How I Built A $60K/Month Language Tutoring Platform With No Coding Skills

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SAVE
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Alex Redfern

Founder, **Lingoci**

$120K

REVENUE/MO
ⓘ

1

FOUNDERS

0

EMPLOYEES

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

Hi, I'm Alex & I'm the Founder of **Lingoci.com**, a platform for online language tutoring. We have students and tutors all over the world, connecting via our website and communicating via Skype and Zoom. Currently, 7 languages are available: Spanish, French, German, Swedish, Italian, Dutch and Japanese.

I launched the website with $300 in January 2017 and it now does around $60,000/month in revenue.

lingoci   LANGUAGES   FREE TRIAL   REVIEWS   PRICING   FAQS   ABOUT US & CONTACT   📅 BOOK LESSONS

Select a language to learn:

SPANISH   FRENCH   GERMAN   ITALIAN   JAPANESE   SWEDISH   DUTCH

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

Back in 2016, I was working in a digital marketing agency in London. It was a nice place to work, but I wasn't feeling challenged enough and I'd always been attracted to entrepreneurship. Not because I dreamt of making millions, but I felt that being an entrepreneur would allow me to test myself in multiple ways and have a bigger impact.

At the same time, I was taking Swedish lessons with a superb tutor called Isabella. I was learning online and loved the convenience of being able to book lessons at times that suited me, as well as being able to learn from home. The main downside of the site I was using was that the quality of tutors was highly variable. I didn't find Isabella immediately.

After a couple of months of lessons, the idea hit me: could I create a similar site to the one I was using, but recruit the tutors carefully so that the student experience would be better?

Describe the process of launching the business.

I decided to start very niche, setting up a site specifically for Swedish, a less competitive language on Google. I spoke to my Swedish teacher as well as a couple of others. As freelancers, they had big gaps in their timetables, so they were happy to give my site a try.

I can't code, so I built the site using a WordPress theme and a third party booking software. I customized the booking system to meet the needs of tutors & students, and using Zapier, integrated it with email software and automated SMS software. Finally, I customized the design so that it would fit with the rest of the site. The end result was a set of features that almost matched competitors who had invested many thousands of dollars into their tech.

Whilst I had 0 coding skills, I did have one big advantage: in my job, I was managing big Google search advertising campaigns, so I was able to set up efficient campaigns right off the bat.

The Swedish site was profitable immediately, so I then went through exactly the same process for Spanish tutoring. Whilst the advertising costs were higher, it was still profitable and the market was a lot larger. I quit my job and in January 2017, I launched Lingoci so that multiple languages could fit under one brand. I started by adding **French tutoring** and have expanded into other languages gradually over time.

Choose A Tutor Below

Lingoci tutors are handpicked to ensure a high standard of teaching; they currently have an average rating of over 4.5 out of 5 on an independent review website. Whichever tutor you pick, you can be assured that they will be experienced, friendly & reliable.

AMALIA   CAMILA   ALFREDO   OLIVIA   MARIA FELIX   DANITZA   NATALIA   DAVID   CLARA   VERONICA   PAUL   FERNANDA   MICHELLE   PEDRO   BRYAN   GEMMA   GALA   MARISOL   JEANINE   LUCIANA   ANY AVAILABLE   MATCH ME

From: Mexico; **Suitable for:** All level, ages & learning needs; **Typical Availability:** Every day except Sunday.

Click here to watch my intro video ⏵

See My Availability / Book With Me

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

Search advertising is our most important acquisition channel. Most people who hire a private tutor do so for a practical reason, such as needing to pass an exam or integrate into a new country. With search ads, we can get in front of these motivated people right when they're looking for a tutor. In contrast, Instagram and Facebook ads require you to interrupt users and convince them to take lessons. This is tricky, in part because tutoring isn't an impulse purchase.

Of course, search advertising isn't cheap. Thus, maximizing the 'lifetime value' of students is essential. We gather feedback on reviews.io, and this shows why students often stick around for a long time: terrific tutors, an intuitive booking process, and prompt, clear communication from support when issues arise.

Aside from Google Ads, we also get a lot of referrals. When students' expectations are exceeded, they tend to recommend Lingoci to friends and family, and we give them a free lesson for doing so.

Recently, we've started investing in content marketing and search engine optimization. The language industry has many big, established players, so returns from these channels don't come overnight. But we have had some success, for example, two articles I wrote on **language learning** went viral on Medium and now rank at the top of Google.

One advantage we have is that our data from Google Ads can inform what we prioritize for SEO. We know for example that terms containing the word 'Skype' convert well. So we have targeted landing pages for terms like: **Spanish lessons on Skype**, **French Skype lessons**, etc. And since Zoom has grown in popularity, we've started replicating the process for Zoom, targeting phrases like **Spanish lessons on Zoom**, **Zoom French tutors**, **Zoom German classes**, etc. It's simple, but it works. Just remember that if you create landing pages to increase your chances

of ranking, the user experience must still come first.

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

Students and tutors are generally very happy with Lingoci. This is reflected in high retention rates. And it has translated into a business that is financially healthy - over 3 years, we've grown steadily to around $60k/month, whilst staying profitable throughout. Profit is a fairly small percentage of revenue after all the costs - tutors, advertising, software, payment fees, etc. I expect further growth will come through optimizing our acquisition channels and continuing to attract talented tutors.

Lingoci is a fully remote business so I've been able to spend the last few years living in various countries around the world. Through automation and finding great people, I've also extracted myself from the day-to-day running of the business.

Accounting is outsourced & I have a super virtual assistant from Germany who deals with most of the support emails. The idea of the '4-hour workweek', popularised by Tim Ferriss, sounds appealing. But after a short time, you end up feeling like an unemployed person and needing a new challenge. So I've recently collaborated with a software developer in the US to build a new **language tutoring** platform that uses its own tech and is more scalable.

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

Pay attention to the small details. The business has been a success because in every area – recruitment, advertising, user experience, conversion rate optimization, you name it – we have followed the Japanese philosophy of 'Kaizen': continuous improvement.

As an entrepreneur, you lack structure and don't have a manager assigning you tasks. So it's essential to regularly take a step back to think about the big picture and work out what to prioritize. This must be based on what's most important to the business, not what you feel like doing.

What platform/tools do you use for your business?

- Acuity Scheduling – booking system.
- Twilio – SMS reminders.
- Zapier – linking apps together.
- TransferWise – sending tutor earnings.

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

When I was at uni, I read a lot of business books, but since then I've preferred podcasts because they tend to be more practical and you don't have to sit there for hours to get the key points. I'd recommend the following books:

- **Influence – The Psychology of Persuasion** – by Robert Cialdini.

- **The Real Deal – an autobiography by British entrepreneur** - by James Caan.

And podcasts:

- **Startups For The Rest Of Us** – a treasure trove of wisdom on running an online business, mostly relevant to SaaS.
- **Indie Hackers** – interviews with founders who have bootstrapped their way to success.
- **The Side Hustle Show** – has some great advice if you're looking to start an online business.

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

For the idea generation stage, you might want to check out an article I wrote covering **how to come up with good business ideas**. Once you've done that, make sure you properly **validate your idea** before you invest lots of time and money.

Aside from that, the best way to learn about business is to be in business. You can only learn so much by reading.
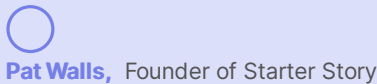
Where can we go to learn more?

Website

LinkedIn

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

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Alex Redfern, Founder of Lingoci
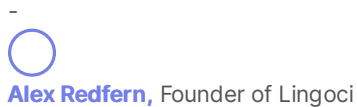
Lingoci has provided an update on their business!

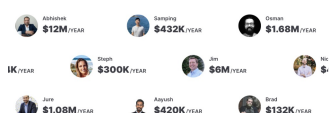About 2 years ago, we followed up with Lingoci to see **how they've been doing** since we published this article.

You might also like:

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Pat Walls
5 Ways To Create A Product Prototype [With Exam...
Pat Walls
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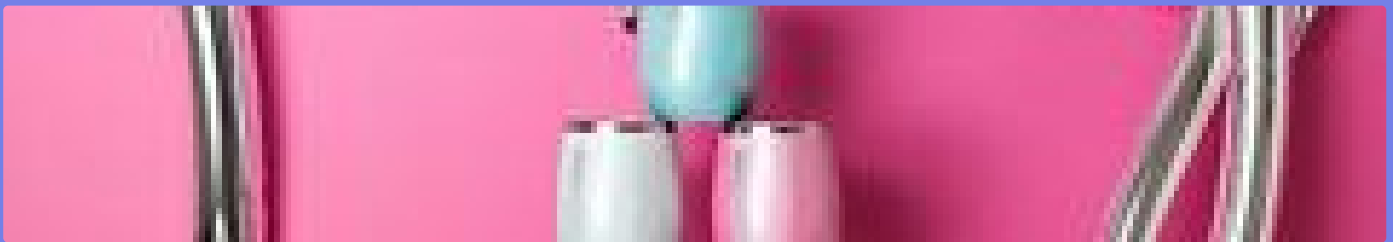
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○
Dylan
I Grew A Drinkware Brand To $1.1M/Month At 23 Years Old

Drinkware brand
$12M / month

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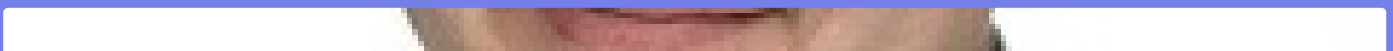## How I Started An SEO Agency For Lawyers Generating $3.6M/Year

Seo agency
$10M / month

○
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Building a business is lonely. And it's easy to feel stuck.

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Michael
$1.08M /YEAR

Scott
$300K /YEAR

Chad
$1.2M /YEAR

Garrett
$300K /YEAR

Resources to keep you building

Abhishek
$12M /YEAR

Building a business is not a game of luck.

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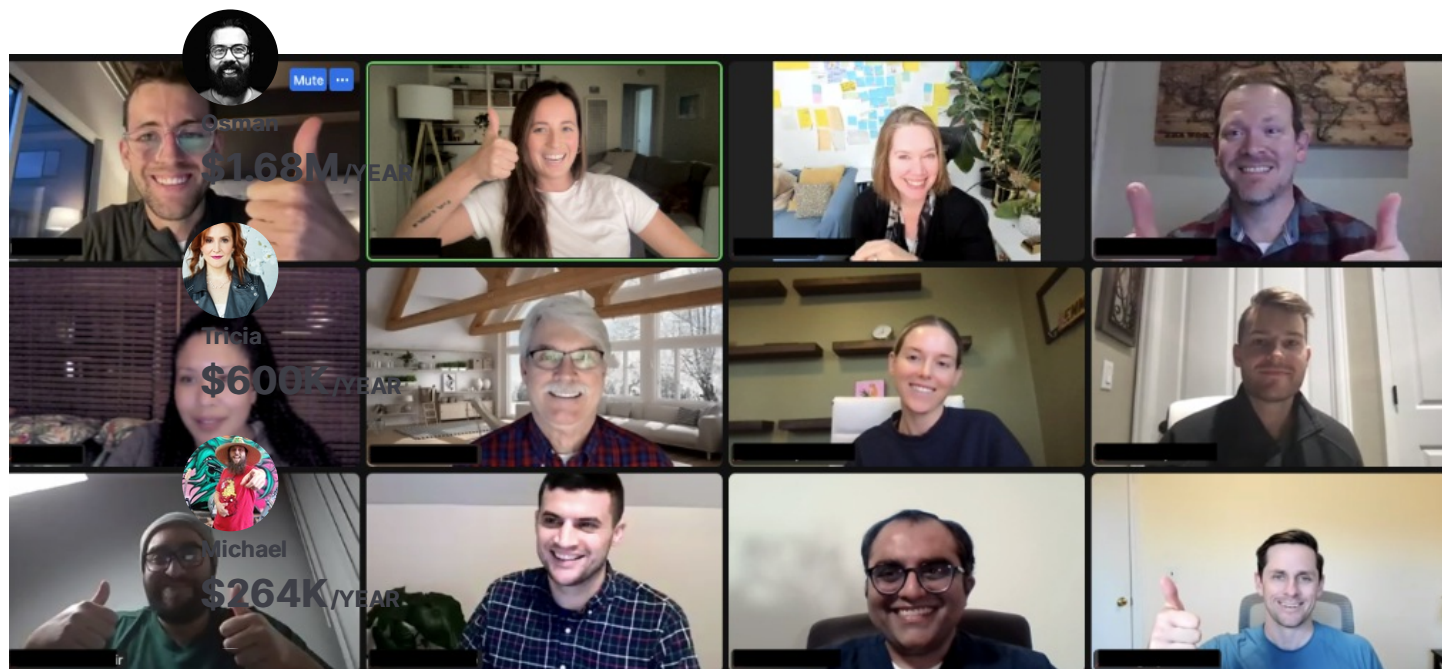
You'll get access to courses, frameworks, weekly live events, alongside a group of people that genuinely want you to succeed.

Samping

$432K/YEAR

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Tricia
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I love this website.

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Moz / SparkToro

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Johne Vang
Be The Match

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Trent Baren
Instagram

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Bilal Budhani
Entrepreneur

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

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$1.62M /YEAR

Michael

$1.2M /YEAR

Michael

$3.6M /YEAR

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