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How I Generate \$1.2M/Year Working 5 Hours Per Week With Audio Online Courses



Graham Cochrane



Published: January 12th, 2020

ABOUT

BUSINESS

TOOLS

BOOKS

SAVE



Graham Cochrane

Founder, **The Recording Revolution LLC**

\$100K

REVENUE/MO



1

FOUNDERS

1

EMPLOYEES

Hello! Who are you and what business did you start?

My name is Graham Cochrane and I'm the founder of [Recording Revolution](#), an online education company that teaches musicians how to record and produce their music to a professional level in a bedroom or home studio.

I sell a variety of online courses and membership sites including [Mixing University](#), a complete system for turning your home recordings into "radio-ready" songs that sound like they came from a big recording studio.

Right now I'm generating about \$1.2M a year in revenue with virtually no ad spend and in working only 5 hours a week.



What's your backstory and how did you come up with the idea?

I started Recording Revolution back in 2009 as an accident.

I had just moved to Florida with my wife to help a friend start a church. I found a job at a financial startup, bought our first house and had our first baby. And then 5 months in I lost my job because the company I was working for ran out of money.

My background was in music. I grew up singing, playing guitar, and writing/performing songs. I also went to college for audio recording and had created a side income as a freelance audio engineer, producing albums for bands and artists.

When I lost my job I did my best to pick up work freelancing again, but I didn't have much of a network since moving to Florida. So I decided to start blogging about what projects I was working on in the studio in hopes I might drive some traffic and potential client leads.

“ Because generosity is attractive. It magnetizes you and draws people in.
A generous person and a generous business will always grab people's attention. So, be generous.

What ended up happening instead was I developed an audience around my blog and YouTube channel who wanted to know more about how to record and mix music themselves (rather than hire me).

They loved my content, and with each video and article that I released I build up more and more credibility in their eyes because they could put my material into action and see results.

The problem was, it didn't make any money. Plus we had to go on Food Stamps (government assistance) for an 18-month stretch because we were basically broke.



Take us through the process of designing, prototyping, and manufacturing your first product.

I needed to find a way to monetize my content. I considered ads but thought a more direct method would be to create a longer, more in-depth video training (as compared to my YouTube videos) and see if I could sell it to my people.

That first product was called “Pro Tools Boot Camp” and it was a 3+ hour training on the most popular audio software in the world, Pro Tools.

I screen recorded the videos, zipped them up in a folder, uploaded it to my \$5/mo GoDaddy server, and built a free sales page with iWeb (anyone remembers that?!) with a simple PayPal “Buy Now” button that linked to that zipped file.

I remember being on the other side of the country attending my grandfather’s funeral when later on that evening when checking email I saw a “You have payment” email from PayPal and it was my first sale of \$45!

That was a turning point for me as I realized someone was willing to pay for my video training!





Describe the process of launching the business.

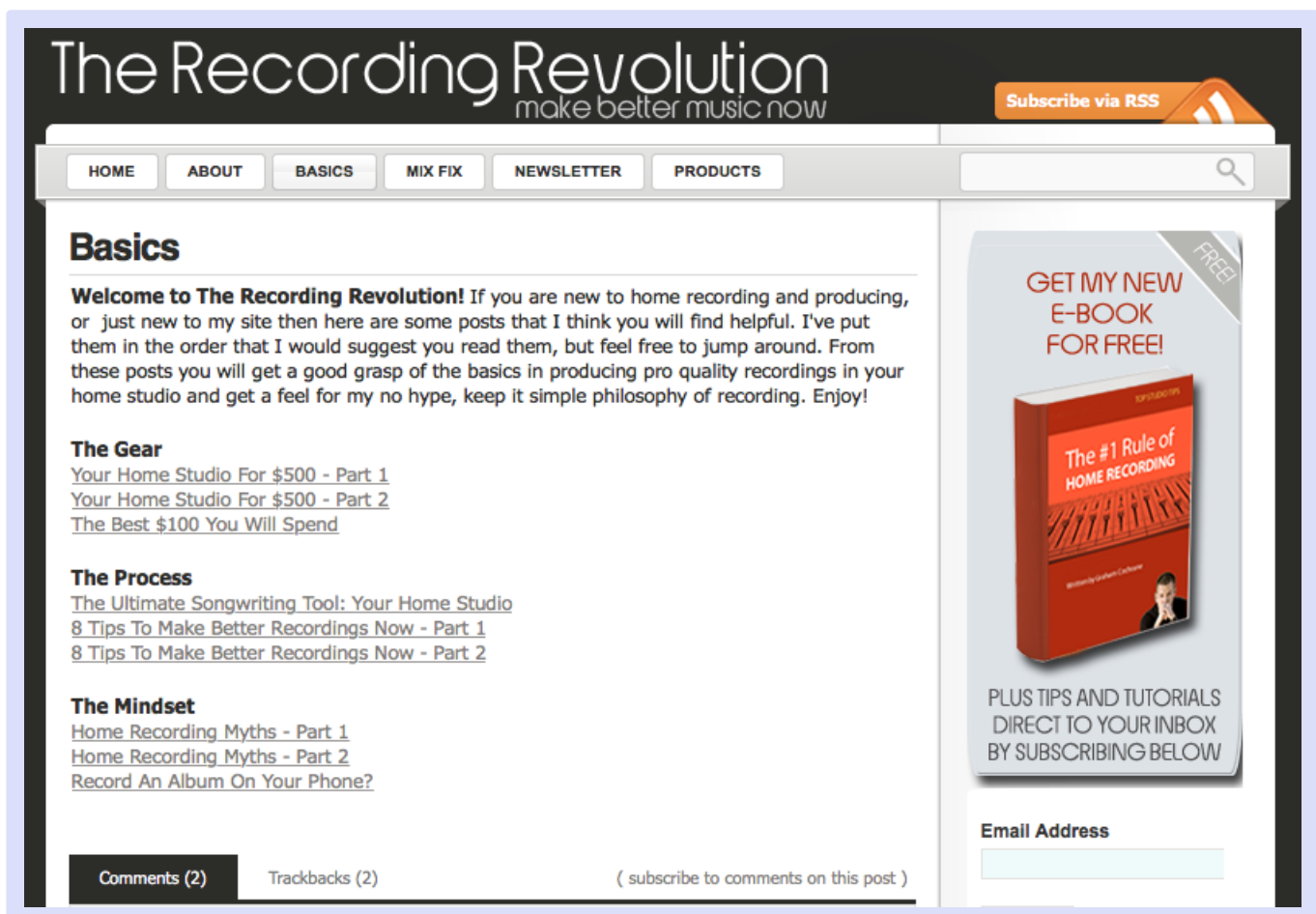
I didn't have a formal "launch" - I just figured it out as I went.

I started with a free WordPress theme and the economy hosting with GoDaddy for \$5/mo. No logo either.

Then I committed to blogging 2 times a week and posting one video to YouTube each week also. I was smart enough to focus on capturing email addresses and building a list from the start which gave me (and still to this day gives me) a curated group of warm leads to sell to.

Between hosting, a custom URL, and some basic screen capture software it cost me a whopping \$50 to start my business and build/launch my first product.

Granted my first launch was pretty sad, amounting to just a few hundred dollars. But it was a start and it validated that I was on to something.



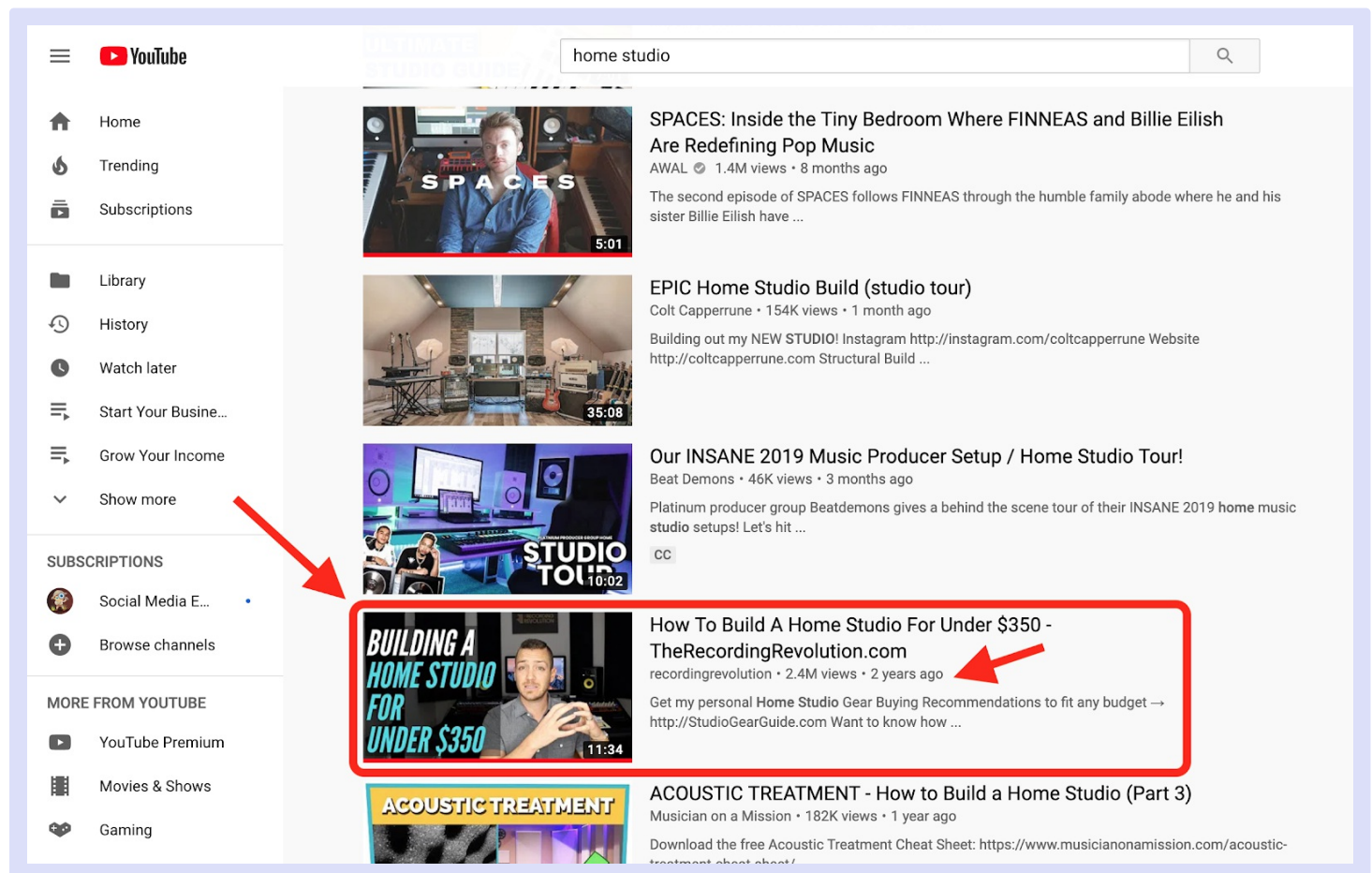
Since I only had two products, I needed to attract a lot of traffic to my site.

Since launch, what has worked to attract and retain customers?

My business growth strategy is stupidly simple. Content marketing, content marketing, and more content marketing.

What this means is that I focus on putting out new free content (articles and videos) every week that center around my niche and market. Content is the best SEO and allows me to show up on Google and YouTube searches. It gets me discovered.

For example, open up YouTube and type in the keywords “home studio” in the search bar and one of my most popular videos pops up in the first couple of results: “How To Build A Home Studio For Under \$350”. It has over 2.4 million views and continues to send people to my email list daily.



Now I'm not some SEO wizard, but I do know what “keywords” or buzz words are common in my niche and I try to make videos around those words or phrases.

I also use YouTube analytics tools to discover what keywords people tend to find my videos with and do more content on those words.

Then at the end (and sometimes beginning) of each video and post, I offer them something more valuable in exchange for their email address. Usually, it's a PDF cheat sheet or checklist or guide. We call this a “lead magnet” as it attracts leads to your email list.

Once on my list, they get put into an email funnel that offers even more free valuable training and promotes my products. This creates automated passive income each and every day.

How are you doing today and what does the future look like?

This type of business is insanely profitable because the costs are virtually zero. My biggest expenses beyond web hosting, email marketing, and my digital product delivery back end (I use Kajabi) are a few contractors that work for me. These include a part-time VA who handles customer service emails and posting of my content and in recent years a marketing manager who runs my promotions, launches, and helps write sales copy.

“ I’ve learned that I’m a bad delegator. I always want to do it all myself. But the moment I made my first part-time hire, things completely changed. I gained back a lot of my time and sanity.

My YouTube channel has over 500,000 subscribers. My email list is just over 250,000 strong (after recently cleansing 100,000 people), and my customer base is over 20,000 strong.

The great thing is that as revenue has grown over the past 10 years from a few thousand dollars a year, to averaging over \$1.2 million a year, my work hours have dropped significantly. I used to work 32 hours a week (I always take Fridays off). Now it only takes me 5 hours a week to run my business. Thanks in large part to eliminating much of what’s unnecessary (thank you Tim Ferriss!), the automated nature of selling digital products, and making a few part-time hires.

All that extra time has allowed me to start a second business aimed at helping people build and grow their OWN online business with automatic income. I have a weekly video podcast at GrahamCochrane.com where I dive deep into how I run my business the Recording Revolution and what’s working now in the industry. It’s a lot of fun!

Through starting the business, have you learned anything particularly helpful or advantageous?

I’ve learned a lot over the years - mostly about myself. I’ve learned that I’m a bad delegator. I always want to do it all myself. But the moment I made my first part-time hire (my VA) things completely changed. I gained back so much of my time and sanity that it helped me focus on creating more content and products - and the business grew.

I’ve also learned to keep things simple and keep my costs low. Content marketing and direct sales via email is such a powerful and simple method but it can be tempting to try and “do all the things” like you see everyone else doing. But I’ve learned to stay in my lane and focus on slow but steady growth rather than explosive and inconsistent growth.

Too many of my peers have tried to focus on launching new things all the time and didn’t commit to the content strategy. They made money for a while, but then their biggest and best source of leads dried up and their businesses floundered.

My relentless commitment to content on YouTube and elsewhere has helped me have a predictable stable income for years.

What platform/tools do you use for your business?

My absolute favorite tool for both of my businesses is Kajabi. It is THE best platform for selling digital products (courses, memberships) on the planet.

digital products (e.g., e-books, memberships) on the planet.

It's so complete of a platform that I've moved my entire Graham Cochrane website and email marketing over to it.

Other tools I've used are [ConvertKit](#), [Mailchimp](#), and [Wordpress](#).

What have been the most influential books, podcasts, or other resources?

Two books that have been game-changing for my business are:

[The Go-Giver](#) (Bob Burg and John David Mann) and [The 4-Hour Work Week](#) (Tim Ferriss)

The Go-Giver is how I run my business. The big idea is simple: the more you give, the more value you offer for free, the more attractive people will be to you and your brand and you will grow. It's counterintuitive but I've seen it work time and time again.

The 4 Hour Work Week is a convicting read because it challenges you to stop just doing "work for work's sake" or just working to make a lot of money. It encourages you to build a business that serves your life, not the other way around.

Advice for other entrepreneurs who want to get started or are just starting out?

This might sound strange, but I personally believe that the biggest key to my business's growth, beyond the grace of God, has been my commitment to generosity as my primary strategy.

When you have an abundance mentality when generosity is your core belief...everybody wins!

One of my favorite bible verses is...

"One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want...Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered." - **Proverbs 11:24-25 (ESV)**

And in this age of digital content and social media, this verse becomes even more relevant. Why?

Because generosity is attractive. It magnetizes you and draws people in. A generous person and a generous business will always grab people's attention.

And attention is the first step to business growth.

So - be generous.

Be generous by giving away free content every week. Be generous by overdelivering to your clients and customers. Be generous by giving a percentage of your profits away to charity each month. And even be generous with your competitors. Show them respect and honor them in your space.


And then watch what happens.

Where can we go to learn more?


- [RecordingRevolution.com](#)
- [GrahamCochrane.com](#)
- [Instagram](#)

If you have any questions or comments, drop a comment below!

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Graham Cochrane, Founder of The Recording Revolution LLC



Pat Walls, Founder of Starter Story

Want to find more ideas that make money?

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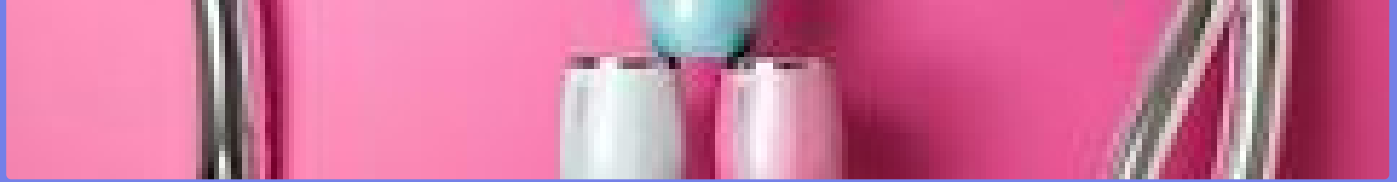
You'll realize these people are just like you - and that, deep down, you can do it too.



Dylan

I Grew A Drinkware Brand To \$1.1M/Month At 23 Years Old





Drinkware brand

\$12M / month



Chris

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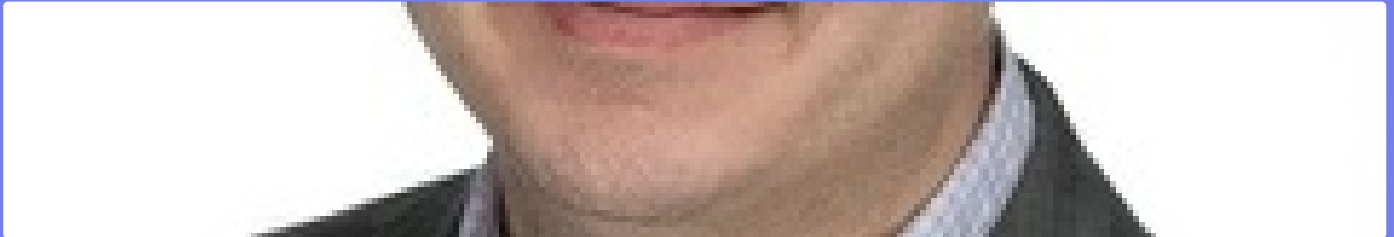
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Matt

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Michael

Michael
\$1.08M/YEAR



Scott

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Chad

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Garrett

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Resources to keep you building



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Sam Parr

My First Million

I love this website.



Rand Fishkin

Moz / SparkToro

Love Starter Story's transparency.



Johne Vang

Be The Match

You can't find this information anywhere else.



Trent Baren

Instagram

So much valuable information.





Bilal Budhani

Entrepreneur

I was hooked on Starter Story as soon as I discovered it. Resonated with me right off the bat.



Jenn Leach

Millennial Nextdoor

I made over \$5,000 from my Starter Story membership in a week!



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