flowing around What might your own signature coaching programme be? If you're already a coach or you know, what do you feel drawn to? If you're thinking about coaching as a career, what might you see yourself developing and working with as you step into that coaching identity? And if you're interested in exploring anything that we've mentioned on this podcast today in relation to our programmes, go and head to our website IgY company.co.uk And check us out there. Thank you for listening to the coaching crowd podcast with Zoe Hawkins and Jo Wheatley. We'd love you to join our inclusive community to learn and grow in the coaching space. Go over to Facebook

**Jo Wheatley** 19:17

and search for the coaching crowd to be in good company with other aspiring coaches.