

ONLINE COURSE CREATORS MANUAL

4 Steps to Building and Selling
Your First Online Course



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INTRODUCTION

Before you read further, I want you to do something...

Are you game?

Ok, good 😊

Thing #1: Raise your right hand.

Thing #2: Say this out loud...

I.

Promise.

Never to build a product.

Without first validating that people will actually pay me money for said product.



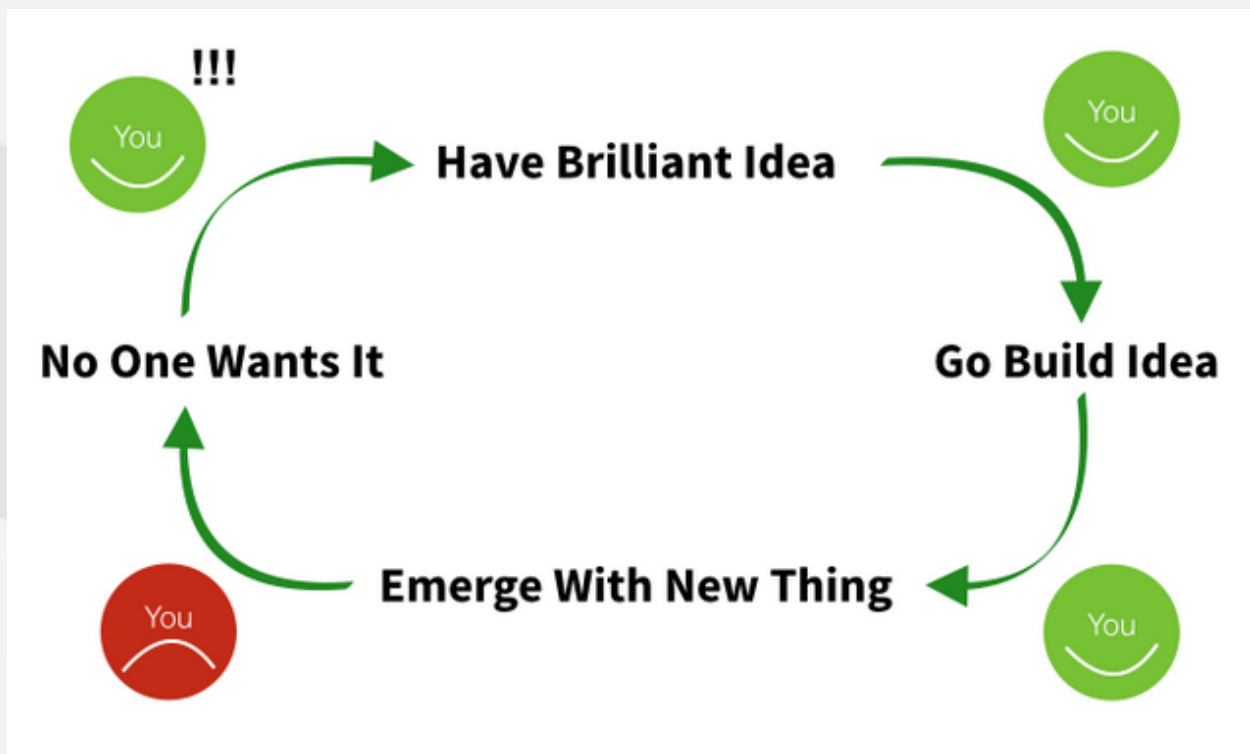
There are countless variables involved in creating and launching a product. This makes it highly unlikely that every product you create will be a smash hit.

BUT!

There is ZERO excuse for creating a product that falls flat on its face.

I've done that so many times I've lost count.

iPhone apps, courses, brick-and-mortar businesses... you name it, I've probably had the idea, tried the idea and completely failed at it.



If you repeat that mistake at any time in the future, that's on you.

If you follow the first two phases of the course-creation process I've outlined in this post, your chances of creating a complete failure of a product evaporate.

Now let's talk about making the actual course.

First, I'll show you how I created the Get 10,000 Subscribers course and then I'll give you a few options for creating yours.

STEP 1: DECIDE WHAT FORMAT OF COURSE YOU WANT TO CREATE. (THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT TYPES.)

THE REFERENCE COURSE

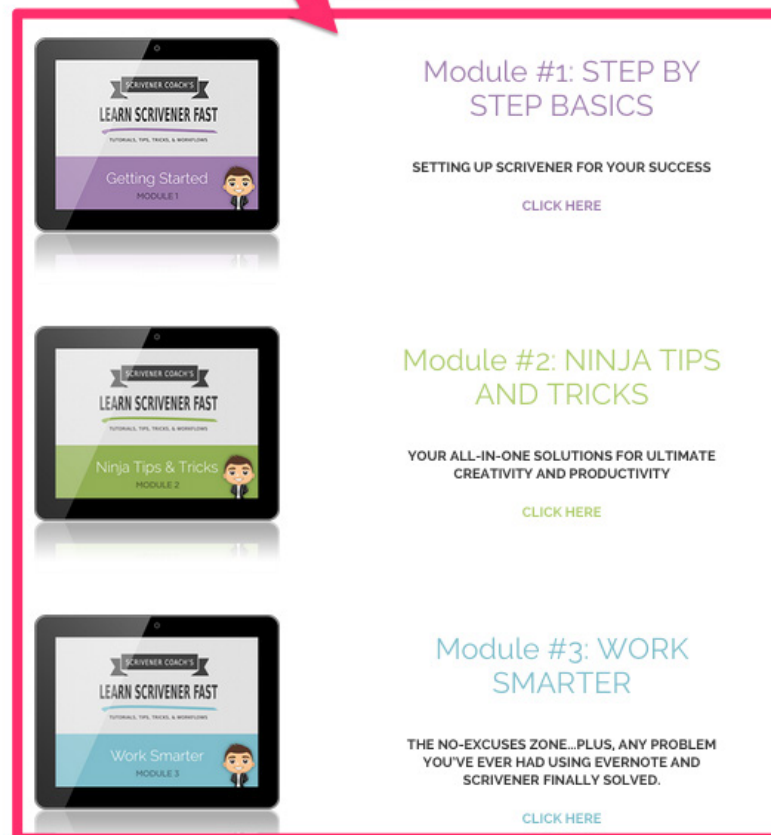
A reference course allows students to jump around. Your students can pick and choose what content they consume and the order they consume it in.

The vast majority of online courses follow this model.

They are open-ended. Some are built to take you from Point A to Point B, but they don't force you down a specific path.

My friend Joe has a reference course called [Learn Scrivener Fast](#).

Pick the module you want to start with



Module #1: STEP BY STEP BASICS

SETTING UP SCRIVENER FOR YOUR SUCCESS

[CLICK HERE](#)

Module #2: NINJA TIPS AND TRICKS

YOUR ALL-IN-ONE SOLUTIONS FOR ULTIMATE CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

[CLICK HERE](#)

Module #3: WORK SMARTER

THE NO-EXCUSES ZONE...PLUS, ANY PROBLEM YOU'VE EVER HAD USING EVERNOTE AND SCRIVENER FINALLY SOLVED.

[CLICK HERE](#)

In the course you can bebop from one module to another. You can watch the video on how to sync Evernote with Scrivener and then go to the lesson on using Scrivener to organize and write blog posts.

People love reference courses.

THE SPECIFIC PATH COURSE

A specific path course is the exact opposite. You can't jump around. It's not open-ended.

And you can't pick and choose what content to go through. A specific path course starts you at Point A and walks you step by step to Point B. No distractions. No fluff. Just straight-up coaching and direction to accomplish that goal.

The first specific path course I ever took was [How to Make Your First Dollar](#) by my friend Noah Kagan. This course makes a very specific promise and then takes you by the hand and shows you how to accomplish that.

You must complete each lesson in order.



Part 0 Making your first \$1

Hide Details

- ✓ Welcome to the course
- ✓ Congratulations on a smart decision
- ✓ Meet your neighbors
- ✓ 7 Traits of our most successful members
- ✓ Helping you get what you want
- ✓ Getting you setup
- ✓ The first step to starting your business
- ✓ Awesome work! How'd that feel?

Noah's course isn't about learning a bunch of information. It's about execution, accountability and reaching your #1 goal.

Most people know what they need to do. The problem is DOING IT.

A specific path course helps you to stay out of "learning a bunch of cool strategies" mode and forces you into "you better execute" mode.

When I started his course, I had no business or side income. When I finished a few months later, I was making \$8,000 per month on the side.

= *Bryan loves specific path courses.*

So, when planning out my new course, I knew I wanted to follow that format.

There is nothing wrong with reference courses. I like them and actively buy them myself. But I made a strategic decision to make Get 10,000 Subscribers a specific path course.

WHY?

Simply put: It's the most effective way to help people stay focused, execute and reach their goal.

STEP 2: PICK A NAME FOR THE COURSE.

I'm terrible at naming things.

One time I got a dog. Paid \$300 for him. Really nice yellow lab.

1 year later I still couldn't figure out a name so I defaulted to calling him 'buddy' (probably a Southern thing). So for the rest of his life his name was Buddy.

When it came to naming my course I couldn't let the name be "That list-building course thingy."

So I worked through 4 tasks that helped me pick an effective name for the course.

TASK #1: PICK THE TYPE OF COURSE YOU WANT TO CREATE.

Having chosen a specific path course, I knew my course name needed to make a very specific promise.

Reference courses can be more broad in name:

- Learn Scrivener Fast
- Blog that Converts
- Master Evernote

All reference courses. All broad names. And they work.

However, a specific path course needs to be more... specific.

TASK #2: MAKE A LIST OF NAMES THAT ARE PROVEN TO WORK.

I made a list of the names of every course I had bought or thought about buying in the past.

These were a few of the names...

	A
1	Course Names
2	Monthly1k
3	Kopywriting Kourse
4	6 Figure Outsourcing
5	Create Awesome Online Courses
6	Sumo Busines Blueprint
7	How to setup a podcast
8	Quicksprout Traffic System
9	Launching Your List
10	Get 10,000 Fans
11	SEO That Works
12	Autoresponder Madness
13	Product Launch Formula
14	Serious Bloggers Only
15	Interview Your Heros
16	Mastering Evernote

TASK #3: ASK YOURSELF FOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT EACH NAME.

1. Do I like the name?
2. Is it short and concise?
3. Can I model the name (steal it) for my course?
4. Does the name clearly tell me what I'll get out of the course?

Question #4 is very important with any type of course. But it's especially important with a specific path course.

For example, one the of best courses I've ever gone through is [Yes Engines](#) by Derek Halpern. But the name of the course is terrible.

I follow Derek closely. I knew about the course. I had even skimmed over some of his sales page. But I had no clue what a Yes Engine was and that it basically taught me an ingenious process for launching products.

I WANTED an ingenious process for launching products. But I had no idea that's what his product did.

A good name communicates all of that in the title.

For example...

- How to Make Your First Dollar
- Get 10,000 Subscribers
- Product Launch Formula

In less than 5 seconds you know exactly what each of those courses will help you accomplish.

TASK #4: MODEL YOUR COURSE NAME AFTER THE ONE YOU LIKE THE MOST.

After analyzing all of the names I could find and asking the four questions listed above, I decided to model the name of Brian Moran's course Get 10,000 Fans.

My course would be called Get 10,000 Subscribers.

Do I like the name? Yes!

Is it short and concise? Yes!

Can I model the name for my course? Yup!

Does the name clearly tell me what I'll get out of the course? Yes sir!

STEP 3: STORYBOARD THE WORKFLOW.

With the course type picked out and the name decided on, it was time to start thinking about the content itself.

Before I started writing any of the content, I needed to decide on a general framework for the course.

What strategies would I teach?

What order would I teach them in?

How many modules would there be?

How could I design the course to give each student a quick win and build momentum into the more difficult sections?

My solution was to think of the course as a map.

And each module was a different waypoint on that map.



I asked myself the question, “If I were starting a list from scratch and my goal was to get to 10,000 subscribers in 10 months, what would I do and what order would I do it in?”

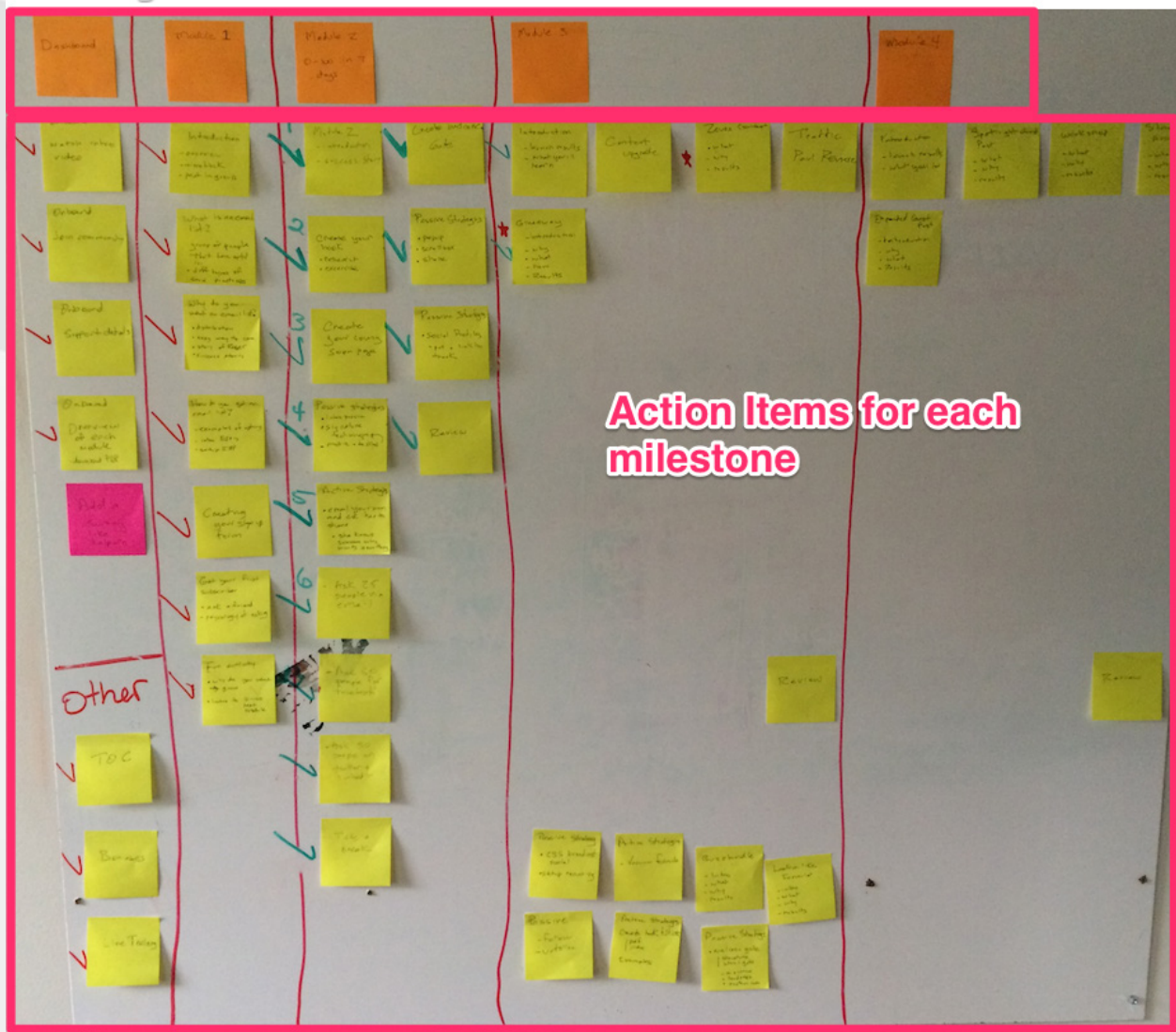
To answer this question, I first wrote down the four main milestones I would go through as I worked toward my goal:

- 1 subscriber
- 100 subscribers
- 1,000 subscribers
- 10,000 subscribers

Then I wrote out an action plan to work through each milestone.

The result was the storyboard framework of the course.

Primary Milestones



TO CREATE YOUR COURSE FRAMEWORK, ANSWER THESE THREE QUESTIONS:

Question #1: What is the goal of your course?

Question #2: What are the 3-4 major milestones your students will go through as they work towards that goal?

Question #3: What action plan should they follow to work through each milestone?

I'm a visual person. If you are the same, I would recommend working out the answer to these three questions on a white board. This makes it easier to shuffle around your phases and action steps.

STEP 4: CREATE THE COURSE CONTENT.

Now it's time to create the actual content of the course. If you've done the work in all of the previous phases, this part will be substantially easier than if you jump straight to this step.

Here is how I created the content for my course:

First, I re-named all my four “milestones” as “modules.”

Example...

The *1 subscriber milestone* became “Module #1: Laying the Foundation and Getting your First Subscriber.”

The *100 subscriber milestone* became “Module #2: Getting Your First 100 Subscribers.” and so on...

Second, I relabeled my action items into lessons in each module.

Which means the action items pictured earlier became these lessons in the course.

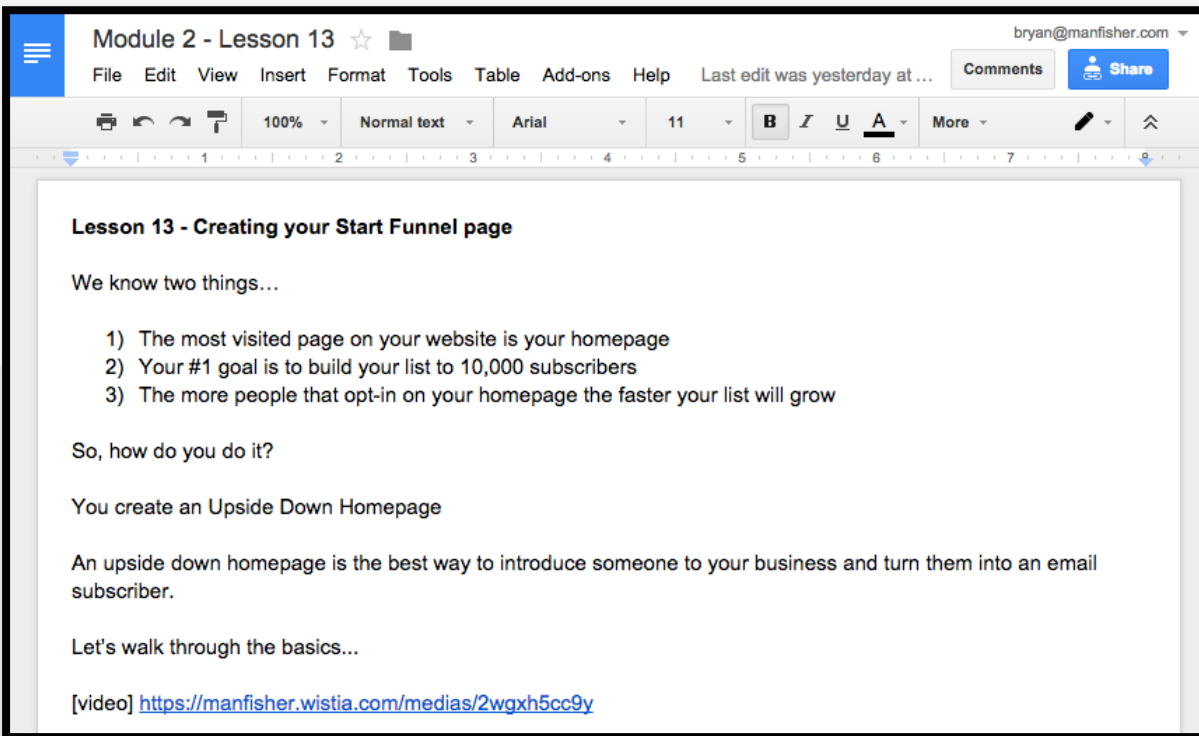
Module 2: Your first 100 subscribers

- [Module 2: Introduction](#)
- [Lesson 1: How to back load your list with Eager Sneezers](#)
- [Lesson 2: How to come up with a hook](#)
- [Lesson 3: Creating your List Launch Page](#)
- [Lesson 4: Signature Technique](#)
- [Lesson 5: Get your second subscriber](#)
- [Lesson 6: Manually backload the Eager Sneezers \(Part 1\)](#)
- [Lesson 7: Manually backload the Eager Sneezers \(Part 2\)](#)
- [Lesson 8: Manually backload the Eager Sneezers \(Part 3 & 4\)](#)
- [Lesson 9: Take a Break](#)
- [Lesson 10: Double the conversion rate of your most important page](#)
- [Lesson 11: Create your Upside Down Homepage](#)
- [Lesson 12: Sending traffic to your Upside Down Homepage](#)
- [Lesson 13: Setting up your passive email list building system](#)

Lastly, I created a new Google doc for each lesson and wrote out the lesson and action items for each one.

Here is an example of one lesson:

[Link to full Google doc](#)

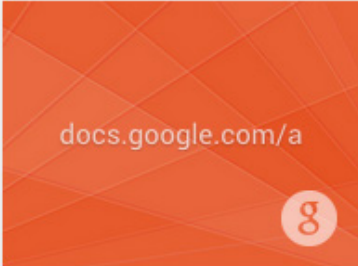

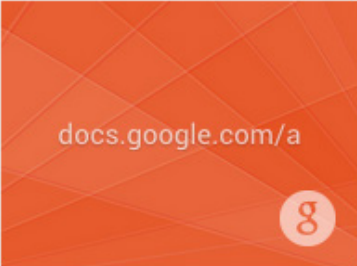
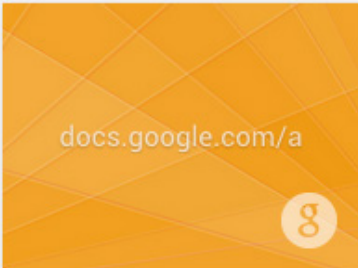

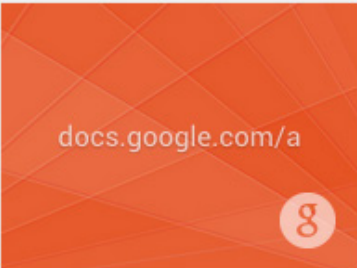
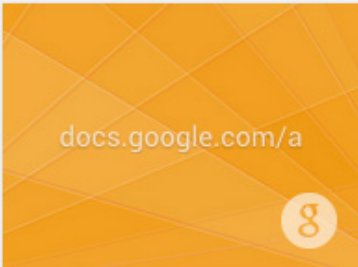
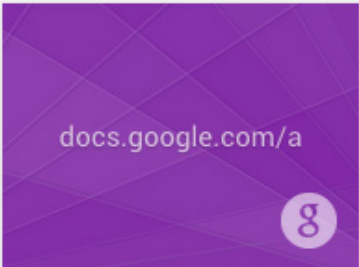
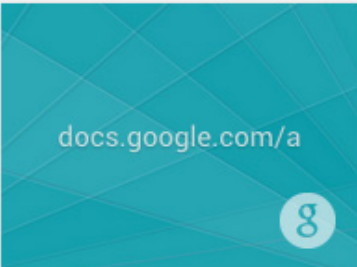


Once I was done, the entire course existed in a series of bookmarked Google docs.

Completed Private Delete folder Share this folder

Click to add a description

Bookmarks Bar 10ksubs Modules Module 4 Completed

 Module 4: Introduction - Goog... docs.google.com/a	 Module 4: Relationship Buildi... docs.google.com/a	 Module 4: Relationship Buildi... docs.google.com/a
 Module 4: Poster Child - 1 - Google... docs.google.com/a	 Module 4: Poster Child - 2 - Google... docs.google.com/a	 Module 4: Poster Child - 3 - Google... docs.google.com/a
 Module 4: Expanded Guest Post - 1 -...	 Module 4: Expanded Guest Post - 2 -...	 Module 4: Expanded Guest Post - 3 -...

ONE NOTE:

It's important to make sure your lessons are small and bite-sized.

For example...

If you're creating a course that teaches people how to potty train their dog and your first module is called "How to get your dog to listen to you (no matter what)"...

Instead of your first lesson including 16 action items, break it into 4 lessons with 4 action items per lesson.

Remember... momentum is incredibly important for helping your students reach their goals.

Let your students feel the momentum and excitement of completing lessons. Creating huge lessons that take days to finish will cause them to get bogged down and slow their progress.

Here is an example of how I did that:

In Module 4 of the Get 10,000 Subscribers course, I help each student write their first guest post.

I BROKE THAT "ACTION ITEM" INTO 5 SEPARATE LESSONS:

1. How to find sites to guest post on
2. How to pre-qualify those sites
3. How to write the perfect post
4. How to pitch the post
5. How to structure the post so it converts into subscribers

I could have crammed everything into one gigantic lesson. But by separating it out, it makes it easier for the student to work through.

Once the basic structure was created, each lesson was written in its own Google doc.

STEP 5: SET IT ALL UP (THE TECH PART).

Writing all of your content will take some time.

That's OK.

It took me nearly 2 months to finish my course's content (video scripts, assignments etc.).

72 Google docs and over 30,000 words later, I completed the draft.

Resist the urge to skip ahead.

As Seth Godin says, the cost of [changing your mind](#) on the front end of your project is extremely low. Later on the cost increases exponentially, because making structural changes to your course and overall workflow becomes increasingly complex as you get deeper into the process.

At this stage, if you want to add a lesson, all you have to do is create a new Google doc, type a few words and you're done.

Do the work. Think it through. But don't procrastinate by trying to make it PERFECT.

HOW DO YOU PLUG EVERYTHING UP ONCE YOU ARE FINISHED?

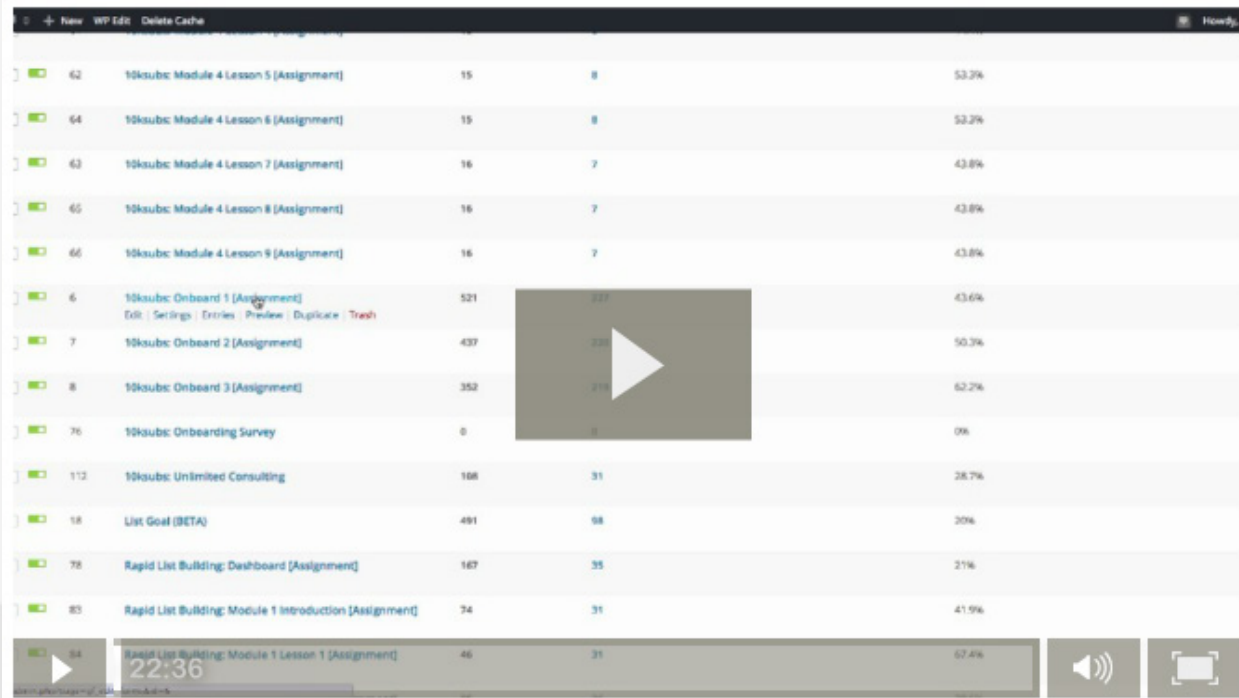
This is where a bunch of you get hung up: setting up the tech part of your course.

I'm going to show you two ways to do this:

Way #1: How I did it (because many of you asked)

Way #2: A much easier way to do it

(In the second part of this video Derek Halpern schools me on a MUUUUUUCH easier way to set up the tech part of a course. Be sure to watch that part.)



The screenshot shows a course management interface with a table of assignments. A video player overlay is visible in the center, showing a play button and a progress bar at 22:36. The table lists various assignments with their IDs, names, and completion percentages.

ID	Name	Count	Percentage
62	10ksubc: Module 4 Lesson 5 (Assignment)	15	53.3%
64	10ksubc: Module 4 Lesson 6 (Assignment)	15	52.2%
63	10ksubc: Module 4 Lesson 7 (Assignment)	16	43.8%
65	10ksubc: Module 4 Lesson 8 (Assignment)	16	43.8%
66	10ksubc: Module 4 Lesson 9 (Assignment)	16	43.8%
6	10ksubc: Onboard 1 (Assignment)	521	43.6%
7	10ksubc: Onboard 2 (Assignment)	437	50.3%
8	10ksubc: Onboard 3 (Assignment)	352	62.2%
76	10ksubc: Onboarding Survey	0	0%
112	10ksubc: Unlimited Consulting	168	28.7%
18	List Goal (BETA)	491	30%
78	Rapid List Building: Dashboard (Assignment)	167	21%
83	Rapid List Building: Module 1 Introduction (Assignment)	74	41.9%
84	Rapid List Building: Module 1 Lesson 1 (Assignment)	46	67.4%

Resource: [Zippy Courses](#), [iMember360](#)