How I Built It: $40K/Month iPhone App

so my mobile app puff count is currently doing $40,000 per month in recurring Revenue I honestly don't think you need any experience to build mobile apps because to be H like I didn't have any how did this guy build a $40,000 per month mobile app with no coding experience well it's all because of his unconventional approach to shipping marketing really is 95% of the success of a mobile app Steven creada started his journey as a typical online entrepreneur jumping from one business model to another while not seeing really any success with anything but one day he stumbled upon mobile apps and immediately recognized the opportunity not a lot of people are doing mobile apps right now but it's a lot easier than a lot of people think to get into it's UNT so I gave Stephen a call and asked him about his business and how anyone can start building similar profitable mobile apps from scratch luckily he shared his entire process how to find and validate your idea how to build an app with no experience and how to Market and monetize it all right let's get into it I'm Pat walls and this is starter story what's up Stephen it's exciting to have you thanks for joining the show can you tell me a little bit more about yourself and the business that you built yeah sure I'm Steven kada I build Viral mobile apps I've amassed over million downloads on my apps in total I'm working on an app right now called Puff count that is currently doing $40,000 in monthly recurring Revenue so this is the last days of sales for puff count as you can see we did $43,000 in sales if we look at the last we have done just over $112,000 in sales so before we get into how people can actually start building these apps can you tell us what you really like about this business model with apps there's unlimited scale you can reach anyone on the planet and all you have to do is build it once and you can sell it a million times so it's unlike any other business in that way but also it's a lot easier than a lot of people think to get into with no code tools and with upw work you can build these apps in less than a month and there's templates online so you can start you don't have to start from scratch anymore the biggest misconception people have is that like it's hard to get into so like not a lot of people are doing mobile apps right now it's untapped but I honestly don't think you need any experience to build mobile apps because to be H like I didn't have any I don't design anything I don't develop anything I just have the idea and I know how to put a team together like you just need to be driven and not not give up on your idea got it okay let's talk about how you can actually build something like this step by step everything starts with an idea right can you share your ideation process I take mental notes of problems that I experience in my day-to-day life if you're building an app from the position of solving a problem for yourself you become the ideal user and that makes you so much better at creating the product and making it useful for the people you're trying to reach if you can solve a problem for someone and you can kind of take them through this transformation whether it be weight loss dieting quitting vaping if you can improve someone's life they are going to love your product and the marketing becomes much easier as well right because you can be like hey you have XYZ problem here's the solution so everything becomes easy if you're solving a problem for someone Steven is the perfect example of how someone with zero experience turned a

simple idea into thousands of dollars but that came with knowing the right information and having the right problem to solve now imagine there was a place that gave you all this the problems to solve the blueprints to solve them and the strategies that turn simple ideas into million-dollar online businesses well that's what you're going to get at starter story it's a library of over 4,000 case studies and business idea breakdowns where you can access this all backed by data from real entrepreneurs so if you're serious about building a profitable side project head to the first link in the description and we're going to give you micro SAS ideas just like Stevens so you can get started on your journey right now okay so scratching your own itch is definitely the way to go if you want to find a painful problem but what do you do after you get the idea for your app how do you actually validate it's an idea worth building I did market research I looked at sensor Tower looked at other you know quit drinking or quit smoking cigarettes apps and I saw that they were crushing it looked at Google Trends saw that vaping was on the rise and then probably the most important part was I looked on Tik Tok I saw that Vape videos were going super viral on Tik Tok but I think where a lot of young entrepreneurs especially fall short is they they give up on the idea too quickly if you have a good idea and it solves a problem for people like commit to it just like me for puff count the first four to months I didn't make any money it was only after I locked in the marketing like marketing is 90% of being successful and validating an idea all right we'll definitely touch on the marketing later but for now let's focus on building the app what do you do after the idea is locked in what I do is I brain dump everything so I get on Google Docs and I brain dump all the ideas all the features that I want in the app I put all the competitors there and I kind of write out you know what I think the app should do and then from there I literally take a piece of paper and a pencil and I start to sketch out the app when you're looking at these competitors and you're seeing who's making money in your niche in the Market On the App Store you should be taking note of everything their features their onboarding their UI that will give you a good guide into what a get app looks like and then you take those sketches and you upload them to a site called designs you upload sketches and you say here's the app here's the premise of it here are the features make my app come to life and you'll have 60 sometimes plus professional UI designers all submit their idea of what your app should look like this is how I develop the UI for literally all of my apps okay and what about turning that design into an actual working app how do you build it with no coding experience you go on to upwork and you look for a developer you can price it based on like the complexity of your app for an app like puff counts fairly straightforward couple main features you get that done for less than grand right you can get the MVP out there I recommend only hiring developers from Eastern Europe they're going to give you the best quality code for a cheaper price once you have your developer that you'd like to go with you do it on a per project completion basis so I don't pay anyone per hour I pay them when the app is complete it's on the store there's no bugs but 100% you can build an app for less than $1,000 you can go to a website called theme forest and you can download pretty decent starter template for any app out there and again you know just launching an MVP like keep it simple and if your budget is tighter like the simpler your app the better and how do we trust the developer what if they steal the idea for our app it's never been a problem for me and also your ideas are worth absolutely nothing and more likely than not the idea that you have for this app already exists so like the idea is out there you just have to trust someone I always take like a 15-minute interview call with with the people that I like from the applicants on upwork I get their Vibe I see are they coming to the

table with more ideas for my app do they seem excited about it how they present but you have to get past that fear of hiring someone online that you don't really know like that's part of being a Founder is finding great talent trusting them and iterating as you go okay now let's talk about the elephant in the room marketing share your strategy marketing really is 95% of the success of a mobile app and Tik Tok is the best way to Market any app the only thing you need to be successful on Tik Tok is you need to know how to do market research so that's exactly what I did I went on Tik Tok I typed in vaping and I saved all of the most viral videos there and I put them into a spreadsheet so I could really understand what the hook was what the value was how they were shooting the content for example this one that got 8.

million views drove tens of thousands of downloads for puff count I saw a viral video this guy had like million plus views taking apart a vape so I was like okay cool I'm going to use the same concept and I'm going to show people exactly what are in a vape and then at the end conveniently call to action baby nothing crazy I think we're lot of people go wrong is like they'll make the entire video about their product and they'll talk about the features and all this other stuff and then it becomes a clear sales video like that sucks no one wants to watch a sales video on Tik Tok my Tik toks are entertainment first call to action at the end a quick two second call to action okay so right now Tik Tock organic is the bread and butter of marketing mobile apps but are there any other marketing channels that have worked well for you the beautiful thing about organic Tik Tok is if the video does well organically it's a great indicator that it's a great creative in general you put them on paid ads and click the spend my money button that's literally all you have to do because as long as the creative is good the algorithms on Facebook ads or Tik Tok ads or whatever they will optimize around that solid creative and they will find you customers what you can also do is you can find influencers on these platforms and you can pay them to make content for you in my experience it's tough to you know work with influencers they always want a ton of cash and they don't really care you know how the videos perform for you but you can find those diamond in the rough creators and you can reach out to them and get pretty cheap content and you can use that in scale that way uh as well okay cool now let's talk about the next step of the process of building a mobile app monetization what's the best strategy to turn these users or turn these eyeballs into paying customers yeah so there's there's many different ways to monetize apps and in my first games I monetized through ads because people were on the app all the time they were playing the game a lot so the ads worked well for or grid and whle but for these tool focused apps like puff count ads don't really work because you're not expecting the user to be on your app for a super long period of time so the way you monetize that is through inapp purchases you need the user to either buy your app or commit to monthly yearly Weekly subscription the kind of strategy that everyone is using now is the app is free you go through the onboarding and then you hit what is called a hard pay wall this is essentially a screen that asks you to pay and if you don't pay you can access the features in the app a hard pay wall is unskippable when I changed puff count to a hard pay wall and I made users commit to a free trial before they could use any features in the app it changed my business overnight my conversion rate shot through the roof upwards of 25% nice and what about pricing how can someone find the best price point for their app I AB tested different pricings I started at $4 went up to $12 right with a lot of users coming to your app you're getting a lot of data and you're understanding which price point gives you the highest LTV the highest lifetime value I use super wall to do this you can remotely configure your pay walls and you can change the price without sending

App Store updates so you can do it much quicker and super wall will actually tell you which price point will give you the best LTV so I just optimize for that the highest LTV price point you mentioned earlier that before getting hit with the pay wall the user is being walked through the onboarding process what's your experience with that the onboarding is super important because this is an opportunity for you to walk the user through their own problem so for example on puff count my onboarding is extensive and I ask the users a lot of questions and some people say that's annoying I don't want to do that I just want to get into the app but the data has told me that if I walk the users through the onboarding they commit time and I'm able to walk them through their problem that puff count is solving so when they hit the pay wall they've thought about their problem a lot and they're like wow I actually really do need to quit or I really do need this product and they're much more likely to convert all right now let's get technical what tools in software do you use to build all of these apps the Tex stack I use to build apps is pretty short I use upwork to find and hire developers I use designs to get the UI built I use super wall to AB test my pay walls optimizing your pay wall is how you're going to make money with your app like you need to optimize your pay wall and find the highest LTV so that is 100% essential everyone who has a mobile app should be using super wall I use Revenue cat for analytics data Revenue cat is good too because that will give you more data on your user lifetime value and again your user lifetime value is like the most important metric in your app you need to understand how much paying users are generating you over their lifetime so that you know how much you can spend on paid ads or on influencers or on installs and as long as your customer acquisition cost is lower than your LTV you're you're making money I use apps flyer as my MMP it connects with my my mobile app and Facebook or Tik Tok ads and sends data back to those platforms I use Tik Tok and Facebook ads to send traffic I also use mix panel amplitude to get kind of more in-depth analytics in my products and see what people are doing in the app once they do download it once they do pay and Gat code is like you should stay on the free plans I don't think you should ever really upgrade mix panel or amplitude like you should get your data understand what you need to change and then get out all right for anyone looking for ideas I want to ask what do you think is the most lucrative Niche to build an app in right now when I look at like the most profitable niches in mobile apps I think a lot of them do have to do with help helping people be better lose weight quit vaping quit drinking anything in the health space I think will absolutely crush and of course like there are already apps that are doing really well like in Fitness you have like my fitness pal you have all these weight training apps but it comes down to the marketing can you get in front of people at a cheaper cost than these mobile apps right being a young founder you truly do have an advantage because all these old heads in the industry these big slow moving companies that never iterate on their idea a small Nimble entrepreneur rur can take them out all it takes is one viral Tik Tok all right another question for you some people watching this right now may have started a couple other things before but didn't see immediate results and eventually gave up or quit what advice would you give to those people the struggle of building something new is it's never going to be perfect on the first try but I've done this enough times now to know it's a process and you have to keep iterating I know it's a good idea I know it can make money that's all I need I don't need it to work super quick right like I just need that Val validation um and then I can go out into the market and talk to talk to customers and make it better over time everything is built over time puff Count's been live for years but only the last or seven months have I really made decent Revenue per month it takes

time it takes commitment and you have to be willing to learn all right next question how does a day in the life look like for a mobile app builder like you I'm actually nomading I've been traveling for about months now I'm in Europe time so my day doesn't start till later in the afternoon like 1:00 p.

m. is when I start hopping on the phone and talking to people so I have my morning to myself make a coffee go to the gym get a workout in and then I'm in the zone to start you know building start talking to my team start taking sales calls whatever it is and I work till 8 p. m. sometimes much later depending on what's getting done and then you know on the weekends I have a chance to explore an entirely new city and new culture and meet new people and try new things so inspiration is a fleeting feeling and when you do feel inspired to build an app or build a new project or work super hard like you have to take advantage of it going back to why I kind of like decided to be a nomad and travel like it's so I can do more of that so when I had these moments of inspiration I wasn't distracted by anything I can lock in all right last question that we always ask if you could stand on young Steven's shoulders and give him some advice or advice for anyone who wants to make it in this online business world what advice would you give first of all it's not as hard as you think like you just have to be driven and you have to you know be willing to to work with people who have skill sets that you don't Outsource what you're bad at and build a team around you build a team that you trust treat your team well and again don't give up super early on the idea it takes months sometimes years for a project to take off relentlessly talk to users get feedback and iterate Based on data a huge mistake that I see first time mobile app Founders doing is like they're like hey I have this random idea for a feature in my app that I think I'm going to spend two months developing right before launching my MVP don't do that like go to market with something simple that you can afford get feedback from users and then build on top of it with your team all right stepen thank you so much for your time the businesses that you've built are amazing and thank you for coming on here and sharing it with everyone peace Brother yo guys I really hope you enjoyed the rest of the video and got some good takeaways from Stephen but I want to say something quick at the end of the day the point of these videos is to inspire you and show you that this is possible so that you can go start your own thing on your own while learning is important and will give you new ideas action is the thing that's actually going to move the needle forward and take you where you want to go so research learn find an idea and then go build that as fast as you can if you're still feeling a little loss right now click that first link in the description and you're going to get a free list of micro SAS business ideas so you can get going on your side project much love and I'll see you guys in the next one peace [Music]