How I Started A $5.5K/Month Zapier Specialist Agency

Andrew Davison

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SAVE

Andrew Davison

Founder, **Luhhu**

$5.5K
REVENUE/MO

1
FOUNDERS

0
EMPLOYEES

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

My name is Andrew Davison and I'm the founder of **Luhhu**, an agency I built as a result of accidentally stumbling into a freelance career as a Zapier expert. We help businesses of all types and sizes automate their processes using Zapier.

A job well done for us is a client that ends up saving a significant chunk of time each day on the boring stuff that comes with running a business.

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

I've had quite a varied background up until this point. I started a web design business while studying computer science at university before dropping out in my last year and heading to London - bored of learning and wanting to make money.

After an internship at one design company and a sales job at two others, I finally burned out, traveled Asia and then landed in Budapest, Hungary and never ended up leaving. After a quickly abandoned attempt at teaching English, I pivoted to building an online marketplace that helped language teachers find students - and it's through that I learned to use Zapier - a very fortuitous decision in hindsight.

Fast forward two more years, that business was doing OK and I was onto another side hustle as a writer for various ex-pat websites. In need of more work, I tried to join Upwork, only to be rejected because they were swamped with writers.

They offered me the change to apply again if I had any other skills, so on a whim, I decided to offer myself as a Zapier freelancer. That was November 2017 and within 12 hours I had my first piece of work making $20/hour - much more than writing.

Timesheet Detail

Click on any day's hours to view the Work Diary

Client	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total Hours	Rate	Amount Billed
Blake Mooser – Detail							00:40	00:40	$20.00	$13.33
TOTAL							00:40	00:40		$13.33

First timesheet entry as freelancer

2018 was a blur, my other projects all fell away and I found myself working full-time building zaps for clients. By the end of the year, my rates had quadrupled, I was a lot more confident using Zapier and was ready to take things further.

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

The thing stopping me from growing was a lack of hours in the day and the thing holding back my income was relying on a platform I had to give 20% to for work. Having worked for a few, I knew creating an agency was the natural solution.

The legal and admin stuff was straightforward and Luhhu was founded one evening in December 2018. Why Luhhu? Well, because it was a two-syllable word that was easy to say - and there was a .com available!

> One very smart decision I made was to get certified by Zapier before I founded the agency. Their expert's directory has been a huge source of clients.

I couldn't wait for Christmas to be over so I could get to work.

The transition itself was a careful and gradual process. I kept working through Upwork as normal while I got the pieces of the agency in place. A bank account, as well as Stripe, PayPal and Transferwise account so clients could pay me, and Xero so I could do all the bookkeeping

without needing to hire someone.

When I first got started I used **Carrd** to build a really basic one-page website - but I was never happy with the design. The final piece of the puzzle was a website built on **Webflow** built for about £2,000 by someone hired from Upwork.
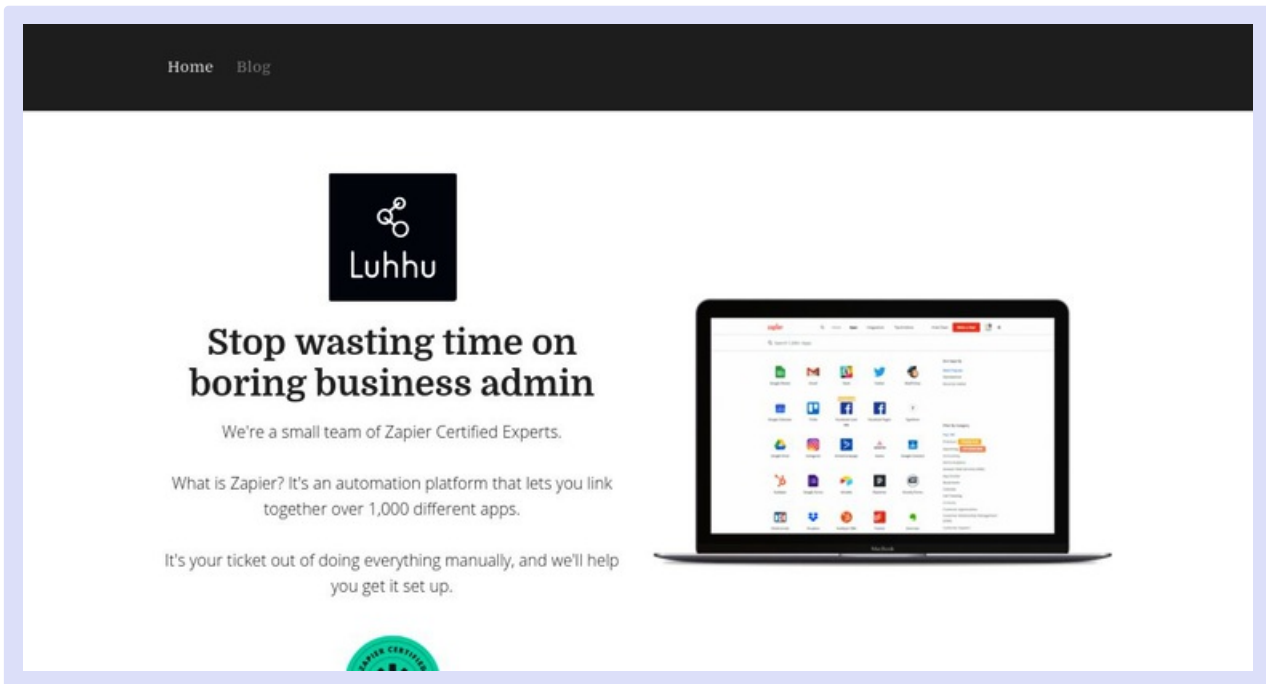
The first website

Describe the process of launching the business.

There was no launch strategy, it was just a slow transition from "Andrew Davison the Zapier freelancer on Upwork" to "Luhhu - Zapier Certified Experts" and a conscious effort to get new clients from the 'wild'.

Early in 2019, I'd become a Certified Zapier Expert and I was able to leverage this on my website and social media profiles. I took this a step further by getting very involved on Twitter, and the newly launched Zapier community forum, answering questions and sharing advice and resources as widely as I could. It was an effort in building mine and Luhhu's brand as much as it was an effort to win clients.

Became a Zapier expert

I also put a lot of thought into how to position Luhhu in the market. Whereas most other agencies used Zapier as an extension to their work on other platforms - or targetted enterprise

clients on long term retainers, I decided to make Luhhu the one-stop-shop for people that needed help with their Zapier setup or had operational problems Zapier would be good at solving.

**embed:tweet** *Example tweet - how we position ourselves*

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

Aside from my brand-building efforts on social media I've invested heavily in SEO with the intention of placing high on Google for both general searches for a Zapier expert as well as for those seeking solutions to specific issues. Having built thousands of zaps, I've got plenty to write about here and I've spent the first few months of 2020 trying to develop a workable content production strategy to both get it out there, and get it out in a format that people will find, use and will trigger them to consider working with Luhhu for extra support.

In terms of inquiries, we get anywhere between 1 and 3 per day, with most of these coming from organic search and through referrals from the Zapier Experts Directory. As one of the few experts based in the UK, we have the advantage of picking up most of the clients from there.

Given that we operate a one-stop-shop model, most of our clients come to us with a specific problem that requires anywhere between 2 to 10 hours to solve. We bill by the hour, and while we do have retainers with a few longer-term clients we operate mostly pay as you go.

This does present a challenge as we're constantly spending time onboarding new clients which do have an inevitable resource cost and we've begun experimenting with slightly reduced hourly costs for clients willing to commit to a certain number of hours of work per month. This has the added benefit of helping me anticipate workload for the growing team of contractors I work with on projects.
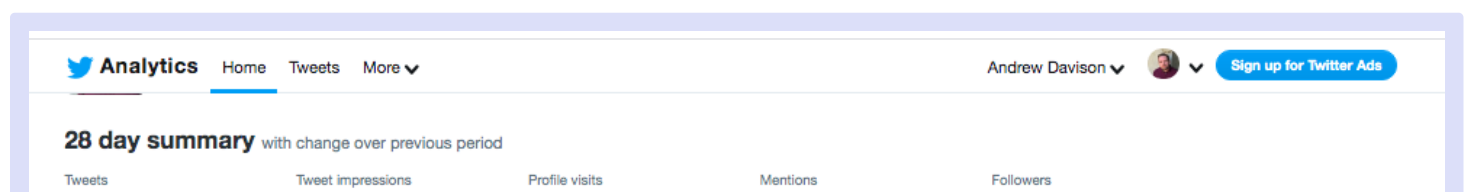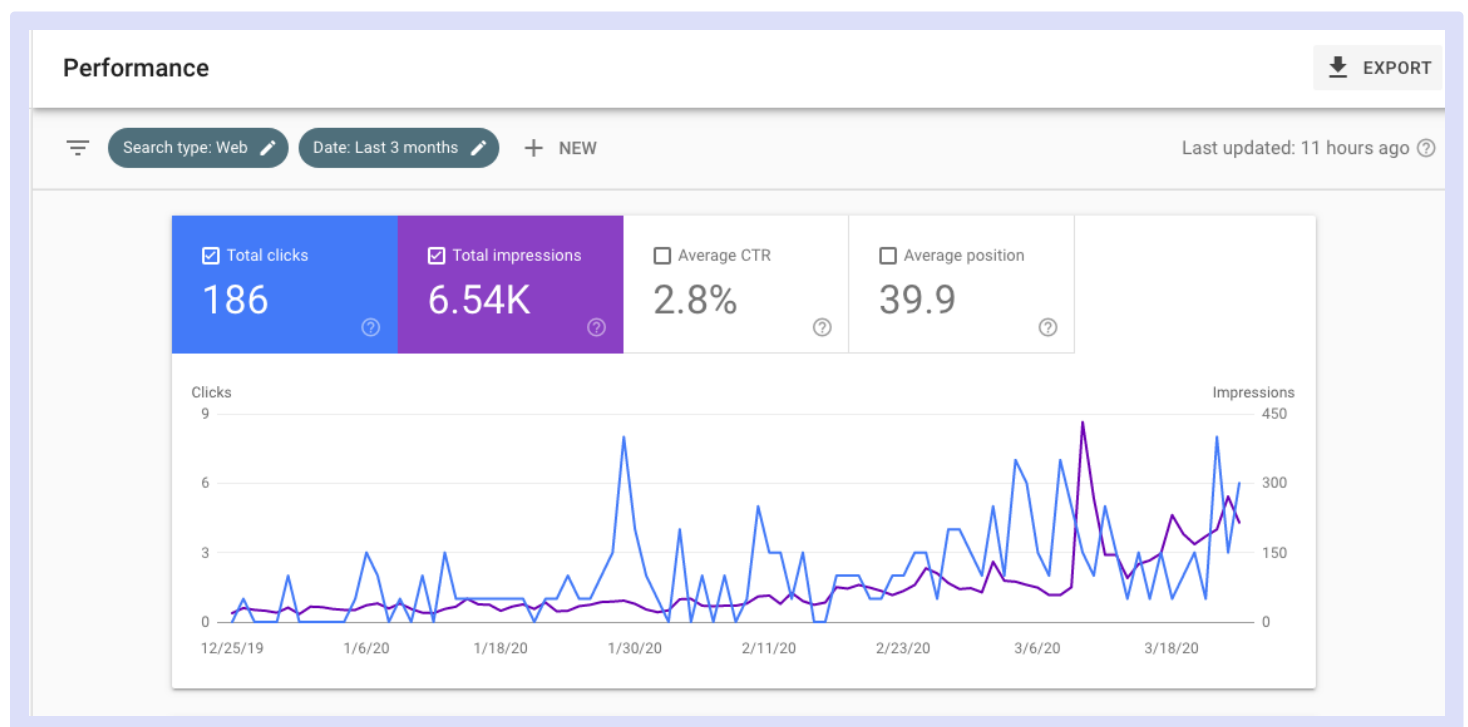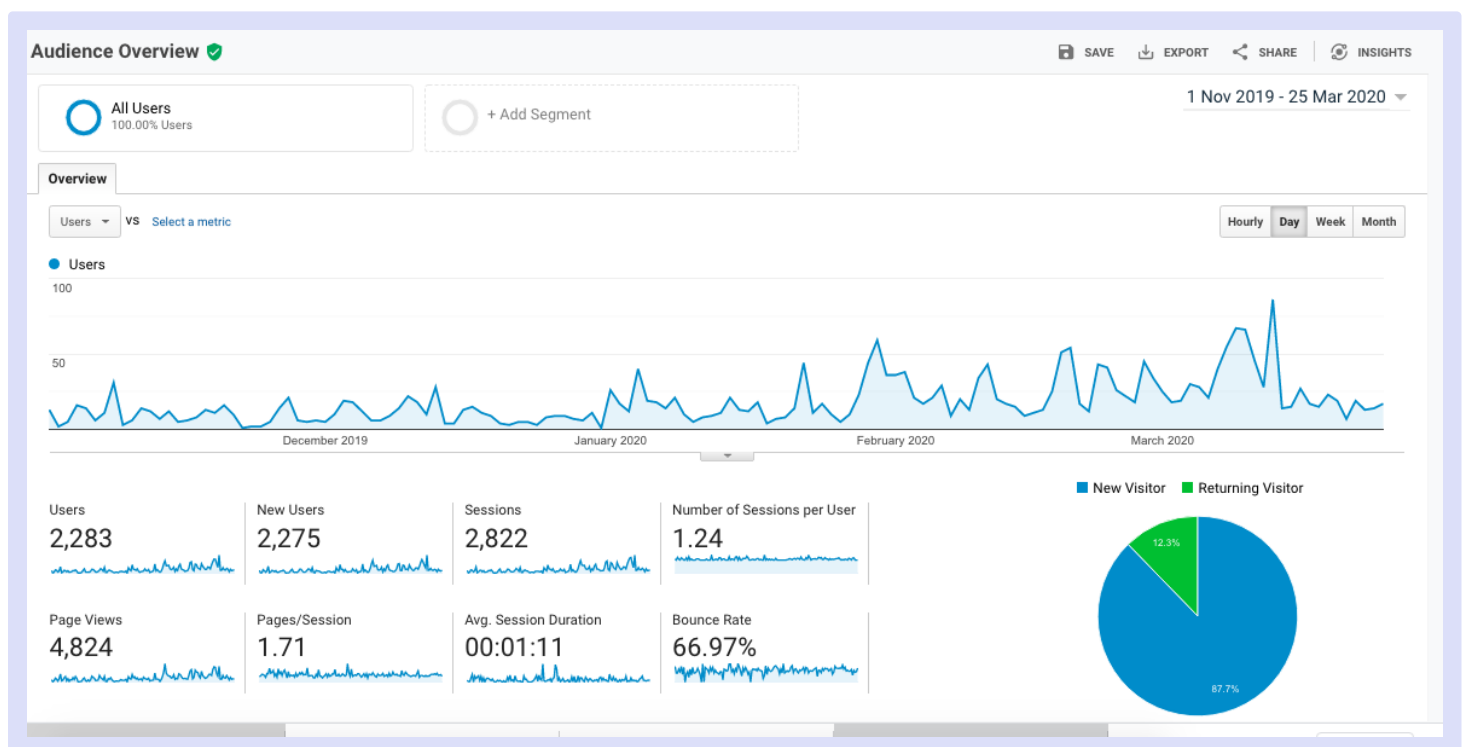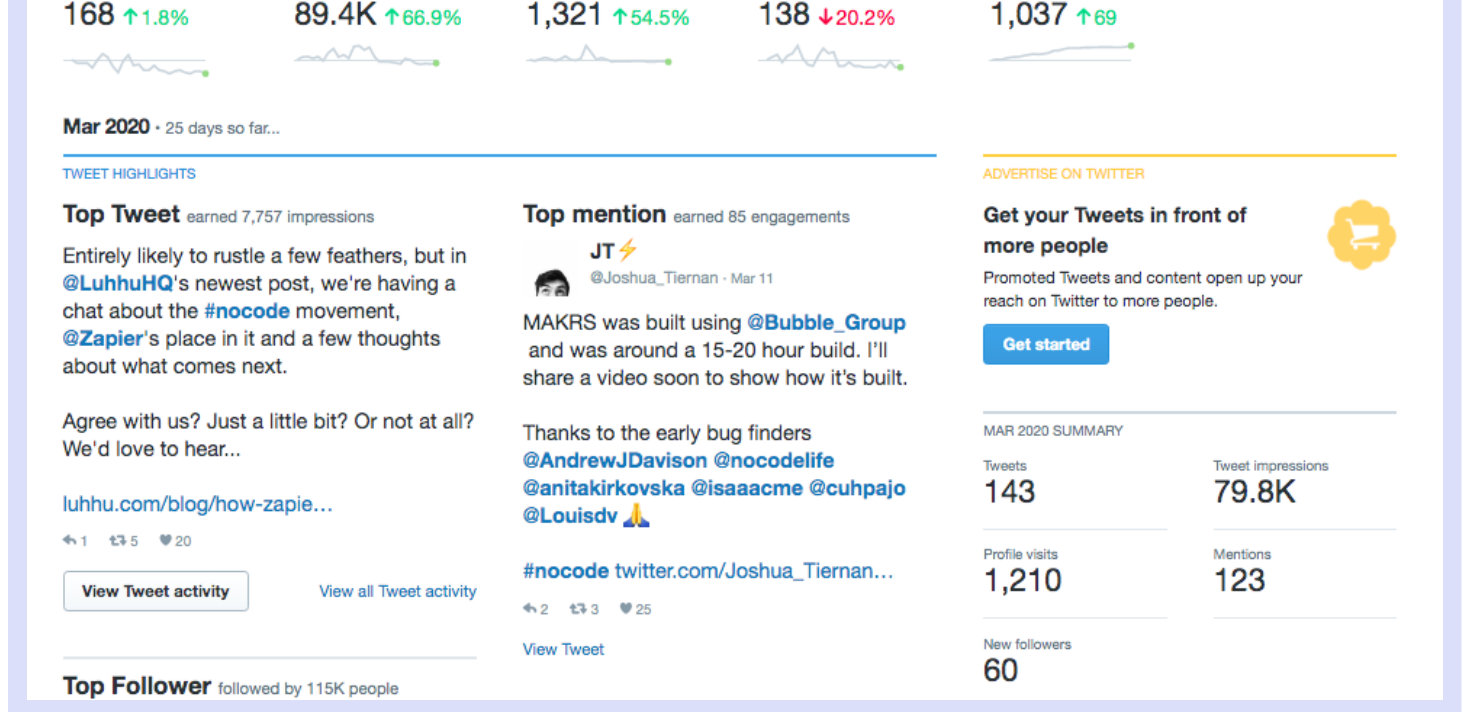
> 66 If you find a problem, create a solution and convince someone to pay you money for that - then you're essentially an entrepreneur.

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

We're profitable and have been since the first day of business. Our fixed running costs are low (< $500/month) and everyone works on the team as contractors so I can directly bill clients for production costs. In terms of salary, I pay myself very comfortably.

Up until mid-Mark 2020 was looking like a high growth year, however, Coronavirus will no doubt slow things. As much as a strong argument can be made for automation in a time of reduced earnings and less staffing, I expect many clients will move non-essential Zapier development work to the bottom of their todo list.

Thankfully, the business can comfortably weather a few months of slow business and I fully

intend to invest the time in content production for the blog and our Youtube channel and into developing a format for the new "This Week in Zapier" newsletter I have planned.

embed:tweet *Launching newsletter*

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

One very smart decision I made was to get certified by Zapier before I founded the agency. Their expert's directory has been a huge source of clients.

I have a wandering eye when it comes to new marketing ideas, tools, platforms and trends - and I'm constantly getting ideas for side hustles and sub-services. I love the internal processing of running ideas in my head - but I've needed to learn some discipline and not let myself spend too much time getting distracted from what's important - winning new clients and making progressive improvements to my agency's infrastructure.

To help with that I've built an Airtable to help keep me in check. At its core, it's a todo list, with tasks grouped into 'projects' - a project being anything from a new section of the website, a marketing idea I want to explore or a product idea I want to evaluate.

Within each project, I try and keep no more than a handful of active tasks and I order them by priority.

Project board

What platform/tools do you use for your business?

Zapier - I spend more hours of my day inside Zapier than any other website. Aside from working inside the client's accounts, we have dozens of zaps set up to automate Luhhu's processes.

Airtable - Our whole business is powered by Airtable. Amongst other things, we have a highly customized CRM and project management system built-in there and I recently extended it to include a system for creating and tracking assignments to contractors. At any given time, I can jump in and see the state of progress on any one of the dozens of projects we might be working on at a given time.

Buffer - As we've increased our social media and blog output, I've become reliant on Buffer to make things run smoothly. When a new blog post is created, the link and title get added by Zapier to an Airtable - from there I customize a short description then send it out to Buffer to syndicate via Twitter and LinkedIn.

Slack - Like most businesses with more than one person, we use Slack. All contractors have their own channel and when a project is assigned via Airtable a threaded conversation is started to discuss it in. I've also set up private channels I can drop links in which get added to an Airtable I have setup with content ideas.

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

It's been a very long time since I've read a book and I've yet to find a podcast that's hooked me. But journalism - that's another story (excuse the pun, I guess). I find I learn most as an entrepreneur by reading about business, politics, history, art and culture, and the stories of places and people. It's a mental exercise for me to take experiences and problems outside my area of business and see how they might apply.

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

Boiled right down, if you find a problem, create a solution and convince someone to pay you money for that - then you're essentially an entrepreneur. Go do those things and you've taken your first step. And know that most people never do, so that's an achievement in itself.

Everything past that is mastery. Testing whether more than one person wants to pay you, finding a way to produce your product or service at scale, and building the infrastructure to support it. Those things are a constant journey because the world is constantly changing. Stay adaptable, open-minded and jump on any chance you can to learn a new skill that you can apply to improve your business.

Are you looking to hire for certain positions right now?

Everyone on the team is contractors working wherever in the world they want on flexible schedules. If you've got experience and talent with Zapier and think you could put it to use solving real problems for clients, then please send me an email at **andrew@luhhu.com** and we'll chat.

Where can we go to learn more?

- **Website**
- **Twitter**
- **Linkedin**
- **Youtube**
- **Upwork**
- **Email**

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

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Andrew Davison, Founder of Luhhu

Luhhu has provided an update on their business!

About 2 years ago, we followed up with Luhhu to see **how they've been doing** since we published this article.
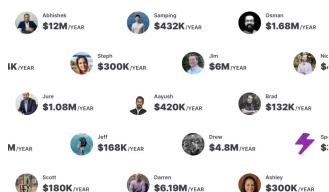
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Abhishek $12M/YEAR   Samping $432K/YEAR   Osman $1.68M/YEAR

1K/YEAR   Steph $300K/YEAR   Jim $6M/YEAR   Nic $.

Jure $1.08M/YEAR   Aayush $420K/YEAR   Brad $132K/YEAR

M/YEAR   Jeff $168K/YEAR   Drew $4.8M/YEAR   Sp $:

Scott $180K/YEAR   Darren $6.19M/YEAR   Ashley $300K/YEAR

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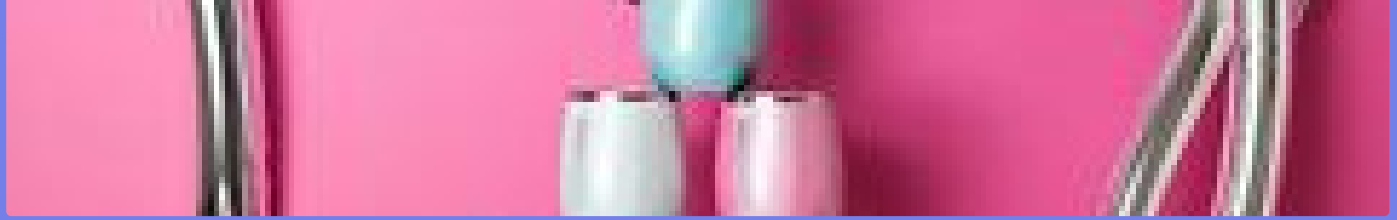> **How did you come up with the idea? How did you find your first 10 customers? How much money are you making?**

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○ **Dylan**

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

Drinkware brand

$12M / month

Chris

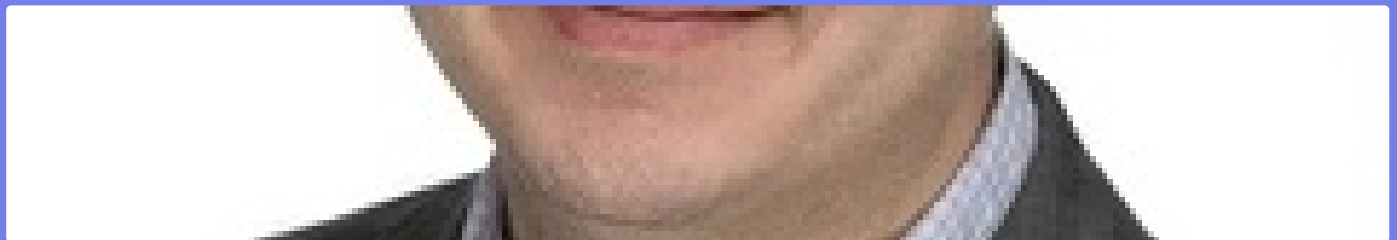## How I Started An SEO Agency For Lawyers Generating $3.6M/Year

Seo agency

$10M / month

Matt

How I Started An $8M/Year Stock Market Research Website

Finance blog

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Michael

$1.08M/YEAR

Scott

$300K/YEAR

Chad

$1.2M/YEAR

Garrett

$300K/YEAR

Resources to keep you building

Building a bus___ ___ is not a game of luck.

Abhishek

$12M/YEAR

It's about taking action every day.
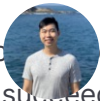
You'll get acc___ courses, frameworks, weekly live events, alongside a group of people that genuinely want you to succeed.

Samping

$432K/YEAR

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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

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Jenn Leach
Millennial Nextdoor

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

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Starter Story

Jamie
$1.62M/YEAR

Michael
$1.2M/YEAR

Michael
$3.6M/YEAR

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