Top 5 Course Creator Interviews of 2019

COURSEMETHOD

Earnings Disclaimer

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Table of Contents

Let's take a look at my top 5 course creator interviews of 2019!

How Shayna & Adam Pond Built Online Courses for ModelTeaching.com that are as Effective as Live Training

- Who: **Shayna & Adam Pond**
- Website: **ModelTeaching.com**
- Course Topic: **Teacher Training**
- Interesting Stats: **30% growth/month**

Who are you and what course business have you created?

My name is Shayna Pond and I run Modelteaching.com with my husband, Adam Pond.

Modelteaching.com provides professional development courses to teachers and other educators. We have a couple sub-markets of educators.

Schools and districts love our courses because they can assign a subscription of all courses to every teacher on campus and let them pick and choose which courses to take for their professional development (PD). We also have a lot of teachers that use our courses for continuing education requirements or for salary advancement. Then, we have teachers who just want more training on one specific topic. They can take single courses aligned to exactly what they need at an affordable price.

What's the biggest benefit of taking your courses?

Teachers get everything they need for implementation. That includes tons of resources for the classroom, an action plan based on the course content, and follow up support. Most online courses for teachers don't go far enough to focus on the actual impact and implementation into the classroom. Often teachers might find course content valuable but then don't do anything with the knowledge. Our courses focus on providing a holistic support structure to teachers. Then they are more likely to implement the course ideas with fidelity and therefore improve student learning.

How did you get into the market?

For years we provided school support services to struggling schools. These included low performing schools that needed help boosting student test scores and academic performance. We would go into campuses and provide tutors and interventionists to students. We also provided coaching and training to teachers and helped develop campus improvement plans.

Our focus was on providing strategic feedback to tutors and teachers. For example, we would identify areas of improvement. Then we provided explicit support and feedback on how to utilize strategies and resources to improve instruction and impact student scores.

This method of support was responsible for rapid increases in teaching abilities. As a result, it also increased student performance in class and on the state assessments. But, we struggled in the beginning to find the kind of supplemental resources and training that would quickly accelerate growth in the classroom. Since we often couldn't find what we were looking for, we instead began developing our own training. We focused on detailed action planning and clear methods for implementation. That way it supported the coaching and feedback work we were providing to schools.

Model Teaching was born out of this support. We launched Model Teaching in August of 2018 and have been operating just a little over a year.

**Why did you decide to create online courses in the first place?**

We worked so closely with schools and were able to immediately see how the training and support of teachers impacted student performance. Due to that we were able to quickly make iterations to our methods for support.

This refinement process allowed us to standardize a formal course structure that produced consistent results. We found that strong planning and implementation of concepts led to student improvement in scores.

We quickly realized that providing live training was not efficient. Plus it took time away from the additional coaching and feedback we provided to teachers. So we moved the training we perfected through coaching into an online platform. We ensured the courses acted as a supplement to coaching support and could be accessed quickly by teachers.

"We continued the iteration process through the online platform until we produced an online course as effective as our live training." - Shayna Pond

Now that we have a standardized development process and course structure, we hire educators as content writers. This way we can expand our course offerings and develop more courses to add to our platform.
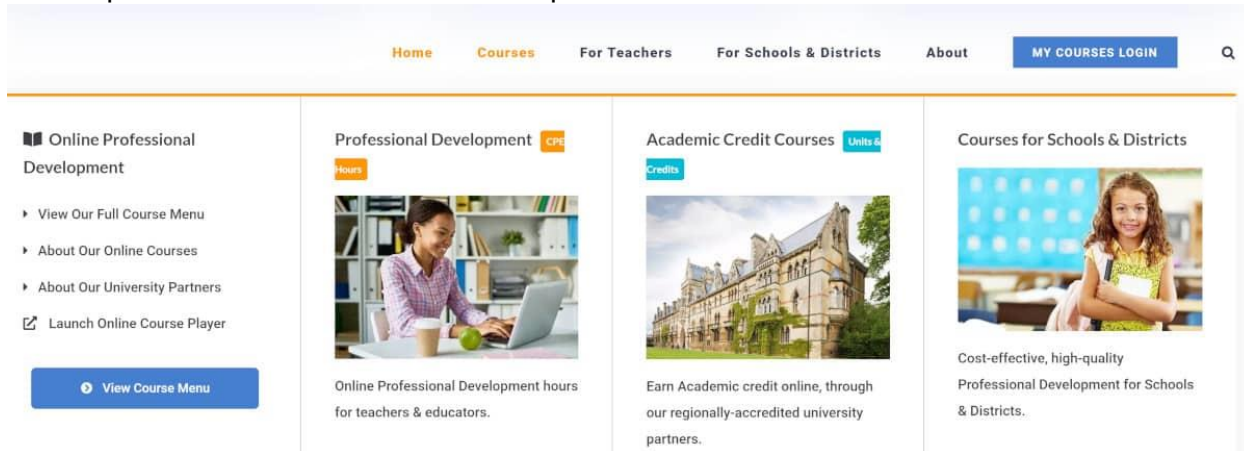
Did you have any moments of doubt before you launched your site?

We were in a good position where we already knew the content we were delivering was effective when delivered live.

We just felt we should launch the courses and take detailed feedback on participant's opinions of the course. Then we analyzed the action plans produced by each participant. In the case of our school support work, we followed up immediately by performing observations in the classroom to begin narrowing down areas for improvement in our online structure.

I wouldn't say we ever felt we weren't good enough because we already knew our training was effective in a live format. We did want to know what components of our online courses needed to be refined to be as effective as possible.

On initial launch of our first few courses we took a lot of care to refine our process and finalize our standardized course structure. - Shayna Pond

What are your online courses like?

Our courses follow a standardized format so that teachers know what to expect when they take a course. Each course focuses on a specific theme or strategy. Each course is divided up into sections that contain a PowerPoint converted to a video. Our course instructor explains the section concepts using beautiful visuals and graphics.

Each section also contains a step in the process of building a plan of action for immediate classroom implementation. Each section also contains supporting resources including student graphic organizers, strategy guides, planning templates, data trackers, and more. The activities within each section build onto a final activity of an implementation plan. This is where the ideas throughout the course are arranged into a final plan. This plan can be implemented and used in the classroom.

We have follow-up resources and support. These include an implementation checklist for self-reflection or classroom observations, ideas to apply the concepts into the classroom, and optional email support after course completion.

Here's a screenshot of what it looks like in the platform and the resources we develop to complement the courses.

## How long did it take you to create your first course?

Our courses were several years in the making. That's because it took time to find a standardized structure we were confident worked well in practice. Now that we have our formal structure in place, we follow the same course creation approach for every course we provide.

Briefly, we have the following steps in place:

1. General outline to propose the end goal for the course participant, an idea for the course, and background research.
2. A second outline to narrow down the course tasks participants need to complete so they can be successful in developing a plan of action ready to implement.
3. A third and final outline to identify the specific content required to support each section task.
4. Development of the resources and content to support an implementation plan, with several iterations of edits.
5. Branding of PowerPoints, with final editing of all course components.

6. Development and editing of transcripts, recording of the PowerPoints, and final edits.
7. Video editing through the use of Camtasia, final course resource design, and development of the course pages in the platform.
8. Once complete, the instructor for the course and the Model Teaching management team take the course. They identify any areas for improvement and clarity in the course progression. They provide sample responses in activities to ensure participants have a good model to follow when designing their plan.

We normally hire full time teachers to develop the course content. That's because we want someone with expertise in the specific course topic. We also want them to have a deep knowledge of how this content would be implemented in the classroom. These educators mainly work for us part-time. Because of this, our course development process often takes a few months. That way we can allow enough time for our educators to effectively develop the content. Then they go through our rigorous editing process during the spare time they are devoting to course development.
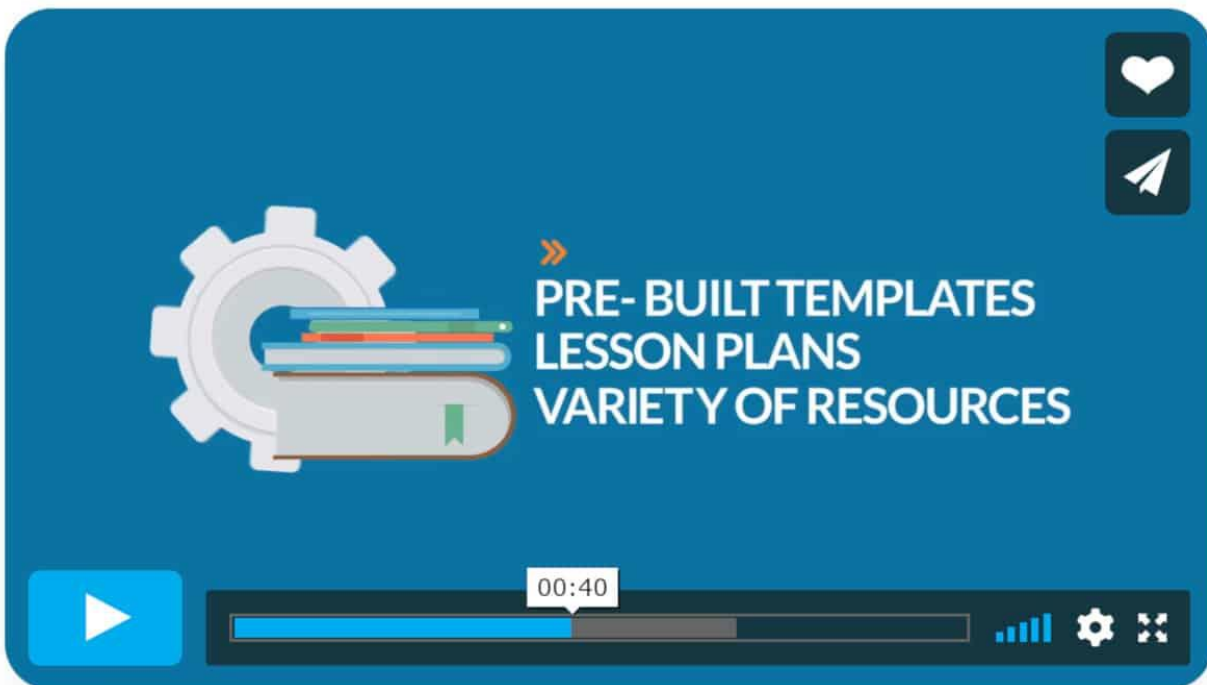
Tell us a little about the process of launching your site and getting your first sale(s).

Initially after launching our website, our first strategy was to utilize pay per click advertising. This way we were able to get insights on if we had the kind of content that people want. It also allowed us to begin refining and optimizing our keywords. (Use the keyword planner tool in Google Ads to help you do this.) Once we determined which keywords were best to drive conversions, we optimized our website around them to help boost organic search results.

Do you have a lead magnet?

A big lead magnet are our blog posts and free resources. Teachers find them helpful and aligned to what they need for success in the classroom. These are often linked to from various other sites or shared among teachers.
However, more traffic doesn't necessarily mean more sales! To bring attention to our courses, we provide promotions specific to our blog articles to drive conversations to specific courses.

For example, we have a popular blog article that science teachers find valuable. Since we have a course aligned to this article that goes into a ton more depth, we provide a promotion where blog readers get a discount if they purchase the course. The promotion is in the form of a pop up that advertises the promotion on the course. This is possible through the opt-in monster plugin. The majority of our web traffic initially discovers us through our blog posts!

In that same idea of providing value to teachers, we also have a space on our website to provide information on teacher certification requirements. Many teachers and schools want to make sure they can use these hours toward continuing education hours. Teachers looking for re-certification need a way to learn about the re-certification process for their state. We provide all the details and information for teachers for every state so they can learn more about their state's requirements. Then we provide information on our courses and how they can be used to satisfy those requirements.

We offer course promotions to newly released courses. We have a mailing list we notify when we launch a new course along with social media postings and information on our website. There, we often provide a discount to a new course for a limited time.

We recently implemented a referral program, where individuals can refer us to another teacher. If that teacher signs up, he or she gets a discount on the course purchase – and the referrer earns an Amazon gift card! It's a simple way to thank the individual for referring us, while increasing our reach and converting more sales.

Finally, we also get a lot of organic conversions and conversions from Adwords. This has allowed groups like whole schools/districts to find us and request services, in addition to individual teachers. Though other lead magnets bring us more traffic, this is still currently where we see the highest percentage of sales conversions.
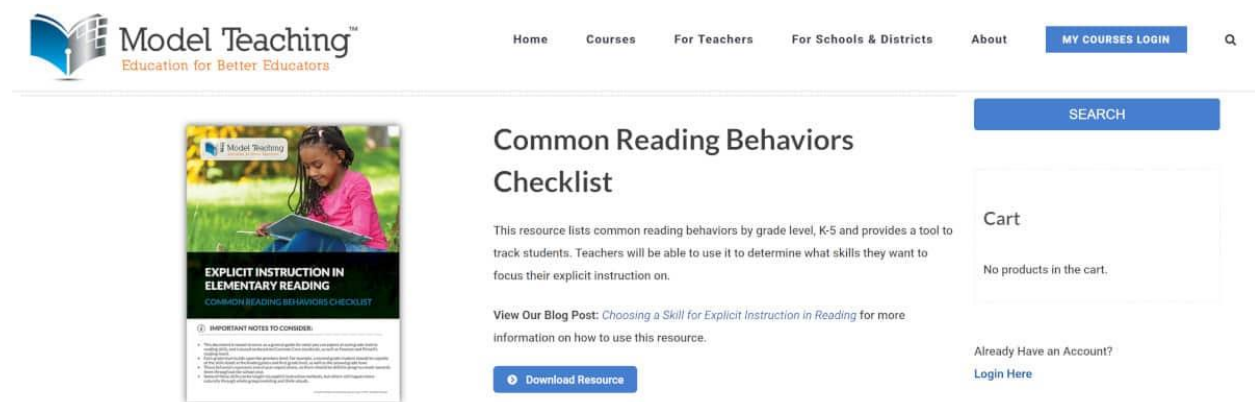
What online course platform are you using?

We use a wonderful company called Academy of Mine (AOM) and we love them. They are pricier than a lot of other platforms out there, so I recommend this for people that have plans for a high volume of courses and sales. If you have a lot of customization needs that don't fit neatly into the box with other course platforms, AOM is definitely a company to consider.
Are there any features you wish it had?

Academy of Mine can build custom features for you. We have a standardized course structure now and AOM provides everything we need to be successful and serve teachers.

What made you decide to use your chosen platform over others?

We wanted the ability to customize our courses. We had a clear vision of exactly what we wanted in a platform. Others we researched had limited features. AOM

was the only one that provided us with all the features and the customizable options that we needed. They have phenomenal customer service and actually listen to the feedback of their customers. So they're always improving their platform and providing customization options that are important to course creators.

What other tools do you use to run your online course business?

I absolutely love teamwork.com. We have several educators that work with us as content writers, and it allows us to manage all the course content and development in one place. Teamwork.com is a project management platform, so it helps organize all the steps in the content development process and allows us to better track each revision.

Since content development requires so much editing and refinement, having a project management system ensures we have a well-aligned course with good quality information. Prior to using teamwork.com, we would just work via email or Dropbox – which is perhaps fine if you are developing a single course. But we found more typos and errors then, and our content message was not as clear as it is now. Since moving our project management to Teamwork.com, our course quality has increased dramatically and we can now consistently build courses to meet the quality people that take our courses come to expect.

Please share some idea of your revenue growth curve.

We are averaging about 30% growth in revenue each month. This revenue has fully funded the company's growth now and we are cash flow positive.

Please tell us a little about what the money you've earned from your course has done for you.

> Our online courses have allowed us to significantly expand our reach.
> - Shayna Pond

Prior to hosting our training online, we served only the group of educators that worked with us through our intervention support work. It simply wasn't possible to scale that support when we had to rely on live training to be impactful.
Moving our training online allows us to provide more access to our courses locally with immediate support to the schools we supported. Then it allowed us to expand support through online professional development across the country.

Now, we have partnerships with universities to provide academic credits, are working towards continuing education approvals in multiple states, are partnering with organizations, schools, and districts to provide courses to a large volume of teachers, and allow individuals access to our courses for very reasonable rates. They are purposefully priced so that great professional development is equitable for all teachers who wish to learn and improve their craft.

These courses are allowing us to expand rapidly across the country, and though our school support services currently still provide more revenue than our online courses, we expect Model Teaching to grow to surpass that within the next few years. We have been able to hire multiple content writers to provide new courses. It also has provided us more freedom in flexibility in how and when we work. Since Model Teaching is online, we often work on the go and are less tied to a certain city when we want to plan a vacation or trip.
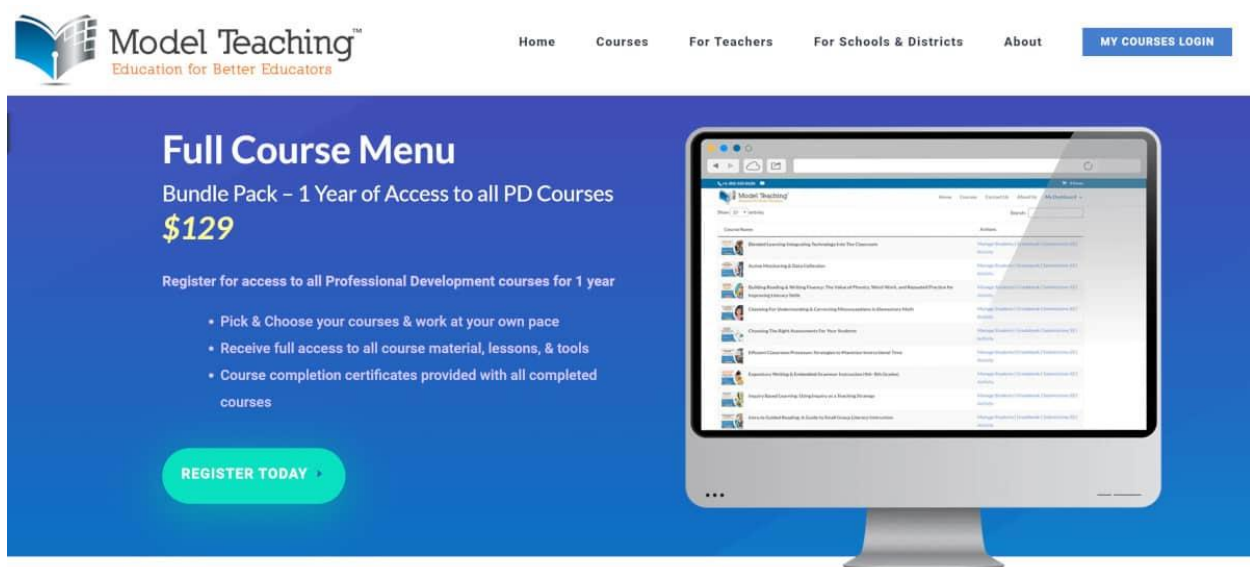
In addition to revenue are there any numbers you would like to share?

For the following points, please review the graph below …
1st arrow: We launched our website and added a few select courses in August 2018.
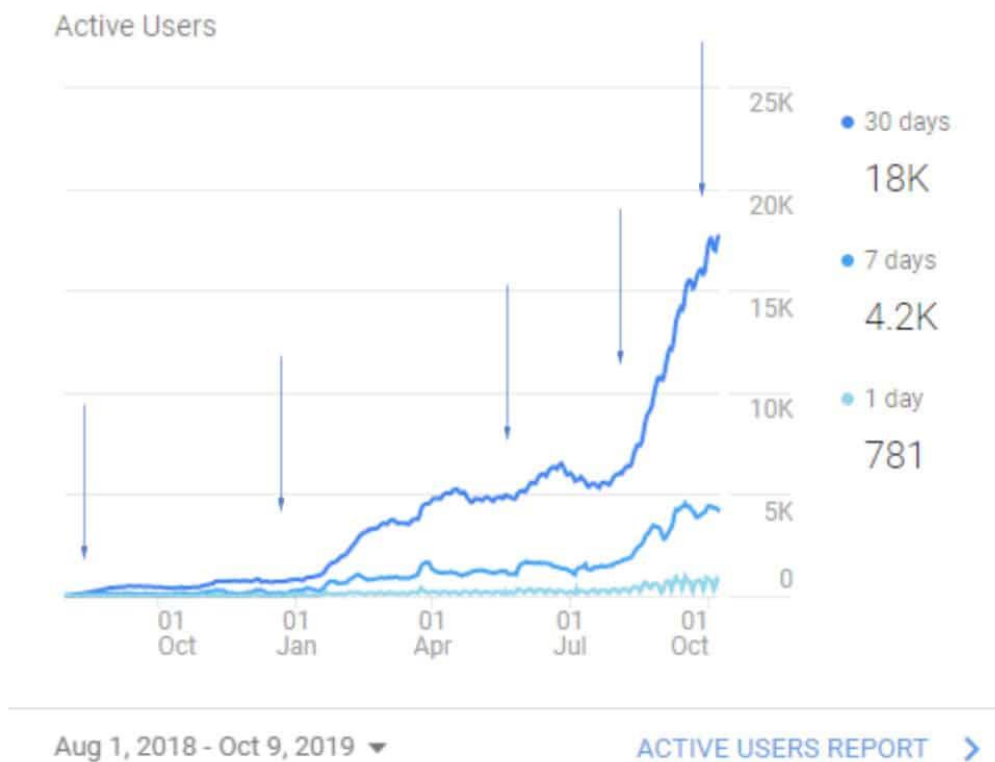
2nd arrow: We doubled the number of courses on the site and created a 'bundle pack' where teachers could buy all the courses in the platform for a low price. The additional course options and the reasonable course rates meant more people

were discovering our site, which in turn converted more teachers looking to buy professional development courses.

3rd arrow: We performed a complete re-branding and relaunch of our website. This allowed us to better optimize our site for the right keywords, help align our messaging across our site to clearly define why our courses are valuable and improve functionality and ease of use.

4th arrow: We created blog articles that provide actionable strategies and resources to teachers and allows them to access free content with high value. Shortly after our site relaunch and re-branding, our blog articles began getting links from other sites. In addition, more people were sharing our web page, and we began getting orders nationwide.

5th arrow: We have launched a review system for our courses, referral programs, and added more custom bundle packs. We have also launched additional new courses and have another set of courses launching late fall. We expect these changes to continue to greatly increase our web traffic and greatly increase our revenue numbers.

Active Users

• 30 days	18K	
• 7 days	4.2K	
• 1 day	781	

25K
20K
15K
10K
5K
0

01 Oct   01 Jan   01 Apr   01 Jul   01 Oct

Aug 1, 2018 - Oct 9, 2019 ▼   ACTIVE USERS REPORT >

14

What has creating your course done for you personally?

The course development process has refined what good teaching looks like and how to support other teachers in improving their instruction. I have been able to better develop my professional skills and gained a lot of confidence in how to train and support teachers.

Do you have a story of a transformation from any of your clients?

Since we also provide consulting and coaching support services to high needs schools, we are often able to see firsthand how our courses impact teaching. One recent success story is of a tutor with very little prior teaching experience who was struggling significantly on a high needs campus. Through our strategic feedback support coupled with our assigned Model Teaching courses, she wound up impacting student scores. By the end of the year her student scores increased so much that they surpassed the scores of students taught by the campus teachers. The school campus hired her the following year.

Often after individuals take our courses they report back to us that a particular resource, action plan, or idea really resonated with them and made them excited and enthusiastic to begin implementation into the classroom. They often state they are planning to take the knowledge back to their entire team, share the resources with the principal, or refer other teachers to our site. Knowing we are able to affect educators even outside of courses is such an amazing feeling because it means our impact is amplified exponentially, and we get to indirectly support more students.

What advice do you have for people just starting out?

Provide a clear vision for the value your course will provide to the student, and a clear idea of how your course satisfies the need for the student. -Shayna Pond

For us, we understand deeply what schools need in online training, and we also understand the continuing education requirements for teachers in each state. This understanding allows us to build highly targeted courses that are important and valuable to people who take our courses. It also allows us to provide clear messaging and information on why our courses are good for educators.
When we first launched our courses, we didn't consider how to explain the value of them. We first built them as supplemental support for the schools we served through our consulting work. After realizing the value our courses could provide to

teachers all over the country – and the world – we took the time to articulate what teachers loved about our courses.

We uncovered exactly why our courses are impactful and important, what value people would get from them - and after we did this, we began to see huge increases in traffic and in sales. - Shayna Pond

Learn more about Shayna & Adam Pond and ModelTeaching.com:

- Website: Modelteaching.com
- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn

How Marc-Andre Seguin Earns Mid-6 Figures/Year Teaching Jazz Guitar Lessons

- Who: **Marc-Andre Seguin**
- Website: **JazzGuitarLessons.net**
- Course Topic: **Jazz Guitar Lessons**
- Revenue Stats: **Mid-Six Figures/Year**

Who are you and what course business have you created?

My name is Marc-Andre Seguin and I run JazzGuitarLessons.net where I teach jazz guitar.

My courses allow students to improve their jazz guitar playing with a real instructor on camera.

We serve guitarists that can already play at a certain intermediate or advanced level. We don't cater to the beginners. If you're just getting started on guitar and want to learn to strum and play chords at the campfire that's not us! We're looking at mostly the 45 to 65 year old male, English speaking, mostly U.S.A., Australia and Europe. Our target customers typically play a little bit of blues, folk or other genres. But they're really interested in branching out into jazz.

So we're attracting people into guitar but **mostly** into jazz.
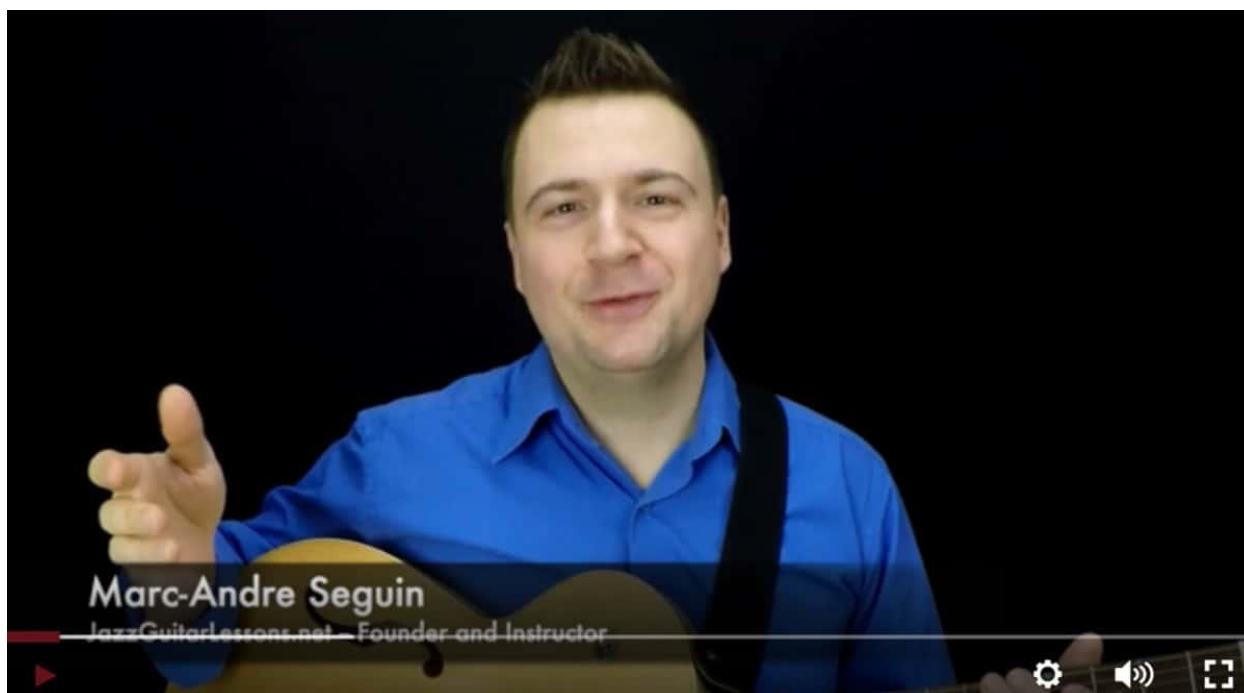
What's the biggest benefit of taking your courses?

JazzGuitarLessons.net provides an entry-level, non-elitist jazz program where you can improve your jazz guitar playing with a real teacher. Explanations are clear and step-by-step. The biggest benefit (and our pride as a company) is that we eliminate the "overwhelm" people get when they start to learn jazz.

Because jazz is complicated ... or at least it's perceived as such. It's like learning chess or learning math. Where do you even start?

So in summary the biggest benefit is to eliminate overwhelm. Often our students have already bought five or ten books and they've got DVDs, and they're already taking other jazz courses online. They come to us saying "I don't even know what to do man..." and we reassure them by showing them our step-by-step, easy to follow program.

Where did you come up with the idea?

Actually I was a professional jazz musician for years. I was living in Montreal and I started a blog in 2009, on the domain jazzguitarlessons.net. I started to publish blog posts and a few video lessons on YouTube. It all finally started to gain traction and

what really got me going is I had private students on Skype. When I saw students paying and scheduling from Australia and the UK I was thinking "Wow I can actually make money online!" and that's how I got into it.

Why did you decide to create online courses in the first place?

Ultimately, I created the membership (our main offer) to monetize the audience that we had. At first I used only ads and Amazon affiliates links on certain products. Then I thought, "Why not create a course to show scales?" which was my first paid course.

Did you have any moments of doubt before you created and launched your first course?

Yes, plenty.

There was one BIG false start. I had another website prior which I started maybe around 2008. I wrote a 50 page e-book which covered basically everything I knew about jazz guitar and sold it for $50 and I only sold, like, three copies!

So I had a lot of doubts and fears, for sure.

When starting the new site, I did keyword research and I made a blueprint of about 50 pages. And I decided "I'm not gonna look at anything else until I get these pages down!" because I knew those were the most likely to bring me traffic. And I accomplished that in the first 6-8 months of 2009.

What made you turn it around and do it anyway?

Not being "good enough" is still an issue to this day, you know we all work on our stuff!

I would say seeing the snowball start where people were coming to the website and leaving comments and asking questions on videos. That made me think there's "something there" even if it's a really small niche. It's a really small market, so I believed I could completely dominate it (which I did and still do!).

What are your online courses like?

It's full-on video guitar lessons. I explain this stuff while I'm playing the guitar and showing them what to do. It's all videos with sheet music that is downloadable. We don't really use quizzes that much but we have the PDF sheet music, you know, for music notation.

Our main offer since 2016 is actually "the whole membership", so *what* we sell is actually access to everything on the site. We currently have 18 courses and 50 tunes (jazz standards) arrangements in the catalog.

So if someone were buying everything "a la carte" individually, we value our **full catalog at over $4,500** — but you get it for less and there are also bonuses :).

On top of that we created the master meta curriculum called *Concierge*. Concierge will show you how to take all of this stuff and break it down piece-by-piece into a no-nonsense weekly program for 18 to 24 months. So it's a really, really huge course!

How long did it take to create your first course?

It's all ongoing, basically. But with the first course I created, I took a "Course on How to Create Online Courses" (no kidding) and I just followed through all the instructions and learned how to produce good videos and how to price courses and how to split your lessons, etc ...

Then later on I started to create a series because jazz chords are complicated. So you start with the basic chords and go further up in more complicated chords. I created a 101, 102, 103 series for chords. And then for jazz soloing. And so on.

Actually, most of it has been created by my team. I think in 2017 we published eight different curriculum-based courses in 12 months. These are full length video courses with PDF's and the extras. We did 101, and then next month 102, and then the next month 103. We used to run a promotion at every launch; it was good for the cash flow. And the process was to work *as a team* and delegate, have rounds of reviews, until we got our tuition perfect.

So for my situation I think it would be best to ask "How long did it take to create your membership site?" It's ongoing but it took three to four years I'd say.

Tell us a little about the process of launching your course and getting your first sales.

That was the fun part! I didn't expect to build a membership honestly, I just saw it like "Ah we need a course about scales so let me create that and then promote it for a month and then leave it in the store as a standalone purchase ..."

And I built the catalog in this fashion, launching a new course monthly or every other month. Launch it, run a little promotion and make a couple of thousand bucks and just go, "Okay, now we have 102 published in the store! Now next month we'll have 103 or maybe promote some of the old stuff". It was promotion through emails.

These days, we do not launch and sell *à la carte* as much. We instead say "Well if you want what we just published, you need a membership! You get on board and here's a coupon for the membership!"

Do you have a lead magnet?

Boy, do I have lead magnets... I have tons of lead magnets! So at this point they're on any and every blog post that has sheet music. I think there's 130 lead magnets that are simply sheet music for the video/blog lessons.

We attract a lot of people because there's a lot of free content. Every piece of sheet music has an assorted content upgrade; it's free and downloadable but you have to put your email in the form to get it. And if a visitor interacts with the website (i.e. downloads any lead magnet), somehow it means they're interested in learning jazz. So we have email automations that promote our membership option. The subscription is all access so it's really easy to talk about it through email.

**What's the traffic strategy that works best for you?**

I told you earlier about the blueprint from 2009, which was 50 pages. I nailed those in less than a year and the traffic strategy working the best is just literally SEO, good SEO, and getting to it early.

My philosophy is to be the best answer to whatever people are searching for. We try to have really relevant content and fun tips, lessons, podcasts, etc.
- Marc-Andre Seguin

We really have a powerful trio of -1- blog content, -2- YouTube content, and -3- social media. We're making sure the stuff on social media is put out "as Marc" (me, the guy with the blue shirt in the videos). But that character is actually the brand itself, posting to Facebook and Twitter. We make sure we interact as a brand, even though the brand is "me".

That's really our strategy: SEO, YouTube, and social. And of course, making sure those channels are optimized.
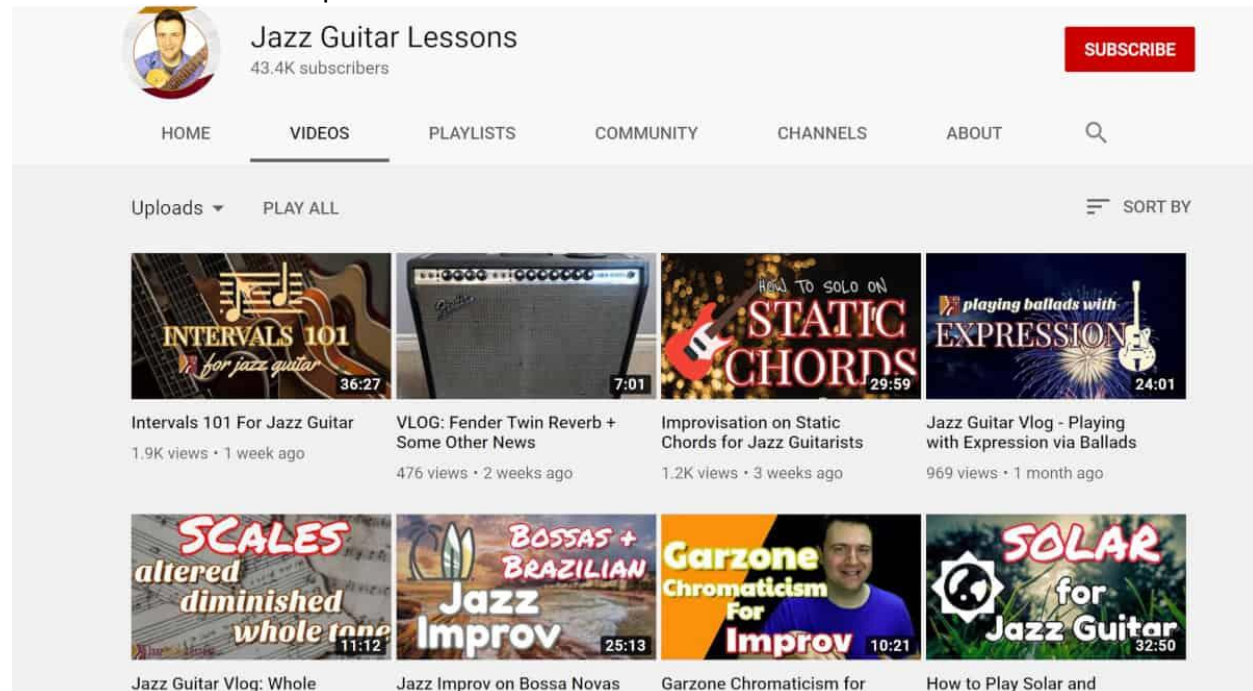
What online course platform are you using?

I'm using Teachable (2015-2019). I've been looking for ways to get out of Teachable ever since I adopted it five years ago. We are currently in the process of migrating the content to Kajabi (2020-) just for the user experience, conversions, and redesigning the way people interact with the member's area.

Are there any features you wish it had?

I don't think Teachable is meant for people that become a "superuser" like JazzGuitarLessons.net did so fast. When it comes to running a subscription or membership site, Teachable **is not** the answer, unless your content is pretty simple. Teachable doesn't create customer profiles in Stripe when they charge a customer. It means that if I were to turn off my Teachable account right now I lose all the recurring subscription payments from our customers. We have several thousands

of dollars running monthly (past the five figures) in recurring payments. So if I turn off Teachable I lose all the monies!!! Very frustrating.

But all in all, Teachable **is** a good LMS. It's really nice when you just want to learn the ropes and sell only a few courses. I started to have trouble when I bundled all the courses into a membership offer. On a large scale, Teachable doesn't work for that purpose. It lacks automation, reporting, and ease of use for my team.

There's more to it (I'll spare you the details), but we're migrating to Kajabi for the modern sales pages, the modern checkout pages, and for the better UX — both for our customers and our team.

Of course, if we could double JazzGuitarLessons.net revenues overnight, I would go for a custom solution or a platform we build from scratch. Right now our margins are good enough that I can pay my mortgage and I don't have to worry. I'm not gonna go for the "big investment" right now, but we'll use Kajabi since it's a good program that will do what I need.

What other tools do you use to run your online course business?

Right now I'm fortunate to say Gmail for business and HubSpot, and that's pretty much it!

HubSpot does everything because we sync our orders from Shopify (we don't use a Shopify store, we just sync Stripe and PayPal payments on Shopify and use HubSpot to create transactions associated with customers).

We use HubSpot as our CRM. It also works as the email marketing platform and even the CMS for the website. We use it for customer support and tickets. Everything goes through HubSpot which makes it much easier to manage my team.

Basecamp is our project management tool of choice and of course, as usual, we use Google Analytics and all the social media stuff and the Google search console.

Please share some idea of revenue.

Mid-six figures per year. But in terms of structure, I personally get both a "salary" for being the GM, and withdraw the profits that remain after that. It's a well-oiled machine and I'm very proud of it.

Please tell us a little about what the money you've earned from your course has done for you.

I bought a house in 2017 — that's probably my biggest accomplishment, in my life so far. I never had a real job because I'm a lazy musician (LOL).

We have three local (Canadian) workers and many freelancers in the Philippines. I have changed the lives of a lot of people because I can give guitarists jobs, which is pretty amazing to think about.

Overall, I can travel and I have a pretty nice car, a good home in a good neighborhood and my wife and I both work.

The idea that I've built something that is mine that I have full control of is great. It's not someone else's dream or it's not a government job. - Marc-Andre Seguin

I'm a scientist by training: I have a degree in statistics. I'm an actuary by training also and I was going into finance when I finished my stats degree. I have two degrees in music as well, classical and jazz. I'm really happy that even though I'm a musician, I have the freedom to do what I want. I can adjust my schedule however I want and I learned so much about business over the years, I have a hard time believing it!

In the past year or so I made local business connections totally unrelated to music. I'm starting to get into partnerships and get clients to work on their business which is a totally new endeavor for me. The avenue for selling courses has been perfect for my own journey. I learned and I'm able to transfer my skills into other businesses.

In addition to revenue are there any numbers you would like to share?

Yeah. Ryan Deiss at digitalmarketer.com said your threshold should be one dollar or more per subscriber per month and that struck a chord. He meant per subscriber on your mailing list of course. Right now we have 13,000 email subscribers and we make more than $13,000 a month in recurring revenues. So that's a good measuring stick.

We used to have this massive mailing list of 18,000 – 25,000 emails. I've learned to "purge" and keep a list of only customers and engaged users.

I believe Ryan's metric is a sensible aim, even if you have a small niche and have (say) 5,000 people on your mailing list. I'm a statistician, I love data. So in my brain, these 5,000 immediately translate to one dollar each, on average.

If you think about this, even if only five percent (250 people) of those 5,000 buy and each make a $20 purchase, you can still say "Hey, I'm making $5,000 this month for whatever online business I started", then that's great. The hard part is to maintain that pace and keep em' coming back, hence the need for me to transform JazzGuitarLessons.net into a subscription model.

What has creating your course business done for you personally?

I learned I am a learner. I took the personality tests and the Strengths Finder 2.0 and whatnot. And my number one trait is "learner". I just love to learn. I learned business, personal relations, HR, business processes, accounting and bookkeeping and you know I learned how to lead troops.

I'm a huge process guy and I love writing really clear ways of doing things so they're always done the same way by my team. We're able to troubleshoot easily the tasks that are repeated often in the business. - Marc-Andre Seguin

In addition, I would say that creating an online course business has shown me "how to live", basically. You know … get up in the morning and do something without having to "go to work" in the traditional sense.

It's my own personal version of what "work" means — which is most often in the kitchen — right here on the counter near the coffee machine. I just drink coffee, talk fast, and play fast. So I'm really proud, because, as Sinatra said, "I did it my way".

Do you have a story of transformation from any of your clients?

Oh yeah. Some guys have taken private lessons with me and have their *jazz* skills completely transform. Lots of people literally say "the past two weeks, I made more progress than in the past 5 years". That's the kind of impact the JazzGuitarLessons.net learning materials have on them.

What advice do you have for people just starting out?

My best advice is to control your friggin' product and distribution as much as possible. - Marc-Andre Seguin

For instance, I was happy to host my new courses on Udemy, as an early adopter of their platform. And then they changed their commission structure in 2014 and we all got screwed. I remember Udemy said "Yeah man, if you bring us a customer, you keep 100% of the revenue, we don't even keep anything. Not even a fee." And I was thinking "Wow, that's a really good deal!"

But then the catch: after you bring a customer in their system, there's no way you can beat the Udemy marketing machine. Udemy took these other guitar courses and discounted them to 95% through email promotions. There's no way I can compete with that. The customer you bring to Udemy, it's the last you'll hear of him/her. I got burned ... and immediately started my own "storefront" for selling courses, through Teachable.

So my advice: get on an LMS platform (Teachable, Kajabi, etc.) or WordPress LMS plugin and don't sell your own stuff through a "marketplace" platform that has too much control over your customer data. - Marc-Andre Seguin

Marketplaces are good because the audience comes built-in ... but they can hold your business hostage if you're not careful. Build your own audience outside of a

marketplace, or convert them from the marketplace and bring them back to you (which Udemy actively and aggressively prevents, BTW).

Another example: relying on Facebook exclusively, that's no good. I love Facebook ads, they used to work great two or three years ago. And then it got overcrowded. It's really expensive now and people stopped getting results.

I must confess, I'm also guilty of putting all my eggs in one basket when it comes to SEO. Google is really feeding me 99% of my clients, maybe more. I know I can't "control the internet" so to speak, but I know the internet can play fair. Google's game is getting the most relevant stuff in front of people when they search for it. So if I produce relevant, good content it will be found by qualified leads, provided I play by their rules (i.e. don't try to cheat Google, they will weed you out in the next algorithm update!) It's a win-win-win for JazzGuitarLessons.net

And one last piece of advice: get recurring revenues! Read John Warrilow, "The Automatic Customer: Creating a Subscription Business in Any Industry" as soon as you can and apply this knowledge. I've only been in the membership game work subscription three years but it's been really worth it.

Learn more about Marc-Andre Seguin and JazzGuitarLessons.net:

- Website: JazzGuitarLessons.net
- Marc-Andre Seguin "Artist" website: marcandreseguin.com
- Facebook
- LinkedIn

How Lee Wilson Used 20 Years of Career Experience to Create a Rewarding $30K/Month Online Course Business

- Who: **Lee Wilson, a.k.a Coach Lee**
- Website: **myexbackcoach.com and marriageradio.com**
- Course Topic: **Relationship Recovery**
- Revenue Stats: **$30K/month**

Who are you and what course have you created?

My name is Lee Wilson, a.k.a. Coach Lee and I run myexbackcoach.com My market is in the relationship-advice niche. Specifically, it's in the area of relationship recovery. Like getting your ex back after a breakup or your spouse back from separation. People who find me are often in a panic and suffering a great deal of anxiety. Begging and pleading to make this person want to get back together with them hasn't worked. They feel helpless so they are looking for an expert to give them some direction and hope.

My main course right now is the Emergency Breakup Kit.

The course essentially teaches people how to get their ex back.
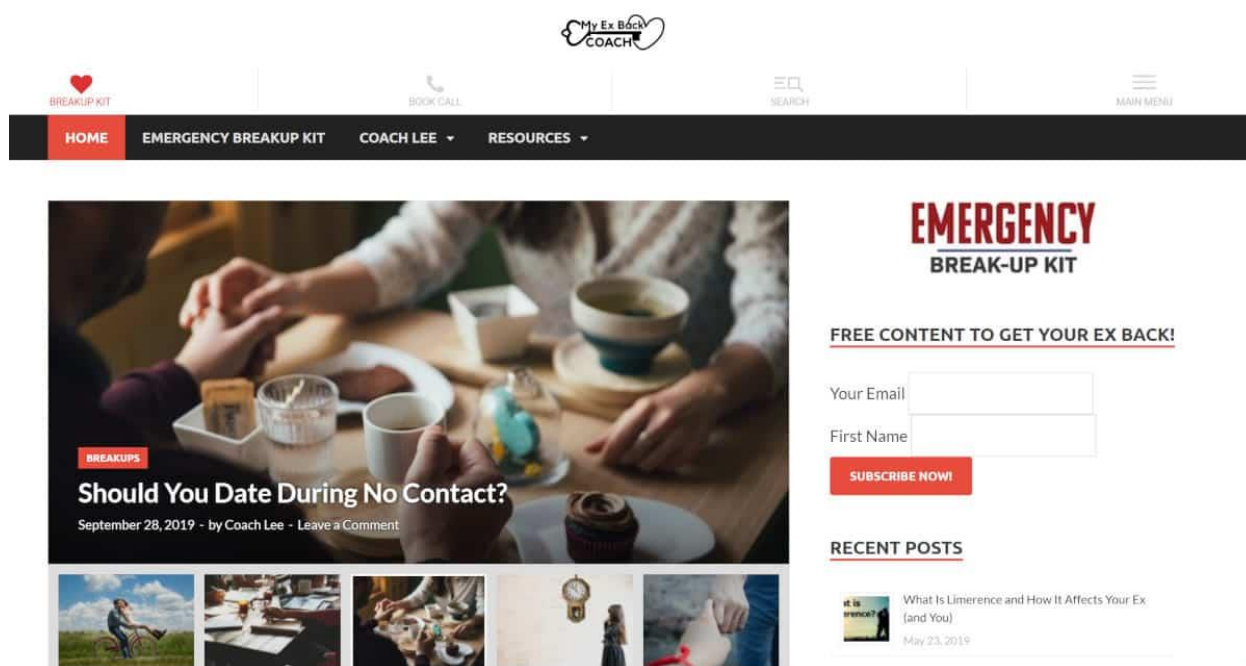
What's the biggest benefit of taking your course?

Most people say it gives them a map to accomplishing their goal of getting their ex back and helps them understand the mindset of the person who dumped them. So instead of just winging it and acting on desperation, they are given clear direction and precise steps to take. They are also given steps to take when certain things happen that they weren't expecting. Since I've learned from thousands of professionally observed cases, I have an unusual vantage point to offer help.

It also helps calm people down because they have it in their mind that they have to get their ex back right then and there or else they have lost them forever and that's just not the case. So the course shows them that they have time and that time is actually on their side if they do the right things and avoid the wrong things – both of those are extremely important.

How did you get into the market?

I started working for a marriage-coaching company nearly twenty years ago. I recently went out on my own to do dating coaching and continued marriage coaching as well. This is an industry that demands experience and having two decades is certainly a solid way to build credibility and trust among those seeking help and coaching.

What's funny is that while I was still working for the marriage coaching organization, I had been doing dating coaching on the side for years but thought I would put a few videos on my YouTube channel just to give hurting people some direction. It seems the instincts people have after being dumped are completely wrong. People usually do the exact wrong things that actually push their ex further away. I told my wife that I thought I could make an extra $500 or so a month. Literally a few months later, it was my full-time job, completely overwhelming me as it turned into my primary business.

Why did you decide to create an online course in the first place?

The number of people booking coaching calls with me was nuts. I had a video that went viral with over 1 million views on YouTube in just a few months and the others I put out did well also so people were wanting to talk to me.

At one point I was nearly two months booked out so I realized I had to duplicate myself because I was overwhelmed. I knew people were frustrated that they had to wait for such a ridiculous amount of time to talk to me. So, I stopped doing the coaching calls except for regular clients and offered the course as my primary service. It's been great because I can help more people. Plus I'm not completely overwhelmed with calls which had really done a number on me as far as just being mentally fried by the end of the day.

Did you have any moments of doubt before you created it?

I didn't have doubts mostly because I didn't have time to. I was trying to get the call load off of myself and had to have something to offer the people wanting help.

What's your online course like?

It's all video. About 10-20 minutes for each module with about 15 total modules. It's just me speaking into the camera to the people who bought the course.

How long did it take you to create your course?

I sat down in a chair in my office and used natural light from the window. I just put my cell phone on a tripod using a piece I bought on Amazon for $15 and a microphone for my phone from Amazon for about the same and had the course ready in a couple of weeks.

Since I knew the topic so well after nearly twenty years with it, I just wrote down on paper the main things people needed to know about what to do after a breakup to get their ex back. I divided it up into what made sense to be one video at a time and so on. I didn't want to over-complicate it since I've seen people plan and plan literally for years and still not have a course up to sell.

Tell us a little about the process of launching your course and getting your first sales.

I knew a mailing list would come in handy so I had already been taking sign ups for that on my website.

I had been adding articles to the site like crazy - two or three a week in fact and was getting a good amount of traffic. Second, I would turn every article into a YouTube video. -Lee Wilson

So I was building my audience that way as well. When the course was ready, I just emailed the mailing list and mentioned it in my next YouTube video which would go out to the subscribers of my channel. I also went to all the YouTube video descriptions and added a link to the course (which is called the Emergency Breakup Kit).
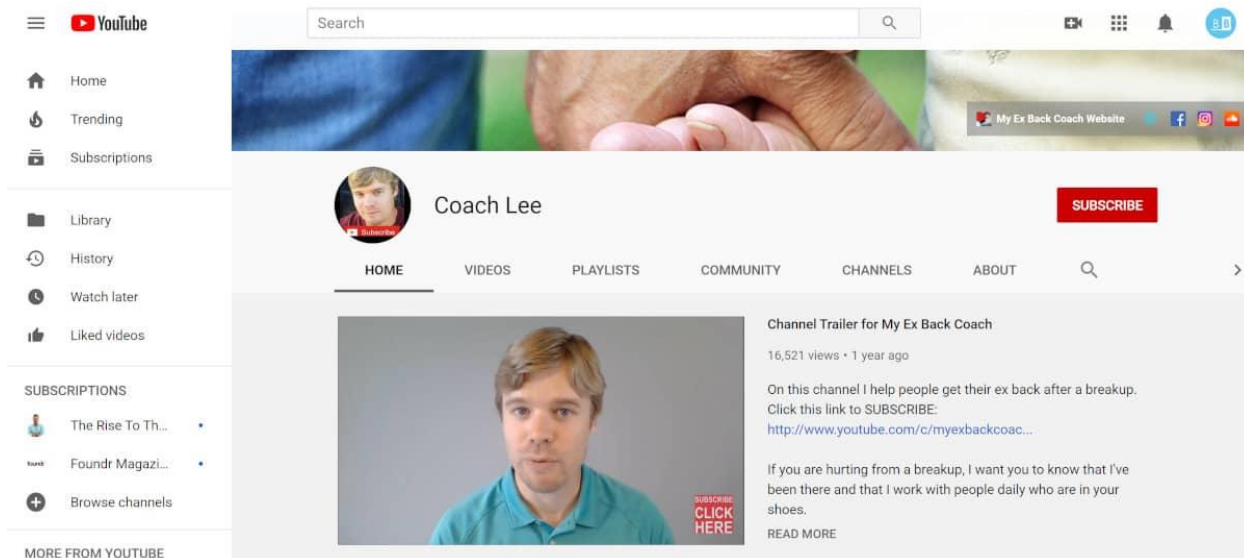
Finally, I went to all the content on my site and added ads and mentions of the course there. So I just built my audience knowing I'd probably do a course or something in time and then when I did I went to them. It wasn't a big, fancy, loudmouth launch like a lot of people do. I didn't bring on guests and do an hour-long webinar. Maybe I should have, but I just went to my audience with it and knew that the new people coming to the site for the first time would want it as well.

The key, in my opinion, was finishing it and getting it up without overthinking it.

Do you have a lead magnet?

I don't really have a lead magnet. I have a mailing list on the site where I tell people I'll email them when I have new articles for their situation and on relationships in general. In many ways the content on the site is my lead magnet since it pulls in a lot of traffic along with the YouTube videos since both the videos and the articles are evergreen content.

What's the traffic strategy that works best for you?

YouTube and articles. I write the article and then do a video on that same topic. Then I embed the video on the article page and share the link on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest. I also take time to do interviews. 😉

One rarely talked about quality indicator that can increase your video's rankings by itself is adding captions. In fact, YouTube video captions will almost certainly increase the average time your video is watched. It will not only allow the hearing

impaired to properly consume your video, but also allows for people who can't utilize volume at the moment to still watch instead of saving it for later or from closing your video altogether.

So adding captions has a compounding effect in that it tells YouTube your video is higher quality because it offers maximum use compared to other videos lacking captions. That appears to help your video rank higher in YouTube and also in Google search results. What's more, since more people will be able to consume your video for all its worth, the watch time will increase which will also help your rankings on YouTube and Google.

Finally, captioning also allows you to provide translations of your video in other languages so that you greatly expand your audience. Since a YouTube video can be an evergreen asset that continues to provide exposure and revenue for you for years to come, investing to optimize each video – even your older ones – is a very wise move.

You can use a service or do it yourself although it's somewhat time-consuming and tedious with a learning curve. You'll have to learn how to format a file to tell YouTube the timing of when to show words and when to bring up a new line of words. The other option is to edit Google's auto-captions by double-clicking on it in YouTube studio. (INSERT IMAGE "self-captioning-youtube.jpg")

Whichever route you choose, captioning your videos will give you an edge over your competition since most YouTube videos are not captioned.

What about YouTube's auto-captioning?

You can get YouTube to make an attempt to caption your videos with the push of a button. The technology isn't there yet to say the least. You can see what I mean by going to your video in your YouTube studio and going into the edit section symbolized by the pencil. (INSERT IMAGE EXAMPLE "pencil-symbol.jpg")

Select "More Options." (INSERT IMAGE EXAMPLE "more-options.jpg")

From there, you can select the spoken language of your video. Then YouTube makes an attempt to caption your video. Sounds good, right? Well, to say that YouTube's ability to caption is limited is putting it mildly. Technology to determine spoken words and sentence structure is much more complicated than it might seem. You might be tempted to think that YouTube's auto-captioning is, "better

than nothing," but I strongly disagree. I bet you'll see things my way if you look at some of the auto-captioning.

To do that, go to your video after you have saved the language in YouTube studio. Click the "CC" button at the bottom right of the video. (INSERT IMAGE EXAMPLE "closed-caption-button.jpg")

The first thing you might notice is that the captions are one giant sentence with no commas and not even a final period. There is almost no capitalization. If that weren't enough, you'll notice that many of your words are mistaken for other words and sometimes a series of words is mistaken for being one word that is nothing close to what you intended. This is extremely common and it makes you look pretty silly to viewers. (INSERT IMAGE EXAMPLE "youtube-captioning-error.jpg")

In my opinion, poor captions actually make you appear LESS professional and credible than having NO captions at all. That's why I opt for not using YouTube auto-captions and, instead, to wait until my video has been captioned by a real human being.

I can't recommend strongly enough that you get your videos captioned. You'd be surprised at the sheer number of people who prefer to mute the video and read the captions rather than have the volume loud. Imagine being in a waiting room with no earbuds. You are missing out on those views and sending strong quality signals to YouTube by not having your videos professionally captioned.

What online course platform are you using?

Paid Membership Pro which is a WordPress LMS Plugin.

It has been simpler to use than some of the others that seemed like they were speaking another language.

Ease of use is so underrated! Plus they have good support. I've recommended them to other people who are in other niches and patterning themselves what I've done.

Are there any features you wish it had?

It's had all that I've needed so far. They have a lot of add-ons that do things I hadn't even thought of. I added some features that I wouldn't have right off but after reading about what the add-on did, it made me think it would be helpful.

What made you decide to use your chosen platform over others?

I finished all the videos and then kind of thought to myself that I needed a member area. I didn't have any experience with any of them so I started Googling and looking in the plugin database for WordPress. I'd read about some of them and a lot of them tried to do too many things or when I activated them I couldn't figure them out. That was frustrating.

PMP was up and running quickly since it was simple to set up. If I wanted it to be more complex, I could do that as well. It gave me a membership area where people could buy the course and start using it.

What other tools do you use to run your online course business?

I use the Post Adverts plugin to put ads for the course in posts and pages (you can see an example in the How to Save a Marriage blog post.

That's it other than getting traffic with articles and YouTube. Did I mention YouTube? 🙂 I hired people to transcribe the videos so that the hearing impaired could also get something out of what I create. I've had some people who are hearing impaired reach out to me about that so I know it's been helpful.

YouTube tries to do an automatic transcription but I have checked and it's just kind of okay. It misses a lot of words so having a professional transcribe your videos is the way to go.

Please share some idea of revenue.

The course is making around $30k a month right now. I'm getting ready to launch the Emergency Marriage Kit in the next few weeks. I anticipate it doing close to that number as well.

Please tell us a little about what the money you've earned from your course has done for you.

Freedom. That's why I cringe when I hear politicians say they want to take it away. I've worked hard for this. Two decades of my life learning this. Then last year I was working seven days a week, often ten-hour days. Now I have it down to a video and article or two a week at most.

I finally feel like I can sleep in some, go to breakfast with my family, have coffee and contemplate the universe, and just be. My sons ask me if I can go do something with them during the day and most of the time, I can. I'm the boss and I've got a handle on this.

The work for the course has been done and now I'm reaping the rewards for that work. I was able to take my dad on vacation with my family, pay off debt, help a

friend who couldn't make ends meet, and we are considering adding on to our home.

What has creating your course done for you personally?

It's taught me that experience matters and that building my own future instead of just working a job is the way to go. The marriage organization that I was part of actually forced me out. I was just doing dating coaching on the side but they wanted to get into that area too. So they decided to let me go since they would be competing with me. My course and future courses helps me not be at the mercy of an organization, a new CEO, board members, etc.

There's certainly a place for having a job because bills have to be paid and your family must be provided for and it's not always ideal.

<p style="text-align:center; color:#3db4e5;">But working on an escape route makes sense if you have an entrepreneurial mind and the desire to be out on your own. -Lee Wilson</p>

I know it's not for everyone, but it is for me.

Do you have a story of a transformation from any of your clients?

The one that struck me the most caused me to just sit and stare for several minutes. It was a married couple and she took the time to email me about six months after he had come back to her. This client enrolled in my Emergency Breakup Kit.

She told me how difficult it was but that she stuck to what the course said. She described him coming home to her, crying, wanting her back and wanting to be a family again with their children. Then she began talking about how difficult the separation had been on the kids. How they had cried themselves to sleep because he wasn't there. Now, she said, the kids are so happy and they all do things together as a family again.

Knowing that there are children out there who will go to bed tonight knowing that dad is home and isn't going to leave them brings quite the lump in my throat.

I didn't just make a course and make some money. My course helped real people and made a positive difference for the future. That is more satisfying than the income. -Lee Wilson
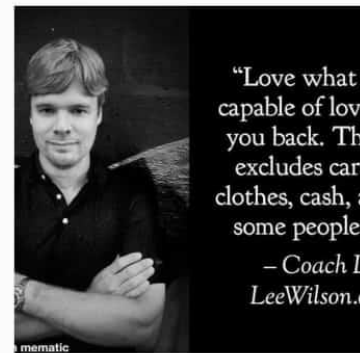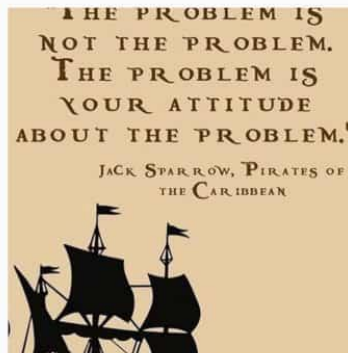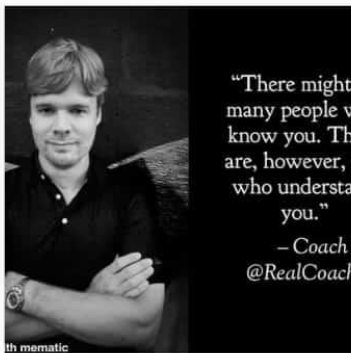
What advice do you have for people just starting out?

Don't worry about giving your "secrets," or good information away for free. There's plenty of information for a course and people appreciate having it all stepped out and organized for them.

When people are helped by your free content, they'll be more willing to pay for your content that has a cost to them. They'll appreciate and trust you already so they don't mind paying you for something. -Lee Wilson

Also, don't wait until your course is perfect and you feel like it could win best picture or the award for best special effects. Ask yourself, will this help my audience? Will it serve their purpose and provide a solution to their problem?

If the answer is yes, go ahead and start selling it. You can always redo videos and tweak it later. In fact, you can get feedback from the people who buy the course that way to make it better instead of just guessing.

That's how I view my course. It's always a work in progress because I want it to look as professional as possible and provide as much help as possible. But once your product is viable, start selling it. Don't delay. It gets you nowhere.

Learn more about Lee Wilson and the Emergency Breakup Kit:

- Website: myexbackcoach.com and marriageradio.com
- Facebook
- Instagram
- YouTube

Resit Gulec Shares How He Started a Project Management Training Empire

- Who: **Resit Gulec**
- Website: **masterofproject.com**
- Course Topic: **Professional certification training**
- Impressive Stats: **Trained 100,000+ professionals**

Who are you and what course business did you create?

My name is Resit Gulec and I run masterofproject.com.

Master of Project Academy prepares professionals for the certification exams. Since 2012, we have helped more than 100,000 professionals in more than 180 countries get ready and pass their certification exams. We offer PMP, CAPM, PMI-ACP, Prince2, Agile and many other certification courses for professionals.

My team and I offer over 50 different courses from masterofproject.com. Here's a sample of a few of our current course titles:

- PMP® Certification Training – 35 Contact Hours Online PMP Training
- PMP® Online Class Virtual Training – 4 Days – 35 Contact Hours
- CAPM® Certification Training – 23 Contact Hours Online CAPM Training
- PMI-ACP® (Agile Certified Practitioner) Certification Training
- Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Certification Training
- Agile Scrum Certification Training
- IT Service Management Certification Training

We offer 28 Project Management courses and 11 related to Project Management Professional (PMP) certification.

Our most popular course is our PMP Training.

PMP® Online Class Virtual Training - 4 Days - 35 Contact Hours

Our PMP® Online Class Virtual Training helps you fully prepare for the PMP certification exam – PMP class at your place.

What's the biggest benefit of taking one of your courses?

Master of Project Academy students have an industry leading 99.6% first attempt pass rate. This is the first attempt pass rate of our students in certification exams. We do not count second or third attempts of students as other training providers do.

Our courses are designed by industry experts who have several years of teaching and field experience. Our students do not only learn how to get ready for their certification exams, but they also see how to apply the theoretical information they learn in the courses to real-life projects.

Where did you come up with the idea for your business?

I worked as a project manager for several years before starting my own business.

One of the last projects I managed was the development of Turkey's largest online education platform for Turkcell, which is the largest mobile operator in Turkey, and one of the top 5 operators in Middle-East region.

During this project, I had the chance to work with senior executives monitoring the online education sector and saw how the education world would change in the coming years. At that time, I was giving project management lectures at Ozyegin

University to undergraduate and MBA students as a visiting professor. That's when I decided I wanted to put my rehearsals into online education platforms.

I received very good feedback from students which was when the real story began! I prepared and published more than 13 courses in 13 months and exceeded 32,000 students in 15 months from September 2014 through March 2016.

Master of Project Academy was launched in April 2016.

Actually, masterofproject.com has been live since 2012 acting as a blog for project management and IT service management.

We continue to prepare and publish new courses and recently passed 50,000 professionals from more than 170 countries. We celebrate this milestone with a 50K50OFF coupon which will give 50% off to our visitors in all courses and all pricing plans site wide.

Our news has appeared on hundreds of popular sites including Yahoo! Finance and Market Watch. You can check the most popular appearances from our media coverage page.

Why did you decide to create an online course in the first place?

It all started when I uploaded my university lecture rehearsals into an online education platform. I did not expect such a big interest in my lectures. After I saw the big demand for my courses, I created new courses and upgraded existing courses.

After some point, I launched my own business.

Did you have any moments of doubt before you created/launched it?

The biggest struggle I had was with the narration of the courses. My colleagues, friends, supervisors, and managers told me that I'm good at project management, but as you know, being good at something doesn't ensure that you will teach it as well as you practice it.

Around 10-15% of my students were saying that although my content was impressive and comprehensive, my narration could be better.
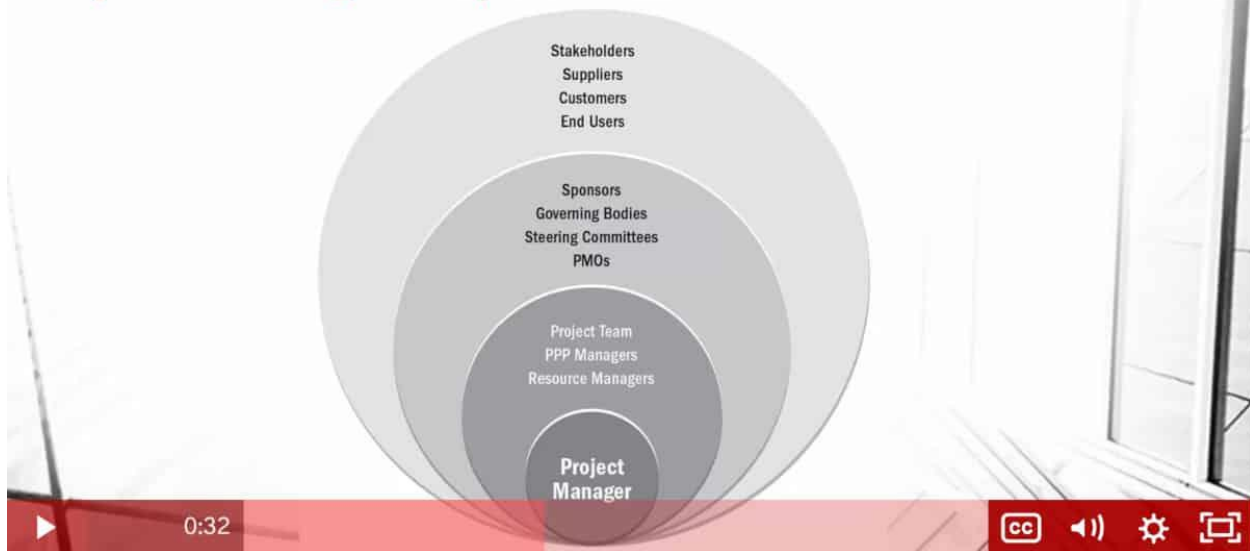
If so what made you turn it around and do it anyway?

To improve this, I found a native voice actor. We transformed our courses with native narration and our students are much happier now.

What's your online course like?

Our course materials include mainly high-quality self-paced video lectures. However, we provide handouts, study guides, cheat sheets, sample questions, flash cards and many other supplemental materials to help get students exam-ready.

How long did it take you to create your course?

It took about 3 months to complete all of my first course lectures which is a 35 contact hours PMP course. I used the PowerPoint slides that I prepared previously for my university lectures. I was able to re-use them and prepared video lectures through screen casting.

Tell us a little about the process of launching your course and getting your first sale(s).

Almost immediately after I uploaded my course to online education platforms, I started to earn money. I did not believe I would earn this much before I started.

Soon after I started to teach online, I left my full-time job, and incorporated my company. Since then I've been fully focusing on my own business to teach professionals project management skills.

Do you have a lead magnet?

Yes, we offer several free courses at Master of Project Academy. If you navigate to our website, you will see all the Free Courses just by clicking on the "Free Courses" link on the top of our page.

Our free courses mainly show how our courses are structured. Each one is actually a free demo of our comprehensive paid courses.

For instance, we have Free PMP Training. PMP certification aspirants who thinking about enrolling in our PMP training can attend this free PMP training to get an idea of how our courses are structured before they pay for anything. They can watch several sample lectures from the free training.

There are also free resources including downloads and tips from recent PMP exam takers.

This free course also gives learners an understanding of what PMP certification is about and how to apply for the PMP exam. At the end of the course there's also a discount for applying for the paid version.
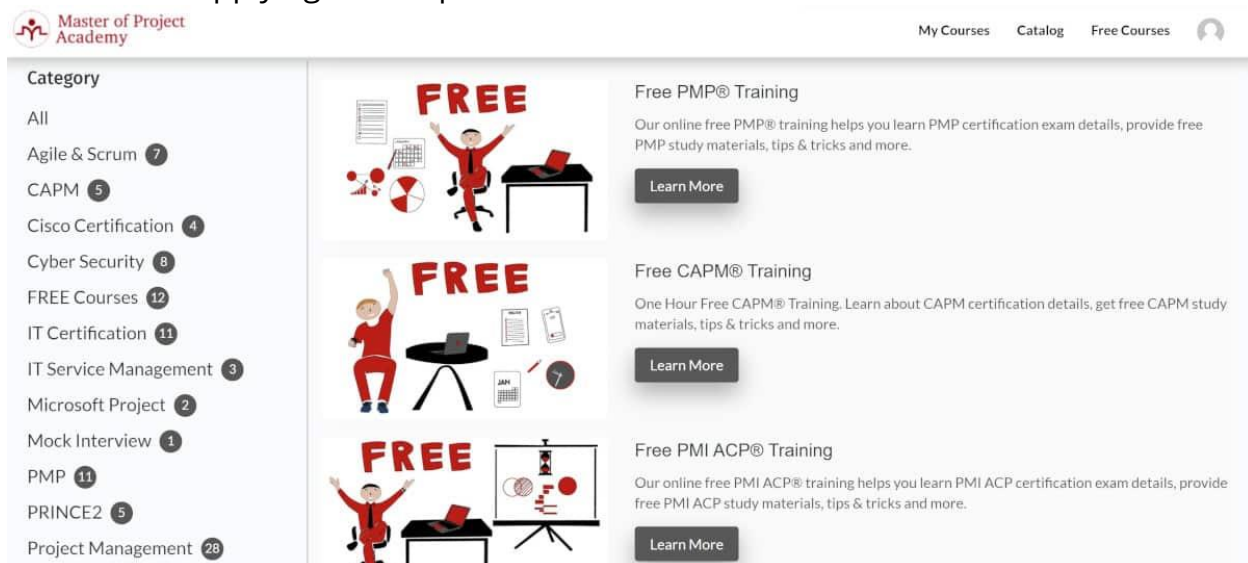
What's the traffic strategy that works best for you?

I would say the best traffic comes from the best content. - Resit Gulec

When I'm browsing online, I see several tips, tricks, hints, and hacks around getting more traffic for your site. However, search algorithms for the search engines are very clever now. If you do these hacks and if your content is not engaging for your audience, your hacks will not work.

We did not apply these "SEO-called" hacks in our content creation. Instead, we believed that creating true and engaging information will drive our traffic and that's

exactly what happened. We now see 200,000+ unique visitors each month across our platforms.

Our content creation strategy consists of publishing 1-2 new blog posts every month. We used to publish much more in the past. When we are preparing a blog post, we consider it from the certification aspirants' perspective and try to clarify the most frequently asked questions. Besides this, we provide and write free resources as well. Then we publish these posts in our social channels including; LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter where we have more than 10,000 followers.

What online course platform are you using?

We use Teachable as our course platform and Woocommerce to handle eCommerce.

Overall, we like Teachable but have some issues especially in measuring some aspects of data. We've raised several requests to Teachable for this issue and it still remains unresolved. Other than that, we are happy with Teachable.
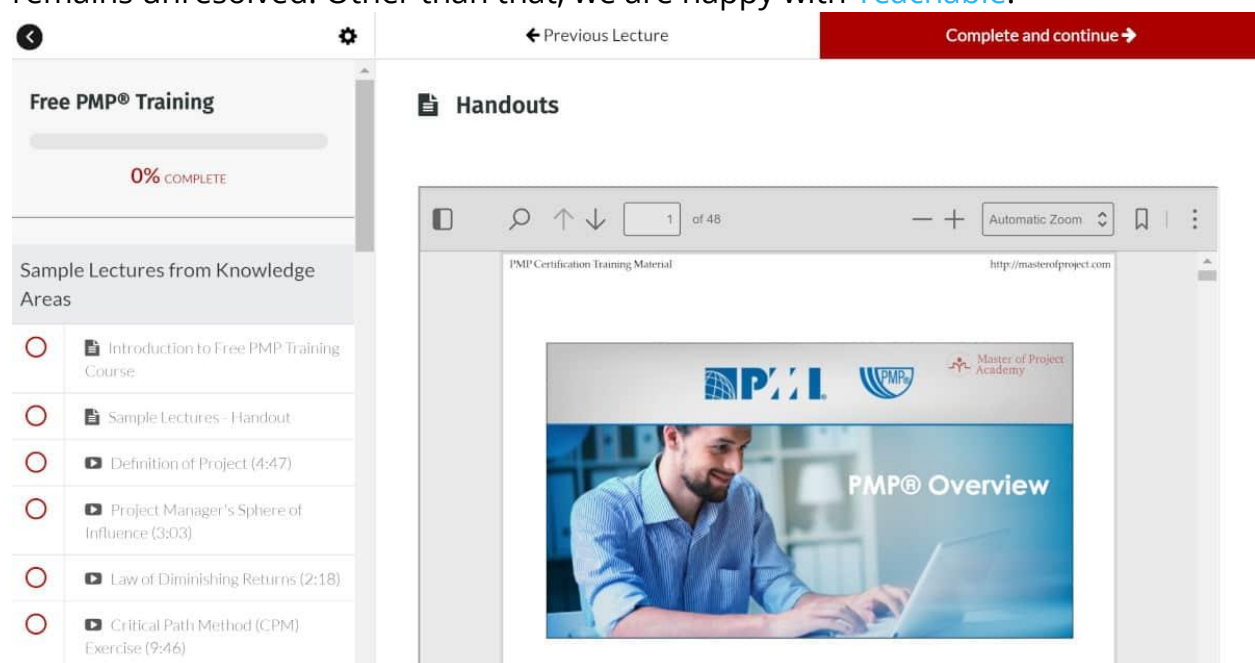
Are there any features you wish it had?

With Teachable, you never know how many active subscriptions you have in your online school. It would be awesome if there was a feature showing how many active subscriptions are in each pricing plan.

We also use several tools for collecting, measuring, and analyzing meaningful results to better serve our students.

What made you decide to use your chosen platform over others?

When we launched our business, Teachable was the dominant player in the market with competitive features and a good pricing plan. So we opted for that.

Do you have any impressive statistics or numbers you're willing to share?

We have helped 100,000+ professionals in more than 180 countries get ready for their certification exams with a hard-to-believe 99.6% first attempt pass rate. Each month, thousands of new students enroll in our courses.

We currently get over 200,000 visitors a month across our platforms so we do very well in this industry.

What has creating your course done for you personally?

The best thing is, I see how I help people change and positively enhance their careers. Our students earn certifications, change their jobs, and earn higher salaries after taking our courses. Respectively, receiving their success messages makes me happy. Hearing this is more valuable to me than how much money I make with Master of Project Academy.

Do you have a story of a transformation from any of your clients?

Yes, you can see our student Don Wheeler's PMP exam success story.

We do not only help our students to get their certifications. We help PMP certified professionals retain their PMP by earning PDUs from our PMP PDU courses.

Similarly, our Scrum SEU courses help to earn SEU credits to renew Scrum Alliance certification.

What do you wish you knew before you started?

I would say, "do not teach to earn money". Instead "teach to change the lives of your students".

If you believe you will be able to change the lives of your students in a positive way, you will be a successful course creator. - Resit Gulec

Money comes afterward 😉

Learn more about Resit Gulec and Masterofproject.com:

- Website: masterofproject.com
- LinkedIn
- Facebook
- Twitter

How David Wallimann Earns an Average of $40,000/Month Teaching What He Loves

- Who: **David Wallimann**
- Website: **guitarplayback.com**
- Course Topic: **Electric guitar lessons**
- Revenue Stats: **$40,000/month**

Who are you and what course have you created?

My name is David Wallimann and I run guitarplayback.com
Guitarplayback.com offers courses for people wanting to learn how to play and improve their electric guitar skills.

I offer over 40 courses, most of them taught by me. I also offer a few courses created by other instructors.

Course titles include; Melodic Formula, Applied Theory, Modal Explorer, Chord Scales and many more.

I serve electric guitar players interested in developing their musical personality. I do this by breaking down musical concepts in a way that (hopefully!) most can understand and most importantly apply!
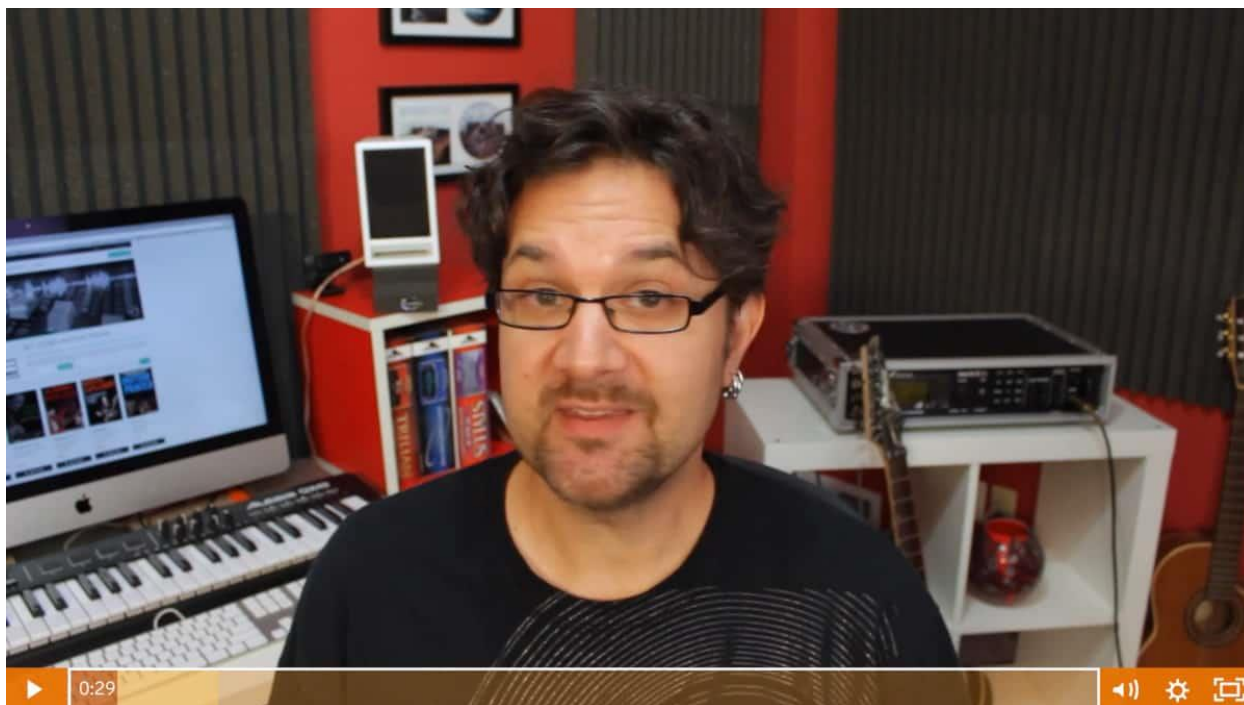
What's the biggest benefit of taking one of your courses?

The biggest benefit to my courses is that they offer a very practical way of applying music theory. Each course focuses on direct implementation of the concepts I teach. I believe that each student has a story worth telling musically, and I make sure that every course I create helps students express themselves more effectively.

How did you get into the market?

I started teaching guitar at the age of 17. At the time I would teach neighborhood kids the few things I knew on guitar. I charged enough to afford a weekly lesson with the best guitar teacher I could afford. I fell in love with teaching then.

When YouTube came out, I saw an opportunity to expand my reach, so I started making videos for the platform.

Through YouTube I realized I could take my local guitar teaching to a different level. I started offering pre-recorded custom video lessons to my YouTube viewers. That was how it all started. Those lessons became my first "online course".
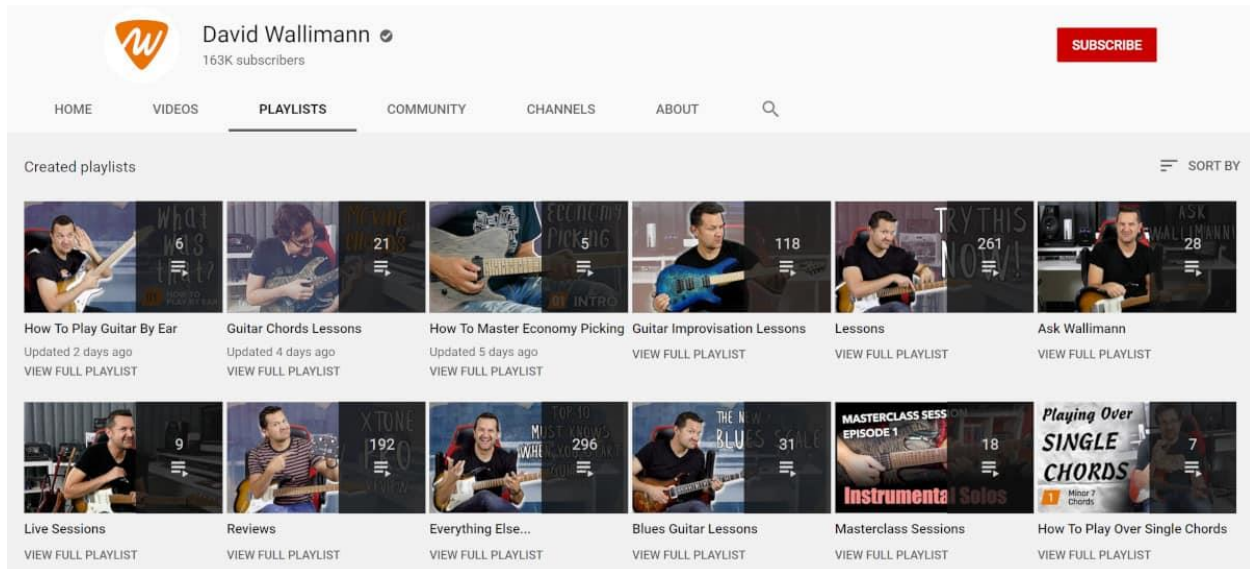
Why did you decide to create an online course in the first place?

I was overbooked with Skype lessons. I couldn't handle the number of students that wanted to take lessons.

> Offering an online course allowed me to create something really good (because I had time to prep it) and serve more people too! - David Wallimann

Did you have any moments of doubt before you created/launched it?

I never really struggled with that. Not because I think I'm the greatest, but because my love for teaching is so big that I never really asked myself the question. I'm sure if I did I would have had fears. But again, passion was the key motivator!
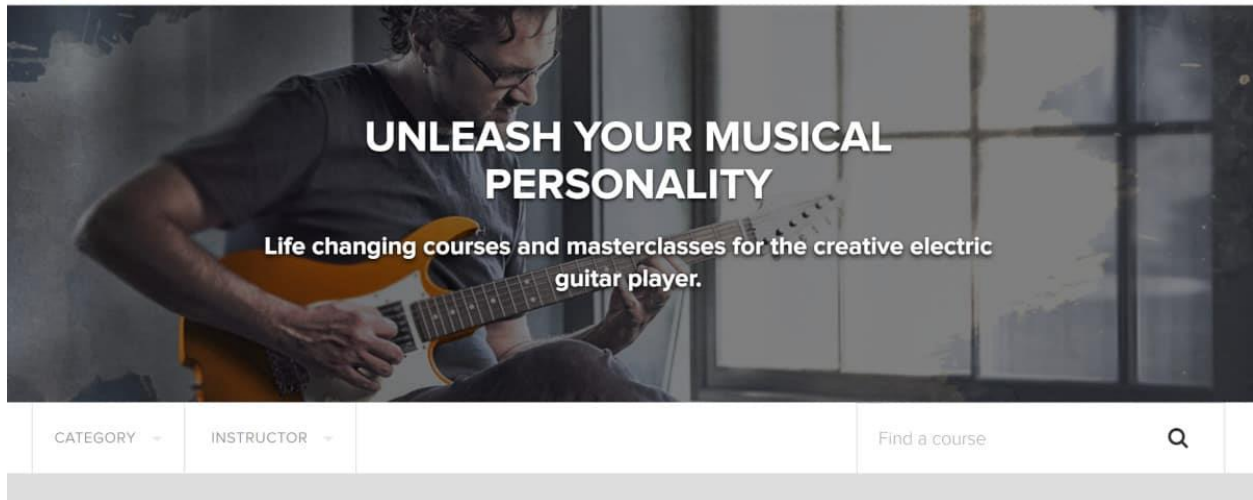
What are your online courses like?

All my courses are video-based. I also offer supplemental content for scale diagrams and guitar tabs. But the teaching is all video-based. Most students know me from the YouTube show and expect a similar format when they decided to get into the premium paid content.

To give you an example of typical course content, the Applied Theory course offers 2.5 hours of video lessons spread out over about 8 videos. Most of the video content is me or another instructor showing students how to play the guitar by demonstrating. There are also some graphic overlays where I have illustrations over or next to the video.

There are also backing tracks to help students apply what they learned. They also get PDF scale charts.
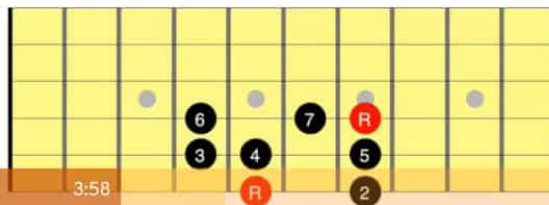
How long did it take you to create your courses?

That's a hard one to answer!

It really depends on the course. I have about 40 at the moment, but I can speak about the very first one I did.

My first course started as a membership subscription service. The goal at the time was to offer a weekly guitar lesson to all paying members. After 2 years of doing this, I felt very burnt out and decided to cancel the service. I didn't want to abandon all the content I had, so decided to repackage it into what became my first online course. That course is now the best selling course I've ever launched. So it took over 2 years to make in a way!

Tell us a little about the process of launching your course and getting your first sale(s).

This changes slightly from course to course since I'm always experimenting. What seems to work best for me is to offer free supplemental content to all my YouTube videos. In order to get the download, viewers have to join my email list. Once I have a new course ready, I'll email my list about the course. It's very simple, but has worked well so far!

Do you have a lead magnet?

Yes, I have a few. My main one is a free product that is constantly updated with each new YouTube video I publish. Once signed up to the lead magnet, people can access all the supplemental content for each of my YouTube videos (MP3 downloads, charts, etc...).

What's the traffic strategy that works best for you?

I use YouTube pretty much exclusively. I never did any paid ads (hoping to change that soon!).

My process is unconventional ... I usually sit in front of the cameras each Monday and just turn the cameras on and film 3 lessons. I rarely plan the videos and often make the lesson up on the spot. This is NOT my advice on how to approach YouTube, but that's how I've done it for so long.

That said I recently decided to try prepping my videos more and spend more time making the videos engaging as YouTube's algorithm is really interested in longer watch time. So I'm making sure that I try to keep viewers watching for as long as possible.

I'm probably not the best guy to ask about good YouTube strategies. I just love making videos and teaching. I know that for some 163,000 subscribers and a bit over 1,400 videos probably sounds like a lot, but I've been consistently doing videos for almost 10 years – so relatively speaking it's been a slow growth!
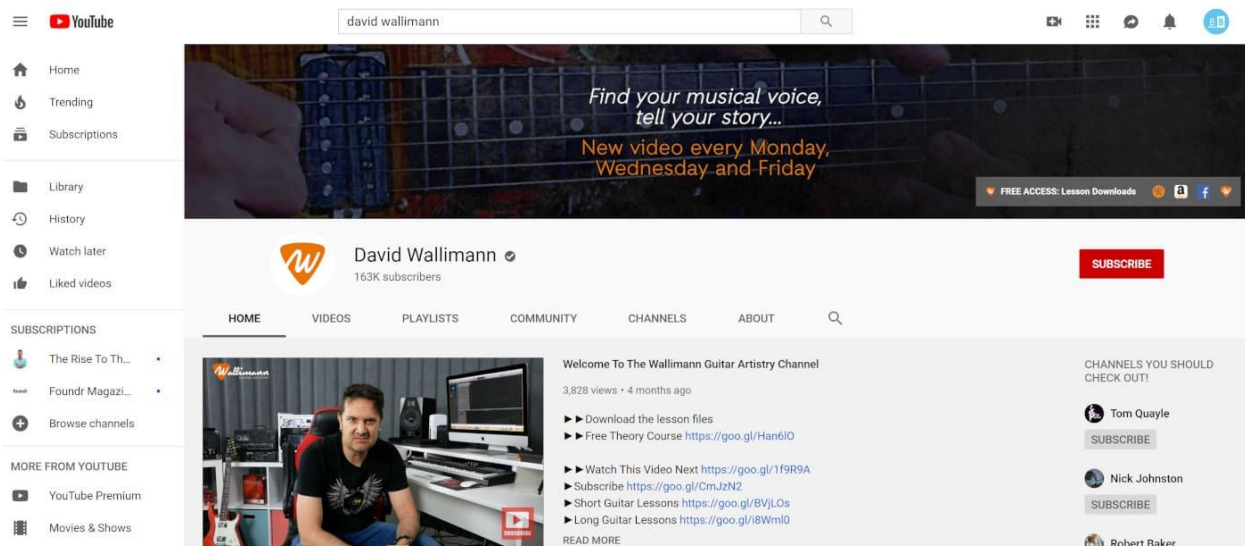
What online course platform are you using?

I currently use Teachable.

I have a love/hate relationship with Teachable. It's a great way to get started and easy to use, but as soon as you want to do something outside of anything conventional, things get very difficult.

Are there any features you wish it had?

Yes, many! The main one is that I would love to be able to offer subscription services for which members ONLY get access to sections added during their membership. In other words, I don't want someone who signs up today to access things that were added last month.

Better page builders would also be great. They just updated their builder, but I am not impressed. I currently use a 3rd party page builder called CoursePro which is awesome.
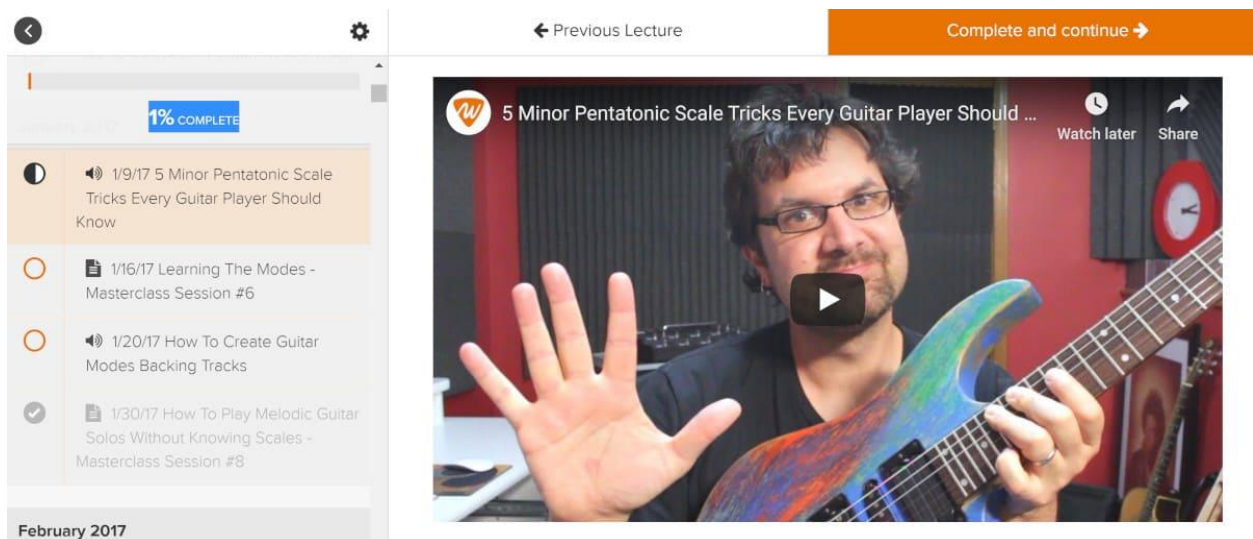
**What made you decide to use your chosen platform over others?**

At the time I needed something quick and easy. I've used many online course platforms in the past and Teachable seems to be checking most of the boxes. Unfortunately, they don't offer many useful updates and I'm now considering going fully custom.

What other tools do you use to run your online course business?

I use DeadlineFunnel for counters, ConvertKit for emails, Conversion Gorilla for banners, Course Pro for landing pages, and ThriveCart for the cart!

Please share some idea of revenue.

It really depends on the month, but on average the courses bring in about $40,000/month.
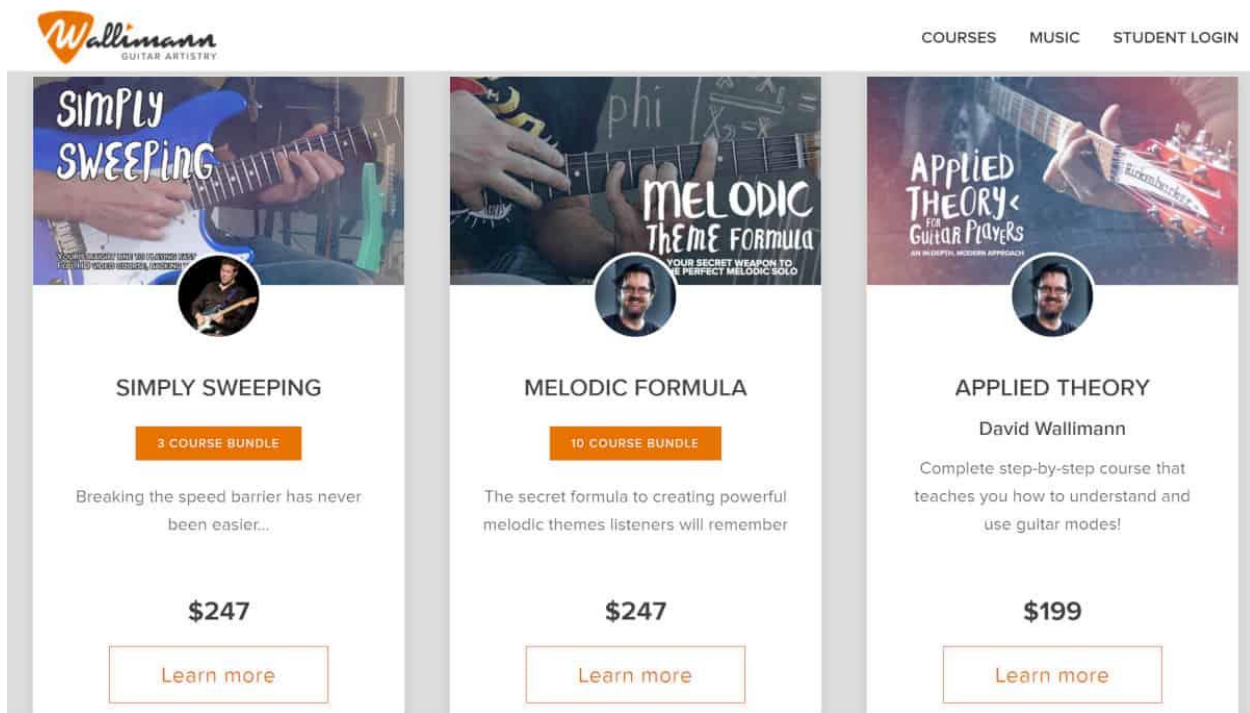
Please tell us a little about what the money you've earned from your course has done for you.

I try not to look at the revenue too much because I don't want it to distract me from my love of teaching.

I would be doing the same exact thing even if I had to pay to do it – I love it that much! Our lifestyle really hasn't changed much. The income allows us to basically not worry about it and focus on other important things like raising our kids, family, and friends.

What has creating your course done for you personally?

Great question! Structuring courses has helped my understanding of music quite a bit. Spending time thinking about a topic and anticipating questions from students does amazing things for your own development – in any field you're in. That's a benefit of teaching!

What advice do you have for people just starting out?

I'd say don't compare yourself with anyone else. It can be unhealthy and very paralyzing. I'm speaking from experience. I always fall back into the "comparison trap" and it never helps.

Work out of love for what you do, not the love of money. There is a greater calling. Financial rewards are just the cherry on top. - David Wallimann

Learn more about David Wallimann and Guitarplayback.com:

- Website: guitarplayback.com
- YouTube
- Facebook
- Twitter

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