



The
**SIDE
HUSTLE
PATH**

10 PROVEN WAYS TO
MAKE MONEY
OUTSIDE OF YOUR DAY JOB

NICK LOPER

The Side Hustle Path: 10 Proven Ways to Make Money Outside of Your Day Job

Nick Loper

SideHustleNation.com

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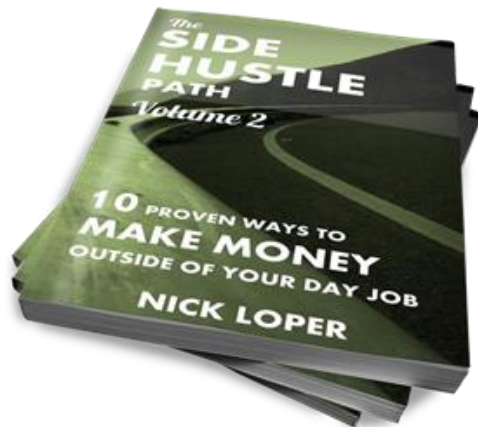
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YOUR FREE BONUS

As a small token of thanks for buying this book, I'd like to offer the next book in the series as free bonus gift exclusive to my readers.

The Side Hustle Path Volume 2 features 10 **more** proven ways to make money outside of your day job. It covers case studies in freelancing, coaching and consulting, software, and building an authority business.



In this FREE bonus you'll learn:

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- How to reverse-engineer your content strategy to attract your target customers.
- Why you should sell a concrete deliverable instead of hours of your time.
- How non-technical people can start a software side hustle with minimal investment.
- How to stand out in a crowded marketplace.
- 3 different ways to build and monetize your authority in any niche.
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You can download the free gift here:

<http://www.sidehustlenation.com/path>

INTRODUCTION

Earn Extra Cash

This book is for people who want or need to earn some extra money outside of their day jobs.

Maybe you need a few extra dollars to make ends meet. Maybe you want to pay off debt. Maybe you want to save for a rainy day, or for your children's education.

Maybe you just want to treat yourself to a nice vacation or a new car without feeling guilty about it.

Maybe you're looking for a way out of the corporate world, an escape plan. That's the ultimate financial freedom, right?

That's how I got started down this entrepreneurial path, and it's been the best choice I ever made.

You're willing to work for it, because your future is worth working for.

The challenge is time is limited, and you may not know where to start. There are a million and one ways to "make money online" and everyone wants to sell you their "proven system for Internet riches." It's hard to tell what's a scam and what's legit.

Real-World Examples

This book offers 10 real-world examples of how regular people just like you and me are earning side hustle income outside of traditional employment. Many have even turned these part-time ventures into full-time businesses, throwing off the shackles of their corporate overlords for good.

And the cool thing is, there are no special technical skills or prerequisites to get started with any of the ideas presented. Most don't require any big scary upfront investment.

You'll learn a variety of different ways to begin earning job-free income, and you can pick and choose which ones sound most interesting and attainable to you.

They may not be as sexy as *The 4-Hour Workweek* or as appealing as multiple streams of passive income, but I believe both of those are achievable over time with discipline and execution.

My Story

After college, I did what you're supposed to do: I got a job.

The problem was almost immediately I found myself looking for a way out. It wasn't that I hated the work or my coworkers, but it just wasn't what I wanted to do with my life. The thought of spending my next 30 years there was terrifying.

But even before that, I'd somehow been bitten by the entrepreneurial bug. I was the kid who sold baseball cards at the end of the driveway, sold candy at summer camp, and sold paint jobs during college.

I loved seeing the direct impact of my efforts on the bottom line, which was something I definitely didn't see in my first "real" job.

So evenings and weekends I turned my attention online. I'd been dabbling with building rudimentary websites, learning online advertising channels, and even running my own small marketing campaigns for other company's products to test the waters.

And that's what *The Side Hustle Path* is about; finding a low-risk way make more money. For me, I eventually invested in having a complex website built, but not until after I'd proven my concept on an ad budget that started at just \$1 a day.

The business was a footwear-only comparison shopping service that earned money by referring shoppers to Zappos, Amazon, and other online retailers. After 3 years of side-hustling nights and weekends, this was the vehicle that let me quit my corporate job.

If you're looking for a get-rich-quick-scheme or the secret to overnight success, you won't find it here. But what you will find are 10 down-to-earth entrepreneurs who were once sitting in your same position. They felt the same fears and uncertainties, but took action anyway.

Why Side Hustle?

There are a ton of distinct benefits to using your non-work hours more productively. This is your chance to get excited and make something happen.

Exercise your brain and explore your passions!

It's science: filling your days with meaningful activities is the path to long-term happiness.

In his book *Drive*, Dan Pink describes how the trifecta of autonomy, mastery, and purpose impacts our satisfaction and motivation. I like to remember them with the acronym AMP, because it leads naturally to the question:

Are you AMPed about your day job?

If not, let's look for a side hustle that provides autonomy, mastery, and purpose.

When you're AMPed, you have the autonomy to direct your day-to-day life the way you see fit, the energy to pursue mastery in your field, industry, or discipline, and the intrinsic motivation that comes from working toward a purposeful goal.

But even aside from getting AMPed, there are several other reasons you might consider The Side Hustle Path.

1. Build Skills

A small side project is the perfect place to learn and master new skills, because you have little risk of failure.

For instance, your workplace may value technical skills when considering who to promote, but you may not always have the opportunity to hone and improve those skills on the job.

Building a skillset outside of work proves your initiative to your boss, and those skills are also portable — meaning you can take them with you to your next job or use them on your side hustle.

Some of the skills I've learned *outside* of my jobs include:

- Contract negotiation
- Pay-per-click marketing management and strategy
- Search engine optimization
- Email marketing
- WordPress
- Social media
- Managing remote employees
- Online videos
- And more...

In a large company, you may not get the chance to exercise your mind and learn new skills very often, which is why it's so crucial to continue your education away from the office.

In a side hustle, you'll get to learn and experiment with new concepts and strategies in real time, and that real-life application can be extremely valuable.

"Anyone who keeps learning stays young." –Henry Ford

2. Build Security

Pam Slim, author of *Escape from Cubicle Nation*, calls your side hustle "career insurance," and she's 100% right.

If you rely solely on one source of income, you're pretty much screwed when that source of income stops. That's why so many people were hurt so badly during the Great Recession, and why there's been such an increased interest in micro-businesses and entrepreneurship.

In today's world, there's no such thing as job security.

In investing, we're told to maintain a diversified portfolio. Why? Because having all your eggs in one basket is inherently risky.

The same is true with our income.

It's dangerous to rely on one company or one paycheck, no matter how lucrative it may be at the moment.

And even if your side hustle makes very little or no money, who do you think is more attractive on the job market? The person who spent their spare time watching TV, or the person who spent their spare time learning and applying new skills in the real world?

"Do not stop thinking of life as an adventure. You have no security unless you can live bravely, excitingly, imaginatively; unless you can choose a challenge instead of competence." –Eleanor Roosevelt

3. Build Income

The chance to supplement your income is what draws most people to side hustling. And that's fine.

But know this is no get-rich-quick-scheme. The secret to earning an income from your side hustle is to create real value for customers.

And real value usually takes real work.

This book will explore some of the impressive financial success stories that people just like you have had with their side businesses, and walk you through how they got it done. All around the world, entrepreneurs are being born and lives are being transformed. It's an empowering moment when you earn that first dollar outside of your day job.

The income I'm talking about is not instant-millionaire-stock-options-IPO kind of money, but rather a realistic and attainable profit that can fund your lifestyle on your own terms.

4. Build Freedom

Ultimately, side hustles are about freedom.

If you can earn a living on the side from what you "do for a living," you're suddenly no longer tied to that job you hate.

And even if you like your job, odds are it takes up a lot of your time. Do you like it enough that there's literally nothing else you'd rather be doing all day?

If your side hustle is virtual, you're suddenly no longer tied to the city where you live. You can work from anywhere!

And even if you like where you live, wouldn't it be nice to at least have the opportunity to go elsewhere to travel and explore?

Yes, the pursuit of this sweet, sweet freedom is what The Side Hustle Path is all about. Who's with me?

You're Not Alone

In addition to the inspiring individuals featured in this book, I get emails every single week from readers who are following The Side Hustle Path and seeing incredible results.

Zach is an IT instructor for the Army in Georgia who recently started selling private label products on Amazon (more on that side hustle later). While there was definitely some time and monetary investment upfront, he now often sees hundreds of dollars in sales a day, and is looking for expansion opportunities.

When my friend Dave listed his Denver apartment on Airbnb, he was flooded with requests, turning previously idle space into an extra \$1000 a month or more. Mark in Seattle reported similar results, and said the Airbnb income actually covers the cost of the office space for his startup.

In New York, Alex began filming short online tutorial courses on business and marketing topics. He bundled them together by subject matter and began selling them on the online learning platform Udemy.com, earning anywhere from \$500 to \$1500 a month.

A Free Facebook Community

I've put together a free Facebook community for side hustlers. It's a great place to ask questions, get feedback, and support others on this path. (You may even see a few familiar faces from this book in there!)

Join here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SideHustleNation>

Let's Get Started

I'm confident this book will give you some new ideas and perspectives, along with some strategies to take advantage of and explore more. That's my promise here and in everything I do: to give you the tools to reach your financial goals.

But I can't do it for you.

Let's get started today on The Side Hustle Path and begin building a little more financial freedom and security into your life!

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SECTION ONE: THE SHARING ECONOMY

The Sharing Economy, or peer-to-peer commerce, is one of the best things to happen for people who want to earn side hustle income.

Under this umbrella are an unbelievably broad assortment of services, but the ones you are probably most familiar with are ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft, and hotel-alternative Airbnb.

These platforms make it easy to do business with your peers or neighbors in a way that was never before possible. That means an unprecedented opportunity for YOU to become a seller on these marketplaces, because there's already a built-in audience of buyers.

(Taking advantage of an existing platform of buyers is a theme I see a lot at Side Hustle Nation.)

Other peer-to-peer services include:

- DogVacay.com and Rover.com for pet-sitting.
- TaskRabbit for temporary work or errands around town.
- Lending Club and Prosper.com for monetary loans.
- Vayable for local tour guides and activities.

I've been investing in peer-to-peer loans with Prosper.com for years, and recently discovered several stories of people earning \$1000+ a month dog-sitting through the DogVacay site listed above.

In this section we'll take a look at how three entrepreneurs are putting The Sharing Economy to work for them, and what you can learn from their strategies.

EARN MONEY DRIVING IN YOUR SPARE TIME

ABOUT HARRY

Harry Campbell is [The Rideshare Guy](#).

Harry started out as a customer of Lyft and Uber, and loved the service. One of his drivers mentioned the company was actively recruiting more drivers, so he decided to apply and see how it would work.

How it Works

In this side hustle, you become a taxi driver in your own car. Passengers request rides based on proximity through an app on their phone, and you earn fares by picking them up and taking them to their destination.

Earning Potential

Harry aims to earn \$20-\$30 per hour from his driving. He explains that by doing this as a side hustle, he's naturally able to work the busier times, such as Friday and Saturday evenings and holidays.

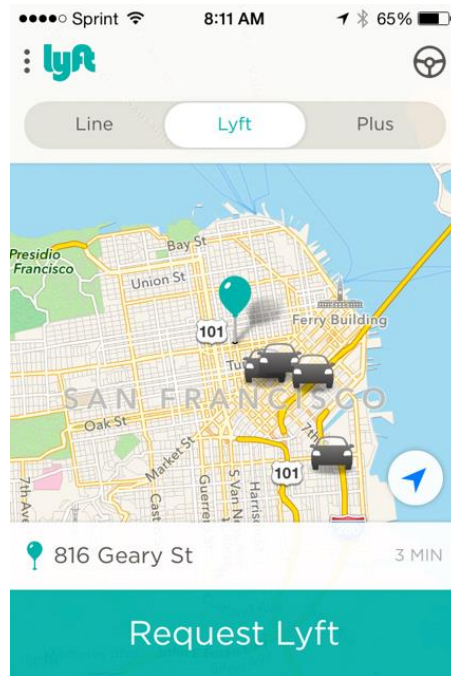
During the middle of the day, demand is much lower and you may have to wait a longer time for requests, which will eat into your hourly wage.

One Lyft driver I met in Dallas made as much as \$1,000 a week, but he indicated he was driving up to 30 hours a week to earn that. Others said they could earn up to \$250 on a busy evening of driving.

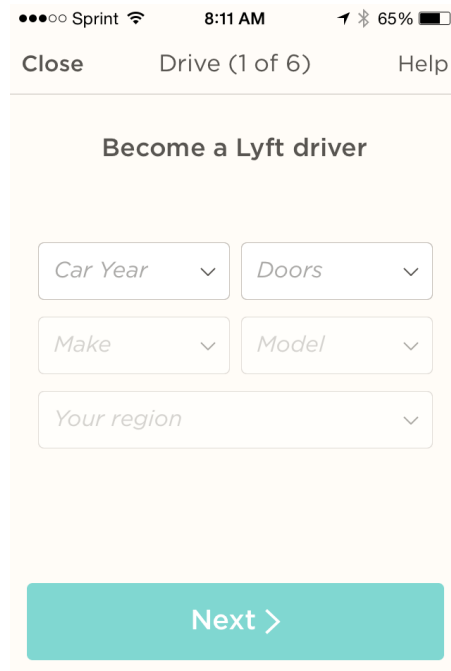
The average ride is 3-5 miles and around a \$10 fare. Lyft and Uber take 20% of the fare and you keep 80%.

The Application Process

You can apply to be a driver directly from the Lyft app on your phone. (Hit the little steering wheel icon in the upper corner).



That will guide you through the application process. The company will perform a background check on your driving record to make sure you're a reasonably safe driver.



Next, you'll do a "mentor ride" that is like an in-person interview. If you pass, you're good to begin driving!

There is no background check for passengers, but there is a rating system the drivers can see before they choose to pick someone up. If a passenger has a low rating (perhaps for being rude or belligerent to other drivers) you can decline the request.

When you pick a passenger up, you also don't often know where they want to go. Though most rides are short, occasionally people will request longer rides like to the airport or to a bar area.

Harry says those longer trips are actually the most lucrative, and there's an element of fun to the side hustle because you never know where the night will take you.

Vehicle Requirements

Your car must be a model year 2006 or younger, and have 4 doors. It needs to be in clean condition without any major body damage.

Harry says if you have an excellent condition older vehicle, such as a 2005 or 2004, you can seek manual review for approval. I once rode in a 2002 Honda with Lyft in Oakland, so the published model year requirement does not seem to be set in stone.

He also indicated that new drivers will undergo a 20-point vehicle inspection from a mechanic to make sure everything is in good working condition.

Driver Ratings

Because the customer experience is so important for these rideshare companies to continue to grow, customers have the feedback mechanism to rate and review their drivers, and the guidelines are pretty strict.

Drivers must maintain 4.6 star rating (out of 5) on Uber and a 4.5 star rating on Lyft. If you drop below those ratings, you'll get a 1-time warning. If it doesn't improve you're put on probation and can't drive anymore.

On my first Lyft ride, my driver took the time to show me how the rating system (and tipping system) worked, which earned him a well-deserved 5-star rating and a nice tip as well.

If You Live in Suburbia...

Harry indicated that the best earnings potential is naturally in the more densely populated areas. For me, that might mean driving into San Francisco and driving for the evening, instead of trying to pick up rides out where we live, about 45 minutes east of downtown.

If your timing is flexible, you may be able to pick up a passenger on their way into town for a sporting event, concert, or night out, so at least you're "monetizing" one leg of the trip.

Nationwide Coverage?

Uber is slightly larger than Lyft, but both companies are active in most major U.S. cities. Uber is even active in some markets overseas.

Harry mentioned a third service, Sidecar, which is also picking up steam in some markets.

Driver Benefits and Tax Deductions

As a Lyft, Uber, or Sidecar driver, you're an independent contractor. That means there's no exclusivity to one company or another and you're free to drive passengers with either app.

Your earnings are reported via a Form 1099, which means you are responsible for paying estimated taxes on your income, but will also open you up to some valuable tax deductions.

The best tax deduction is the I.R.S. standard mileage deduction at \$0.575 per mile in 2015. Every mile you drive while "on duty" can be written off at that rate; you just have to keep a record.

Harry is testing out the [Metromile](#) app to easily track his mileage.

If you're providing gum, snacks, mints, or drinks, you can write those items off as well, but Harry found those didn't really have much of an impact on tips.

Insurance

The insurance question is still somewhat up in the air. The way Harry explains it, your personal car insurance covers you up until the moment you pick up a passenger, and then Uber/Lyft's coverage kicks in.

Because the companies are paying to insure all their drivers, you don't have to buy extra or "commercial" insurance for your vehicle.

Harry says car insurance companies aren't 100% sold on this, and that the gray area is when you're in between rides, driving around waiting for the next passenger. The way it is now, that time would fall under your personal coverage, but it's a little tricky because it's kind of like you're working but not earning any fares at that moment.

Harry's #1 Tip for Side Hustlers

"Think outside the box. Don't be afraid to try something out and see what happens."

Special Bonus: Get your [first ride free on Uber](#), up to \$20.

Special Bonus: Get your [first ride free on Lyft](#), up to \$20.

More Info:

- TheRideshareGuy.com

BECOME A MICRO REAL ESTATE MOGUL

ABOUT JASPER

Jasper Ribbers is a “digital nomad” who funds his lifestyle by renting out his Amsterdam apartment through [Airbnb](#), a venture that turned into a \$60,000 a year business. He’s also the co-author of [Get Paid for Your Pad](#), the bestselling book on Airbnb hosting.

How it Works

With Airbnb, you can rent out a room in your home or the entire place if you have somewhere else to stay. As travelers, my wife and I stayed almost exclusively in Airbnb apartments on a recent trip and loved it. We had more space (including a kitchen, living room, and dining area) than a traditional hotel, and we felt more like locals.

The company provides the online booking interface and handles all the payment processing. If you have a spare room or even if you have a traditional rental, this could be an interesting and potentially lucrative way to earn more money from it.

Getting Started on Airbnb

It's free to [get started on Airbnb](#) and takes about 30 minutes to create a listing.

When I first spoke to Jasper, I offered up a lame excuse for not listing my place: there’s no demand. We’re out in the suburbs about 45 minutes from downtown San Francisco. None of the other Airbnb listings in our town seemed to have any reviews.

Jasper gave this rebuttal: If there's a hotel around, there's an Airbnb market. And sure enough, there are half a dozen hotels within a couple miles of our house.

One way to make your listing stand out is to have beautiful pictures, and Airbnb will actually send a professional photographer over to photograph your place. You’re competing with super-clean and professionally-photographed hotels, so you have to make your place look awesome.

If you browse Airbnb listings near you, you’ll be able to see the ones that have had the pro photo treatment. Real estate listings could learn a thing or two from these guys – they look great!

Best practices are to schedule photos for days with good natural light, open all curtains, and turn on all lights. Tidy up to show an impeccable appearance.

While Jasper's rental is for the "whole house," there is also an option to share the home by renting out only a spare bedroom. This means you can build relationships with the guests, which is a skill that can help your ratings.

My first Airbnb experience was not a "whole house" rental, but instead was just a room in a house in Philadelphia. It fit my budget and my host was very nice and personable, giving me an insider's perspective on the city.

My Philadelphia host also mentioned that the majority of his guests were international, so it was an awesome opportunity to meet people and make friends from all over the world – and get paid to do it!

You might be wondering where Jasper goes while his whole house is being rented. He actually travels the world, which presents a bit of logistical challenge (he was in Brazil when we spoke). It turns out he has a trusted cleaning lady who manages the house, checks in the guests, and resolves small issues that may occur. (More on her role later.)

He also uses [Guesty](#), a service that handles communications. They charge only a 3% fee, and always respond within one hour of a guest's request.

For guests who use the instant-booking function on Airbnb, hosts can set parameters that act as sort of an auto-screening function. For example, Jasper's guests must have at least 1 positive review and book more than 72 hours in advance. Airbnb also allows for verifications that add security like linking your Facebook account, adding a phone number, and including references from friends.

Balancing Rates and Occupancy

This is one of Jasper's favorite challenges, due to his economics background. He says:

1. When you're starting out, look at other listings in your area and undercut them.
2. As you near full occupancy, raise rates for future dates.
3. Vary prices with demand. (AirBnB allows for price changes by day for the next 12 months)

In Amsterdam, the popular months are April-August, so prices are €200-300 per night. Comparatively, in winter, he only commands about €125.

Landlords, Legality, and Other Logistics

Another Airbnb host I spoke to believed in asking for forgiveness instead of permission when it came to renting out a place you were renting yourself. Jasper owns his place and so doesn't have to deal with landlords, but does think it's a good idea to be sure what you're doing is legal before you buy your one-way ticket out of town (and potentially out of your lease).

Telling your landlord that you'll be investing time in upgrading the apartment and keeping it spotless (to make more money) is a good upper hand. Because most renters are considering Airbnb as an alternative to a hotel, the property has to be really well maintained.

Jasper told the story of a friend in Argentina who convinced his landlord to let him sublet the apartment on Airbnb provided he took care of it. Airbnb also covers hosts and homeowners with a hefty \$1 million liability insurance policy through their Host Protection Program to help ease fears as well.

Jasper's cleaning lady receives €60 per cleaning (2 hours max) and also checks in the guests. He pays her well, because she is a vital aspect of the business. She serves as his eyes and ears while he's away. (He also adds €50 as a cleaning fee for the guests, so Jasper he ends up paying a minimum out of pocket.)

How to Get Your First Bookings

Jasper suggests lowering the price to get your first bookings and reviews. This results in placement at the top of Airbnb's search results. Remember to mention in the top of your description that you are just starting on Airbnb and it's a special offer. This will help ease fears from customers who might wonder, "What's wrong with this place – why is it so cheap?"

It's cheap because you need reviews!

Reviews are the social proof that help keep your bookings going. And like all of these peer-to-peer commerce platforms, it takes some hustle or potentially selling for less than you'd like to gain that initial feedback.

Is Airbnb Legal?

The legalities associated with Airbnb depend on the location. Some cities have no rules, while others have specific parameters. Amsterdam gives permits for full-time Airbnb locations, while San Francisco has its own set of regulations.

Be sure to check on the local rules and regulations before making a huge investment.

Airbnb as an Investment Strategy?

Jasper says you can earn 2-3x the income w/ short-term rentals than you can with a traditional long-term rental like a 1-year lease for the simple reason that people on vacation pay more than year-round residents.

For instance, Jasper's apartment might rent for €1500 per month on a long-term lease, vs. €200 a night for Airbnb guests. Pretty serious opportunity there!

In the short-term, Jasper believes this will drive up rental prices in some markets as more landlords try their hand at Airbnb, but in the long-term the market will reach equilibrium again.

Here are a couple case studies on using Airbnb for investment properties:

<http://affordanything.com/2014/05/27/the-airbnb-experiment-how-much-did-i-make/>

<http://gizmodo.com/i-bought-an-apartment-just-to-rent-it-out-on-airbnb-1458666661>

Other Short Term Rental Marketplaces

[Wimdu](#) and [VRBO](#) are other peer-to-peer short-term rental platforms worth considering, but Jasper says it's better to be a king in a small pond, rather than a citizen in a large pond (I love that translation).

Put yourself on one platform and rock it instead of spreading yourself thin.

Airbnb Ranking Factors

Ranking factors definitely make a difference in how visible your Airbnb listing is on the site.

In AirBnB, search results are kind of like Google. To improve your ranking, AirBnB uses factors like the number of bookings, reviews, response time, calendar updates, and cancellation rate. Think about everything in your hosting business from AirBnB's perspective. What will make their customers happy and make the company money?

Be the best host you can be and the search results will begin to reflect that.

Jasper's #1 Tip for Side Hustlers

"If you're going to make assumptions, you might as well make empowering assumptions. Many people don't act because of negative assumptions."

Special Bonus: [Get \\$25 off your first Airbnb stay!](#)

Special Bonus: Get your first 2 weeks of [Guesty](#) free with code: GPFYP.

More Info:

- [GetPaidforYourPad.com](#)

BUY LOW AND SELL HIGH ON CRAIGSLIST

ABOUT RYAN

Ryan Finlay from ReCraigslist.com makes a full-time living (and supports his family of 7) buying and selling items on Craigslist.

In fact, he used this business to pull himself out from \$25,000 in debt and now teaches others to do the same.

How it Works

Ryan's business revolves around finding "undervalued" items on Craigslist and reselling them. A friend of mine used to do this with iPhones, and another actually did it with cars for a while. Ryan focuses on appliances.

It's a "buy low, sell high" business, where you get to keep the spread or margin in between your acquisition cost and the final sales price.

And the beautiful thing is nearly every city in the US (and many other places around the world) has an active Craigslist community where peer-to-peer commerce is thriving. There are no technical skills required, and very limited start-up costs. Ryan started when he was \$25,000 in debt and had just \$200 in the bank.

Humble Beginnings

Ryan was working as a contractor but wasn't in love with his job, so he began experimenting with Craigslist arbitrage on the side.

After a few initial "wins," including earning \$250 on a refrigerator and \$100 on a washer and dryer set, he decided there might really be an opportunity here.

He met with some friends at a coffee shop and told them his plans. They served as accountability partners, checking in with Ryan daily via email for the next 6 months.

Finding Undervalued Items

Ryan explained the key to this business is knowing what items are worth. That means you might spend a few days on your local Craigslist site, Amazon, or eBay to get a feel for what certain items might go for.

Ryan recommends starting with what you know because the learning curve will be shorter. That way, when you spot something that seems like it might have some margin in it, you can respond quickly.

For example, Ryan began doing a lot of deals in home theater items because it was an area he was familiar with. He adds that name-brand merchandise is important since many buyers will search by brand name and those can command higher prices.

He also dabbled in furniture, electronics, and power tools before focusing on appliances. He runs the business out of his home and garage, with no extra storage facility required.

Interacting with Sellers

If an item is very attractively priced, it is best to get on the phone and call the seller rather than responding by email. For other items, you can easily type out a quick email along with your offer price to see if there are any takers.

One thing that surprised me was that Ryan is not a ruthless negotiator when he shows up to pick up an item. Since this is his full-time business, every dollar he can knock off the price is an extra dollar to his bottom line, but he explains the constant haggling can really wear on you and there's no need to beat sellers up for a few extra bucks.

Logistics

If you have no means of transportation, you'll be limited to what you can carry in a backpack or on a bike. Ryan says he's seen little mini trailers hooked up behind Honda Civics or even bikes, but that a small SUV can fit most appliances. (A truck would only be required for the largest items.)

When Ryan's garage is filled with a dozen or more appliances, it becomes obvious to buyers right away that he's "in the business." Still, in having sold more than 3000 appliances, not one buyer has backed out of a deal because of that.

Nearly all the transactions are cash-based, which can make accounting a little more difficult but removes the risk of accepting checks from strangers.

Have a Goal in Mind

Ryan determined he could support himself and his family if he earned just \$100 a day from this business. That daily target gave him something tangible and attainable to shoot for.

Other Product Categories

Aside from appliances, Ryan says bikes have been hot lately and seem to see a lot of turnover. Furniture is always a popular seller, but can be bulky and difficult to store and move.

Making the Most of the Free Section

One of the greatest parts of Craigslist is the “free” section. In fact, whenever I post something for free, it’s spoken for almost immediately. We’ve unloaded moving boxes, a dresser, and a desk that way.

I always thought the free section was an amazing opportunity because you could conceivably acquire your inventory for \$0, which puts you in an incredible negotiating position when you go to sell – not to mention the enviable profit margins.

But because competition is so stiff for the free items – with people literally sitting on the page and hitting “refresh” in their browsers – you have to act quickly. If a really valuable item is offered for free, Ryan recommends shooting the seller a quick note, offering to BUY it and including your offer price in the subject line.

Often times that gesture will put you ahead of the masses of free emailers. After hearing about this tactic, a friend of mine sent me a note saying he’d used it to score a piece of furniture that ultimately made him \$300.

Ryan’s #1 Tip for Side Hustlers

“The best opportunities are found once you’re already in motion.”

More Info:

- ReCraigslist.com

SECTION TWO: SELL A SKILL OR SERVICE

So far we've talked about using existing platforms like Uber and Lyft, Airbnb, and Craigslist to generate a side income. And those are great if you're just starting out.

However, if you have a marketable skill – or could quickly learn one – you may be better off selling your service directly to individuals or business owners who need help.

In this section we'll explore a few real-life ways your peers are doing this.

One of the “services” I've sold recently is non-fiction book editing. Because of the explosion in self-publishing, this is a fast-growing market, but readers still expect a professional product, which is where the need for quality editing comes in.

In another example, my wife and her friend started a local wedding photography business. It started out as a hobby, but has turned into a pretty serious operation, and now earns them each more than \$1000 for every wedding they shoot.

I believe selling a service is another excellent way to start down The Side Hustle Path.

What service could you sell?

FIND A PROBLEM AND SOLVE IT

ABOUT BRYAN

Bryan Harris is the founder of [VideoFruit.com](https://www.VideoFruit.com), which is one of the smartest online business and marketing blogs you can find because of the way he reverse engineers ideas that work and puts them into actionable step-by-step guides for his readers.

Let's say your goal is quitting your job in the next 12 months. I know it might seem pretty daunting now, but if you work backwards and come up with an action plan that you can implement, you can start taking positive steps toward that goal today.

How it Works

Think about the 3 different ways to make money online:

1. Selling advertising (if you have an already existing site)
2. Selling a product (book, guide, training, merchandise)
3. Selling a service

To make money with advertising, it generally requires a ton of traffic or website pageviews. Advertisers are paying for exposure and reach, and when you're just starting out you probably don't have much of either.

Next, you could sell a book, a course, or even physical products. I've dabbled in this arena myself and found it to be a pretty fun side hustle, especially when you can tap into big existing marketplaces like Amazon, Udemy, Etsy, Fiverr, etc.

But Bryan makes the argument that selling a service is the FASTEST way to get started, because you don't need a website, you don't need an audience, and you don't need to create a product to sell. The start-up costs are almost nothing, and as soon as you find your first client, you're in business.

For Bryan, it was offering video content for popular marketing blogs. He found their most popular infographics they were using to generate leads, and turned the highest performing one into a video and gave it to them. That act, totally free of charge, turned into a long-term contract.

Step 1: Identify the Problem

There's no need to create something out of nothing, or worse, to try and sell something no one needs or wants. Bryan recommends finding something that *already* exists.

For example, you can find any number of "epic" how-to tutorial articles online. These detailed step-by-step posts explain how the author overcame some specific problem and the exact procedure he or she used to get it done.

Because of the level of detail and usefulness of these posts, they tend to get a lot of traffic and social sharing. But despite all that, few people actually TAKE ACTION on the information because it's time-consuming and often would require real work.

You can be the person who does the work for them, and takes their pain away.

Other examples of problems you could solve:

- Ecommerce stores need to rank better in Google
- Authors need help editing their work
- Restaurants don't have enough customers

Step 2: Re-Engineer Your Solution into a Service

Don't create an iPhone app, website, or a blog post. Take the pain point and offer to fix it for someone.

To quickly validate your idea, Bryan says the easiest and cheapest way is to utilize BuzzSumo.com and find a how-to post related to your topic.

For example, copywriting. We found "51 Questions to Optimize Every Element of your Copywriting." Can you take the broad skill of copywriting and make it very specific to sell a service?

He gave the example that "copywriting" on its own is a horrible service, but that "copywriting for sales pages for \$1000+ online courses" is much better.

That's one reason I didn't aim to sell my book editing service as something for all authors, but rather as something specifically for non-fiction authors. And now I'm narrowing down that focus even further to just be for business book authors, a small segment of the non-fiction market.

In Bryan's words:

"Don't worry about saturating the market, that's BS. What you need to worry about is leaving your day job and how you're gonna get out of there."

If you're worried about trading time for dollars and being stuck in the hustle, the services you start offering can become products down the line. You can create software, courses, apps, or a number of things once you understand the exact thing you're offering.

Step 3: Choose ONE Person You Want to Work With

One way to start is to see who commented on or shared the epic How-To post on social media using a tool like [Topsy.com](https://topsy.com).

You could reach out to those people and reference the original article to build credibility.

For other services, you could consider who your target customers are already doing business with, and see if you can embed yourself as a preferred referral partner. In the example of a wedding photography business, that might be the wedding venues, caterers, DJs, or event planners.

For an SEO service, that might be website developers and designers, or small business accountants or attorneys.

For a tutoring service, that might be school counselors, day cares, or after school activities.

Who are your target customers already doing business with? Think how you can get your foot in the door with those people, and you'll already have a built-in audience who would be perfect for your service.

Step 4: Create a Proposal

Give – don't ask for anything in your initial email. Reference something they have done that you like (even better if you've taken action on something they have done and seen results), offer an example of recent/related work, and make something especially for them.

If you think you might be dealing with a cost-sensitive client, you might bring up the potential ROI. We discussed the example of someone who pitched me on the idea of bringing together a Side Hustle "round-up" style blog post, the kind where a couple dozen experts all give their answer to specific business-related question.

The service provider mentioned briefly who they might like to target for it, and how much traffic and how many social shares some of their other similar efforts had received, but it wasn't enough to justify their \$800 price tag (at least for me).

Had they instead focused on the dollar return that incremental traffic could have brought, I would have been more likely to pull out my wallet.

Here's an example of one of Bryan's actual first proposal emails:

 **Bryan Harris**

to blogging ▾

Hi,

I'm Bryan.

I'm a huge Hubspot fan. I especially liked your recent piece on [business card](#) design.

I work with companies like KISSmetrics and make weekly video's for their blog. Here is one that published earlier this week on their site: [4 Critical Facebook Reports](#)

Just wanted to email you and see if Hubspot might be interested in a similar series.

I made a demo for you to show you what it might look like: [5 Split Test You Have to Run on your Website Today](#)



Is this something you guys would be interested in?

-Bryan

Step 5: Give Away Your Must Have Experience Free First.

Do everything you can to give them the service for free before you actually ask them to pay.

Let's say you're a dog trainer who wants to hyper-focus on 10 clients at \$2k per month. So you know you have to target people with high incomes and maybe even a specific dog breed (let's say greyhounds).

What Bryan recommended was making a video showing you training a greyhound, and giving it out at the greyhound adoption center and to show people how to do it themselves. Then, seeing the value you provide and the results you achieve, they are more likely to hire you for one-on-one help.

In my book-editing side hustle, I could find my dream client's book on Amazon, somehow dump it into Word, and provide my suggested edits and corrections for the first chapter free of charge. Or take screen capture images and mark-up the pages where I found mistakes.

Bryan's #1 Tip for Side Hustlers

"Go by the book [Built to Sell](#)."

"Get extremely specific. If it doesn't work, scrap it and try again until it does."

More Info:

- [Videofruit.com/hustle](https://videofruit.com/hustle)

FREELANCE FOR RECURRING REVENUE

ABOUT ALEXIS

Today, Alexis Grant runs a [social media, content marketing, and blog management agency](#) and manages a team of 10 people to get it all done.

But like many of us, she started off as a side hustler, working her way up and adding clients until it was time to make the leap.

She took some very strategic steps along the way, including setting up clients on a retainer model instead of a one-off project basis, and building a "personal brand" and audience of her own through [her blog](#).

How it Works

Although Alexis wasn't in a direct social media role in her day job, it was something she'd taken an interest in both at the office and in her free time.

At school, she volunteered to run a Twitter campaign for a fellow student who'd actually been arrested in Iran. That gave her some "social proof" and a portfolio piece to point future clients to, in addition to working on a cause that was important to her.

One day, she was dispensing Facebook and social media advice to a friend when the friend replied, "Wow, you should really be getting paid for this stuff!"

And that was a bit of a lightbulb moment, as that friend's company soon became a paying client.

I think it's a classic case of taking the answer to "what people ask you for help with" or "what people ask you for advice on" and turning that into a service offering.

Setting Up for Recurring Revenue

One thing Alexis did right out of the gate that I thought was really smart was to put clients on a retainer contract, following her dad's advice. After all, social media wasn't going anywhere, and many effective social campaigns take months or years to build long-term engaged relationships with customers.

From the company's perspective, it wouldn't make sense to build an active social community, and then let it falter by cutting ties with their contractor.

And from Alexis' perspective, it meant less time she'd have to spend chasing down new clients, allowing her to focus on delivering her best work.

The rates varied depending on the deliverables, but generally ranged from \$500-\$750 per month. At those rates, it only takes a few clients before you have a potentially job-killing side hustle income!

Blogging for Business

Alexis pointed to the power of social media and blogging for landing clients as well, which makes sense given the "social" nature of her services. Gotta practice what you preach!

But there's a specific strategy to blogging to generate leads and sales.

For Alexis, that meant sharing the inside details of her business, including what was working and what wasn't working for her clients. She would write in-depth case studies on social media tactics that showed curious people how to do it themselves, but also positioned herself as an expert in the field for other potential customers who couldn't be bothered and just wanted to hire some help.

And in addition to that, she also chronicled her journey from side hustling to a full-time entrepreneur, building an engaged readership of people looking to make the same leap.

Selling Digital Products

As another benefit of blogging consistently and making that investment in her "personal brand," Alexis was able to create a series of ebooks to help her readers accomplish very specific goals.

For example, the titles include:

- [Turn Your Side Hustle Into a Full-Time Business & Surpass Your Day Job Income in Just 6 Months](#)
- [How to Build a Part-Time Social Media Business](#)
- [How to Create a Freakin' Fabulous Social Media Strategy](#)

Why Not Amazon?

I asked Alexis why she didn't publish on Amazon to reach a much broader audience, and she gave a few excellent reasons why bloggers or people with their own platform should consider selling directly.

First, you can command much higher prices. On Amazon, ebooks for Kindle are essentially capped at \$9.99, even if they solve a very specific pain point and will provide the reader a far greater ROI.

Alexis' books are priced between \$24 and \$59, AND she keeps 100% of the revenue instead of just 35-70% of the revenue that Amazon would give her.

On top of that, she points out that when someone buys your book on Amazon, they're Amazon's customer—not yours. You don't get their email address or any way to follow up with them after the sale.

By selling direct, you can be in control of the whole process and develop a long-term relationship with your readers and customers.

Alexis also offers a money-back guarantee to help seal the deal from buyers who may be on the fence.

Social Media Networking

When I asked Alexis how she would spend her time if she only had an hour a day to work on her side hustle, her answer was networking. That kind of surprised me, because it often doesn't have an immediate result or return on investment, but I can definitely vouch for the fact that it opens doors and makes things happen over the long run.

She gave one strategy for "getting noticed" on Twitter I thought was pretty smart. Essentially it was to create a private Twitter list of influencers you want to know who you are. (This is after establishing a "baseline" Twitter account of sharing useful and relevant content for your niche.)

Then how it works is you can focus your time on retweeting the content your targeted list is publishing, interacting, replying, and genuinely being helpful and engaged.

Eventually, if you do have an "ask" – like to share a post of yours, come on your podcast, accept a guest post, make an introduction, share your ebook, etc. – you're a familiar face and they're more likely to help you out. Law of reciprocity!

Alexis' #1 Tip for Side Hustlers

"Be persistent. Stick with it!"

More Info:

- AlexisGrant.com
- Socialexis.com

PLAY MATCHMAKER WITH PROBLEM PROPERTIES

ABOUT J. MASSEY

J. Massey is a real estate investor who has completed hundreds of real estate transactions in eight states and has more than 300 units under his control. He's the author of [Cash Flow Diary: 10 Steps to Creating Wealth in Any Economy](#) and host of the [Cash Flow Diary podcast](#).

Necessity is the Mother of Invention

This is a very specific service example, but one that takes place in every city in the world – connecting real estate buyers and sellers. One thing I love about J.'s story is that he didn't start with having a million bucks to invest in real estate. So then, how and why did he choose real estate?

J. says necessity is the mother of invention, and his creativity was born from there. His wife was struggling with her health during pregnancy, and J. got into a volleyball accident that left him with a punctured lung. *(It's just a game, Focker!)*

To make ends meet, he began selling their personal possessions on eBay – but eventually ran out of stuff!

A friend suggested real estate investment, which must have sounded like a complete joke at the time, given his credit score of 398 and the fact he had only \$75 to his name. As he says, "Don't let what you don't have stop you."

Getting Started as a Wholesaler

He started with small wholesale projects, then apartment buildings, and now has cellphone towers, commercial buildings, and all kinds of properties under his belt. He's been able to raise tens of millions of dollars for project investing, and has gained some important wisdom along the way.

Two of those nuggets are:

"Where there's chaos, there's cash flow."

and

“You don’t have a money problem; you have an idea problem.”

When looking to get into a new industry or side hustle service, look for problems. Where problems need to be solved, there is usually chaos.

J. says, “The bigger the problem, the bigger the solution. The bigger the solution, the bigger the value. The bigger the value, the bigger the paycheck.”

On the money side, it just means you have to be a little more creative to get a deal done. How can you insert yourself into the position to help all parties involved, without risking what little cash you have?

The Best Way to Get Started as a Real Estate Investor

J. started working 2 hours a day in wholesaling – aiming to become “the Costco for real estate,” where he would buy at a discount and sell at a discount.

“The key to this is finding the sellers who can’t go retail,” J. explained. He says that 95% of all deals go retail, meaning on the MLS with a traditional real estate agent. The key is to find the 5% that can't or don't.

So what kind of houses are we talking about? If you guessed the ones with some issues, either with the house itself or with the sellers, you’d be right. Houses that have some damage or structural issues, etc., or the seller has a problem and needs to sell.

I’ve had some hesitation or discomfort over this in the past, since it seems a lot like taking advantage of people in bad situations. But really, no one is forcing anyone to make a bad deal and if the house has become a burden and a source of pain, you may be able to help them by making that pain go away.

Like many businesses, the wholesaling service relies heavily on networking, both with buyers and sellers.

J. always introduces himself as a wholesaler, to keep his network growing. He proactively attracts buyers to him by taking quick action with referrals and by leveraging conversations.

By learning what types of properties his network is looking for, he can seek out deals he knows he has a buyer for. In an ideal situation, he’ll have a buyer in place or at least in mind before he even has a seller or property.

Secondly, J. says, "He who educates the market, dominates the market" and J. has made a

name for himself hosting sessions of [CashFlow 101 Board game](#). He's hosted games of up to 180 people!

The game is from the *Rich Dad* book series, and actually is pretty fun. The object of the game is to [escape the "Rat Race"](#) by having investment income (or side hustle income!) that exceeds your monthly expenses.

J.'s Tactics to Find Properties

Think of flipping the idea of finding buyers for houses, and instead find houses for buyers. Interview the marketplace and ask what type of investments people are looking for. When 5 people want something similar, try the following strategies:

1. Look in the probate directory, a list of people who passed away who owned assets. Often the next of kin does not want the house and just wants to cash out. The probate directories and processes differ by county, but usually involve finding the listed properties, a phone call or email to the probate lawyer, and an offer. Check with your county records office for more information.

2. Short sales and REOs. When owners have fallen behind on payments, and houses weren't sold at auction, the bank will take possession. But the bank does not want to be in the business of owning property, so you may be able to find out who runs their REO department and who you need to talk to.

3. Public adjustors. When an insurance claim is filed, it's your responsibility to provide an estimate to the insurance company. Most of us let the insurance company choose payment amount, but the burden of proof is not theirs. The public adjustors step in during disaster or flood situations when landlords or owners are saying, "Get it off my hands!" If you have a relationship with the PA, he'll call you to buy.

J.'s tactics are built on real relationships, networking, and hustle, not magical software.

Making Your Offer

J. recommends giving sellers 3 customized options to solve their needs:

1. A (lowball) all cash offer
2. A lease option / other creative financing
3. 100% Seller financing / creative acquisition

Ask how can I help them the fastest? Keep their needs center stage and be creative.

Remember, you're not putting your own cash at risk, so your contract is "contingent on financing" – a fancy way of saying if you don't find a buyer in the agreed upon time, the deal is off. That's another reason why it pays to have your buyers lined up in advance.

J. explained that the profit-per-deal can vary greatly based on geography and property type. For instance, because the overall property values are lower, the Midwest has smaller profit margins than CA or NY.

J.'s #1 Tip for Side Hustlers

"Once you get started, stay started."

"Take it one step at a time."

"Focus on IGAs: Income Generating Activities, so that your time is best used."

More Info:

- CashFlowDiary.com

SECTION THREE: TEACH A MAN TO FISH

We have a tendency to take what we know for granted. After all, once you know something (2+2, for example) it's hard to imagine NOT knowing it.

But there's a risk in that too. Other people might be willing to pay for the knowledge in your brain!

How can you share it with the world?

The online education industry is projected to top \$100 billion in 2015, and that spells a big opportunity for side hustlers. Instead of education being handed down from tenured professors and ivy-walled institutions, much of today's online learning is pragmatically focused and taught by skilled peers and colleagues.

That's right, if you have a certain skill or expertise (or even if you don't – as we'll see in the following pages), you can build an online curriculum and accept payment from students around the world.

And best of all, by leveraging existing online learning platforms, you don't need to build your own website to get started.

How can you know what to teach and what content to include? I would start with what people ask you questions about. You could scour Quora.com for questions related to your expertise. In my case, I wrote a detailed post about a successful book launch, and people wanted an even deeper behind-the-scenes look, so I created a full 3-hour course on the topic.

It took a few weeks to outline and film the course, but now that the course is created, it is a digital asset that can earn passive income each and every month as new students enroll.

In this section we'll explore a couple different strategies to side hustle in the world of online education.

TEACH THE MASSES – EVEN IF YOU’RE NOT AN EXPERT

ABOUT SCOTT

Scott began his “teaching career” at Skillshare, offering in-person classes on business development in New York.

[Skillshare](#) has since shifted to an all-online platform, but Scott says [Udemy](#) has a larger market share, and so he focuses his efforts there. It’s an Amazon vs. Barnes and Noble situation, where it makes sense to focus on the market leader first, and then possibly syndicate your content elsewhere if it’s easy and economical to do so.

Udemy is NOT a great avenue to sell courses to an existing audience, but is the PERFECT place to reach up to 5 million new students in 190 countries around the world who’ve never heard of you.

Creating the Courses

You don’t need to be a traditionally qualified expert. Instead, you can research and curate the best material out there on a given topic.

For instance, Scott is not a certified sleep doctor, but has helped over 10,000 thousand students [“hack their sleep”](#) with his course. He compiled his research into a well-organized PowerPoint presentation and recorded a voiceover narration using [Screenflow](#). You can also record these movies directly in PowerPoint.

(I use a \$15 software called [Screencast-o-matic](#).)

If you have an interest in a topic, know more than your target student, and have the time to do the research, you’re qualified to be the teacher.

It took Scott 18 hours to research, create, and record his 4.5 hour Sleep Hacking course, and he priced it at \$49.

Selling on Value, Not Price

Scott’s course promised to save people up to an hour and a half of sleep per night, which translated into huge potential value in terms of increased productivity, or time with friends and family.

Marketing the Course

Generating the necessary social proof to be successful on Udemy has 2 primary components:

1. Ratings and Reviews
2. Student Enrollments

Both of these metrics are publicly visible on the Udemy platform. Naturally the courses with excellent ratings and a ton of students are perceived to be better and sell more than the lonely courses with no students and no reviews.

Scott keeps an “insider” list of friends and family who might be interested in a particular project. You could call it a “favor file” – a small database of people you know are willing to help you out.

He emailed those people when the course went live with a coupon code to enroll in the course for free, and encouraged them to leave a positive review.

The great thing about this is you can do this no matter who you are, even if you don’t have a big email list or audience to message. These are one-on-one messages to your existing network.

Aim to reach double-digits in the number of reviews (10+ reviews) through this method.

Hand Raisers on Social Media

Another tactic Scott recommends is to put a teaser out on Twitter or Facebook, with the message, “Hey I’m releasing this course in the next week or so. If you’re interested in checking it out for free, let me know.”

And then you’ll have a self-selected segment of friends curious about your material who can help seed your initial reviews as well.

Increasing Your Student Count

Scott targets having 1000 students enrolled in your course before easing up on your pre-marketing efforts.

One place to go to get enrollments is BlackHatForum.com. There’s a section there for free Udemy courses, and you can create a free coupon code and share your course in there.

Within 24 hours, you can have your 1000 students.

After you hit that number, be sure to cut off the coupon code to prevent it from being picked up in the search results by future would-be-paying customers.

Udemy’s Ranking Algorithm

Scott calls Udemy's algorithm a velocity-based ranking system, where the number of new students within a 7-day period can propel a new course to the top of the ranks.

Because you have the initial base of reviews and a ton of new student enrollments, you'll be in good shape for exposure and sales right out of the gate.

The 10% Rule

Scott says only 10% of people will ever complete your course (or ebook, or whatever), so if the only place you're asking for reviews is the very end, you're missing out on the most opportunities.

Instead, Scott breaks up his content into quarters, and asks for a review at the end of each section. He explains that some students are so excited to implement what they've learned so far, they might never finish the course but those reviews are really important to help new students discover the material.

He includes a screencast video with exact instructions on how to leave a review. If the content is valuable, people will be happy to take a minute to drop in a quick review.

Price Anchoring

During the free giveaway, you can increase the price of your course to increase the perceived value. More people are likely to enroll in a free \$99 course than a free \$29 course, all else being equal.

Title Testing

You can embed your own Google Analytics tracking code in your Udemy course, so you can determine the conversion rate for different course titles or other factors.

Test different titles, check back in a couple weeks, and see what works.

You can do the same thing with testing different price points.

One of Scott's courses converts at 19%!

Revenue Share

Udemy has up to a 50% revenue share for students they source. If you bring in the students (tracked with a unique URL built through their back-end), you keep 97% of the course revenue.

Udemy also has an affiliate program through [LinkShare](#).

One of the most effective tactics for me when I launched my latest Udemy course was recruiting some affiliate partners and offering a special discount for their audience. Those kinds

of endorsements can go a long way toward enrolling new students and reaching a broader market than you could through your own efforts.

Scott's #1 Tip for Side Hustlers

"Find other people with your same mission."

More Info:

- Life-LongLearner.com (Scott's blog)

CREATE AND SELL DIGITAL PRODUCTS ON WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW

ABOUT ROB

Rob Cubbon is a graphic designer extraordinaire and blogger at RobCubbon.com, who now creates digital products like Kindle books and online courses. Sharing his business wisdom online, his side hustles now generate \$5k a month, and when we spoke he was living the digital nomad dream in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

From Humble Beginnings

In the dim and distant past, Rob worked a “miserable” temp job in graphic design. He describes his skills as “not good enough to earn full-time work.”

Still, he was learning the trade and decided to blog about it in his spare time. He wrote about graphic design, including Photoshop and InDesign tricks and tutorials, and slowly but surely, Google traffic started coming in.

After landing more side hustle graphic design work through his blog, the clients got bigger and better. In less than 2 years he stopped working for others and became a full-time freelancer.

Is Blogging Overplayed?

Rob says blogging is still worthwhile. In 2013 he set up a brand new blog in the same way as the 2005 page, and got Google traffic immediately.

***Tip:** Use keywords, keep blogging, stay specific, and write about your passions. "You cannot fail to become a better writer if you keep on writing."*

For example, Rob's top titles were “teaching posts” like:

"Creating Interactive PDFs in InDesign"

"How much does a freelance graphic designer charge in London?"

In that way, he smartly targeted the exact phrases and questions his target customer would ask.

How Did Blogging Make You Money?

Rob's first freelance clients found him through the blog. I pressed him if there were any strategic “calls to action” or “hire me” pages but he insisted that companies reached out simply through his contact page.

Rob explained that this is why it's smart to have your personal name as your domain. It allows you to easily transition from your teaching/tutorial blog content to your own portfolio.

On top of that, at the very least it makes sense to “own” the digital real estate for your own name. Even if I’m not using NickLoper.com, at least I have it reserved in case I want to in the future.

Structuring Win-Win Deals

Rob's clients are NOT on a retainer basis, like some of the other freelance experts I’ve interviewed, but he did explain that many clients tend to hire him repeatedly whenever the need arises.

Creating and Selling Digital Teaching Assets

Rob calls being an online educator a “long game,” something you've got to stick at. He started out with YouTube tutorials, and got turned on to Udemy by a fellow blogger and friend. Rob says to start out with free courses to allow people to see your logo and get exposure to your brand.

Note: If your content is freely available on YouTube, you can’t charge for it on Udemy, but you can bundle it together into a free course.

The minimum course length is 30 minutes.

Next, you can move up the value chain by creating a premium course and promoting it to those students in your free course(s).

You used to be able to send a mass-message through the Udemy platform to all your free students announcing the new paid course, but that tactic has been disallowed. Instead, Rob recommends directing students in your free course to an email opt-in landing page on your website, which is legal under Udemy’s terms.

Then you can email them directly letting them know about your premium course offering.

Subject Matter and Pricing

[Rob's courses](#) specialize in his areas of expertise, including setting up WordPress blogs and websites, Email Marketing, Graphic Design, Building a Freelancing Business, etc.

They are priced around \$80-90 for a 2-3 hour course, but the majority of Udemy's sales come through discounts and promotional offers, so most people end up spending \$20-\$30 per course.

I didn’t fully understand this price promotion strategy of theirs with my first course, and I think I priced it at \$29 to start. Well, when they run promotions that discount all courses to \$19, which

course do you think looks more attractive to prospective students: the course that's normally \$29 or the one that's normally \$99 or \$199?

As an instructor, you can opt-out of these pricing promotions at any time if you're worried about your brand or content being cheapened by such deep discounts.

A Portfolio Strategy

According to Rob, Udemy is kind of a catalog business, with a key point being to have multiple courses. Having several courses adds to your credibility as an instructor and allows for some to perform better than others.

Why Udemy and Not Your Own Platform?

While Rob is in the process of setting up his own site to sell his video courses, he encourages new instructors to consider Udemy. It's similar to the Amazon model where you give up some premium pricing capability and control, in exchange for reaching a broad market.

If you have an existing platform or audience, you can earn more money by publishing directly on your own website. But if you're a relative "no name," you're better off tapping into the broader reach of an existing marketplace.

I've also found that Udemy makes it quite simple to upload your materials. You don't have to worry about setting up a sales page or processing payments. And as mentioned earlier, they offer a 97% revenue share on sales you refer, but still give you the opportunity to reach many more students than you could on your own.

Other Online Education Platforms?

On [Skillfeed](#), you are paid by the minute your material is viewed on the site. It's not a huge revenue maker yet, but Rob says it's incremental income, simple to set up and there's no student feedback. If your course is already on Udemy, you might as well add it on Skillfeed as well!

[Skillshare](#) is another online learning platform, but one Rob's just starting out with so he didn't have much advice to offer us there. I just recently earned my first royalty payment from Skillshare, and it was entirely passive since I just syndicated my Udemy videos and course material over there.

Title Best Practices

Rob says the best Udemy titles combine your targeted keywords with a concrete deliverable. What will your students know by the end of the course?

For examples, check out [Alun Hill and other bestsellers on Udemy](#) with course titles like

“YouTube Secrets: How I Make \$2,000 A Month - And No Filming!”

The title offers a concrete result.

It was due to Rob’s advice that I updated the title of my course to: “Kindle Launch Plan: \$1400 in 30 Days & an Amazon Bestseller.” It has my target keywords (kindle launch) and that concrete result (an Amazon bestseller).

Creating More Content

The great thing about instructional content is it's re-purposeable, so Rob can turn a series of blog posts into a book or into a course. His next project is a course on how to make courses.

So meta.

When I asked Rob what he would do in just an hour a day to get started on a new income stream, he said he would write a post every day to have a Kindle book at the end of the month, or record a video a day and have a new course at the end of the month.

I thought that was a nice way to break down the perhaps daunting task of creating a completely new book or course completely from scratch. If you can make progress each day you’ll be done before you know it.

Rob’s #1 Tip for Side Hustlers

“Consistency: keep the products coming. Fail quickly and keep going.”

More Info:

- RobCubbon.com

SECTION FOUR: SET UP SHOP ON THE WORLD'S LARGEST STORE

Did you know that 40% of the total product volume sold by Amazon isn't actually sold *BY* Amazon?

Instead it's sold by 2 million individuals and companies who use Amazon's warehouses, logistics support, and order processing through a system called FBA: Fulfillment by Amazon.

For side hustlers, that means it's easier than ever to carve out a piece of the action with the help of this multi-billion-dollar ecommerce giant.

The first step in getting started is to find a product to sell (more on that in the coming pages), but after that, Amazon's economies of scale can take over. After you upload your inventory listing, you'll ship your products to the closest Amazon fulfillment center using their discount shipping service. This is the last time you'll ever have to touch your merchandise.

When customers find your items online and place an order, Amazon finds and packages your products using its high-speed picking and sorting system, and then ships them directly to customers, providing them with tracking information and customer support.

There are two primary strategies when it comes to getting started with FBA: retail arbitrage and private labeling, both of which I'll explain in depth on the following pages.

HELP AMAZON CROWDSOURCE THEIR INVENTORY

ABOUT TRAVIS

Travis Scott is a sales rep from Cleveland who found side hustle success with Amazon's FBA program. He writes about his business and parenthood at StuffParentsLike.com.

Travis was of the mindset that success online required knowing how to code, developing beautiful web sites, and being a social media expert. In fact, he admitted to a number of failed online side hustles, but was attracted to the FBA business because he didn't have to learn any technical stuff.

Like me, Travis first learned about the retail arbitrage FBA opportunity from an episode of the [Smart Passive Income Podcast](#).

Unlike me, Travis took immediate action and made over \$500 in his first 30 days selling on Amazon. That was more than enough to have him hooked and he's since continued experimenting with selling toys, groceries, health & beauty products, electronics, and more.

Two of the elements of the FBA program that appeal most to Travis is that it's easy to understand and that there is almost immediate gratification (which he says is key for him). There isn't much technical know-how involved and you can get started immediately.

What In the World is Amazon's FBA Program?

Travis describes the FBA program as eBay or Craigslist on steroids. The principles are the same: you have something to sell and just need to find buyers. Only in this case, Amazon already has a huge marketplace of buyers (around 270 million of them).

The problem with Craigslist and eBay is the seller is stuck with most of the work, like uploading details about the product and ultimately shipping it. The FBA program takes care of these issues for you!

The process is really this simple:

1. You source products to sell through retail stores, thrift stores, or even from around your house.

2. You list these products on Amazon through your seller account and set the prices (typically the product details and pictures are already there for you).
3. You ship all of the items to Amazon at one time.
4. Amazon finds the buyers, packages and ships each individual item, collects payment, deducts their fees, and then sends you money twice per month.

What You Need to Start

Starting on Amazon is pretty easy. Travis says there are three major things you need:

1. An Amazon seller account with the Professional Selling Program, which costs \$39.99 per month. This is relatively painless.

You want the pro-account for two main reasons:

1. So you can use the recommended app below.
2. If you sell more than 40 items per month, it will save you money.

At press time Amazon was offering your first month of the Professional program [free to get started](#). As an alternative, the Individual program has no ongoing monthly cost but has higher per-item fees.

2. The Profit Bandit app for either your iPhone or Android smartphone. This app costs \$9.99 per month, but it is worth every penny. It helps you understand the popularity of products and what price they are currently being sold for on Amazon.

Amazon also has introduced their own app for sellers and it is free, but has some serious functional shortcomings according to reviewers.

3. At least \$150-\$200 to spend on your first scouting trip. It may sound like a lot of money, but if you do this right you will quickly turn that \$200 into \$300 or \$400.

That's an awesome return! If you got 10% on your money in the stock market, your \$200 would be worth \$220 at the end of the year. Travis is talking about turning it into \$300 or more in a matter of weeks!

Scouting

To be successful selling on Amazon, you have to know what to sell, and there are a few strategies that sellers utilize. I asked Travis to break down his retail arbitrage strategy.

He explained that the basic idea is to buy low from discount/drug stores and sell high. He advised to check places such as Target, Walmart, Kmart, CVS, Walgreens, and many more, and to look specifically for clearance sections, end caps, and discount tables.

When you see an item at a significant discount, scan the barcode with the Profit Bandit app to quickly see what that item is selling for on Amazon and what your projected profit would be.

Travis indicated you can do the same thing at thrift stores and garage sales, especially if the items are still in new condition.

He warned that you'll probably need to scan 50-100 items before you find a winner, so don't get discouraged if the first item (or the first 50) you scan doesn't have any margin.

Strategies for Amazon FBA Success

Depending on the product category, Travis aims for a profit margin of at least 35% (which may be considered low by many FBA experts) and a minimum profit of \$5.00. If the store is clearing out an entire lot of products at an attractive price, it makes sense to buy as many as you can. A friend of mine indicated he recently bought something like 20 toilet wands that were on sale for a dollar because they were selling for \$12 on Amazon.

You will need to determine your own strategies and rules for your business. Decide your minimums for profit margins, a dollar profit, and minimum category ranking. Once you decide on those rules, DO NOT waiver from those rules for the first 90 days. It will make your venture much easier and your pay more predictable.

Travis shared that one of his first big wins was an item from a toy store that was going out of business. It sold on Amazon for over \$50 but he was able to purchase it for \$12.90. When he scanned it, it had everything he was looking for:

- A high sales ranking.
- Huge profit margins.
- And a \$26 profit after all fees.

Amazon takes their "fair" cut, but they are doing a lot of the work for you!

Once you purchase these items you will need to package them up and ship them off in bulk to an Amazon fulfillment center. For packing tips and instructions, Travis recommended the site Howazon.com.

Moving Forward with Amazon FBA

Travis explained that while it can be time-consuming to scout for products and sometimes feels like searching for that needle in a haystack, he still estimates he's earning around \$50 an hour from this side hustle. Think you can use this system to turn 2-3 hours a week into \$500 a month or more?

BONUS: If you want to try all of this for free at first, create an Individual seller account with Amazon. Then use the website www.FBACalc.com and find items around the house to sell. We all have extra clutter we don't need and this is a good way to dabble.

Travis' #1 Tip for Side Hustlers

"Take action today."

More Info:

- StuffParentsLike.com

FIND HOT-SELLING ITEMS AND MAKE YOUR OWN

ABOUT ANDY

Andy Slamans began selling on Amazon with the retail arbitrage method of buying something at a discount locally at Walmart or Target, and re-selling it for a profit on Amazon, described by Travis in the previous chapter.

While this is a viable side hustle, it can be time-consuming and you constantly have to replenish your inventory.

What Andy began doing instead was importing his own products directly from China and selling those on Amazon under his own private label brands. The business grew to the point where Andy was able to quit his job in May 2014 and become a full-time importing/ecommerce mogul.

He finished 2014 with \$400,000 in top-line revenue, and explains that gross profit margins are around 25-30%. Not a bad business!

How Private Labeling With Amazon Works

For this business, you are responsible for sourcing the product and shipping it to Amazon's warehouse. From there, they deal with the end customer and take a percentage of the revenue.

The biggest challenge is finding the right products to order that will sell quickly and profitably.

Identifying Profitable Products

During my conversation with Andy, we started out in the Home & Kitchen category on Amazon, but you can do this for any category you like. You can view the top sellers in each category or search for products by keyword.

For this purpose, it makes sense to target descriptive keywords rather than branded keywords. (For example, "shoes" rather than "Nike".)

Amazon publishes a Sales Rank for every product on their website. The lower the Sales Rank, the faster this item sells and the more units get purchased every day. (A Sales Rank of 1 means that item is the top-selling product in that category.)

Andy recommends targeting products with a Sales Rank of 12,000 or below in their category. That indicates a proven demand for the product and a potential opportunity to bring your own similar product into the Amazon marketplace.

During our conversation, we looked at a pair of “onion goggles” that had a [Sales Rank of 1,810 in Kitchen & Dining](#). (Rankings are sure to fluctuate over time.)

Those represented a good combination of a generic keyword plus an attractive Sales Rank.

Scouting the Competition

If there are already dozens of sellers offering nearly identical products, it’s time to move on and source something else because a race to the bottom on price is likely to ensue and probably won’t leave any profit margin for you.

With the onion goggles, it looks like there are plenty of sellers with nearly identical products – but surprisingly most are still fixing their prices at \$19.95. I was surprised not to see them trying to undercut each other a little more.

Finding Suppliers

The next step is to visit [Alibaba.com](#), the leading resource to connect you with Chinese manufacturers.

To make sure you’re dealing only with legitimate suppliers, Andy recommends 3 filters (and an optional 4th) on your search:

1. Gold Supplier
2. On-Site Check
3. Assessed Supplier
4. Escrow available (optional)

Gold Suppliers are trusted manufacturers that have met specific certification criteria, and the on-site check means that someone from Alibaba has physically gone to visit the factory and verified it exists and operates as advertised.

Andy mentioned that a few years ago before the “on-site check” was added, phantom factories would pop up and scam unwitting overseas buyers out of their money!

Assessed suppliers are Gold Suppliers who have undergone a third-party inspection of their processes and reporting.

The escrow option is an additional buyer protection where your money is held in a secure third-party account until you receive the merchandise and are happy with it.

What you’ll do is search your same keyword on Alibaba that you did on Amazon; for instance, onion goggles. There you’ll find the same goggles that were selling for \$20 on Amazon are

available wholesale for just \$1.50-\$2.00 apiece.

The 3x Rule

When searching for products, you want to see a 3x multiplier between your acquisition cost and your anticipated sales price.

For example, if you buy products for \$10 each, you'll want to target a sales price of \$30 to cover your overhead and Amazon's fees and still leave a healthy margin.

The onion goggles fit the 3x Rule in this case.

Your First Order

Before placing your first order, Andy recommends a smaller test order of 2-3 units to inspect the quality. Generally you can still get a good price because the manufacturers want to impress you and earn your business.

(You may be able to place this order on [AliExpress.com](https://www.aliexpress.com), a sister site to Alibaba.)

When it comes to minimum order quantities, don't bite off more than you're comfortable with. I would suggest positioning the whole FBA side hustle as an experiment and giving yourself a set amount, maybe \$500 or \$1000 to start with and play with that to see if it works. That way you minimize your risk and can still scale up quickly if it does.

Andy says it's not unreasonable to have your first order in for \$500 or less.

Shipping

Air shipping is naturally much faster than sea freight, and may come with less importing headaches too. Even if the price is higher, it might be justified by your ability to get your product on Amazon faster and not have to deal with customs agents and importing regulations that (apparently) are more difficult when shipping by boat.

For a product like the onion goggles, shipping costs might be equal to the manufacturing cost of \$1.50 each.

From there, you'll send off the items to Amazon's warehouse and they'll add the stock to their site.

Creating a Winning Sales Page

Andy offered some suggestions to make your sales page outshine and outrank the competition, including:

- Featuring your target keywords in your product title, without being spammy or keyword

stuffing.

- Taking professional quality photographs of your product. (Andy then outsources the photo editing to a seller on Fiverr who makes the background white.)
- Utilizing the product bullet points and writing a product description that adequately informs the customer with everything they need to know to make a decision about the purchase.

For some product page best-practices, just check out the top-sellers in any category and borrow their formulas and tactics.

Generating Reviews

As an Amazon seller, you have the capability to generate special promo codes for your products. What you can do is send out these promo codes for free or discounted products and ask for an honest review in exchange.

Andy considers this a marketing expense, and is quite inexpensive in the grand scheme of things because if you can generate some sales and reviews this way you'll start moving up the search results for your target keyword and generating paid sales on your own.

Amazon is a giant search engine and it's even better than Google because it's a search engine for BUYERS – people are actively expecting to spend money when they're on Amazon.

Andy's #1 Tip for Side Hustlers

“Take action. Don't be a ‘career learner.’”

More Info:

- SlamazonPrivateLabel.com

WRAP-UP

In this book we explored 10 different walks down The Side Hustle Path, each from a real been-there-done-that entrepreneur.

First, we looked at some fun opportunities being opened up by the new Sharing Economy, including ride-sharing and house-sharing. This is an exciting trend because it enables peer-to-peer commerce at a scale that wasn't possible before.

In Section Two I introduced another fast way to get started earning side income, and that's selling a service. You don't need a website or a logo or business cards; all you need is some skill or solution you can offer, and a customer, and you're in business!

Next we met Scott and Rob, who are both earning money online by teaching what they know and what they've learned. Although they have very different approaches, the demand for practical online education is climbing each year. Around the world, students may be anxiously seeking to learn skills or information that's already in your head – will you teach them?

And finally we learned a little “secret” about Amazon; that almost half of their sales actually come from third-party sellers – people just like you! Do you think you could source some undervalued inventory locally, or bring your own version of a proven seller to market?

The stories and ideas in this book are meant to be a starting point, something to get the ideas flowing and the conversation moving in your mind. The next step on The Side Hustle Path is to decide which of these (or another idea entirely) you'd like to pursue, and take action!

One of my first “real” entrepreneurial experiences was a house painting business I ran in college. Since there was no marketing budget, I had to find clients by cold calling door-to-door. I remember circling my territory looking for the perfect place to start, and I pulled over in this little subdivision outside Seattle.

I probably sat there in my truck for 10 or 15 minutes on that rainy March evening, psyching myself up and going over my pitch in my head. At some point, I came to the scary realization that nothing was ever going to happen until I got off my butt and rang that first doorbell.

And that first doorbell is what set in motion all of my entrepreneurial successes and failures and side hustle experiments since.

I tell that story not because I expect you to go cold calling, but because it was all about taking that first step, that first action – and I'm confident you'll be happy where The Side Hustle Path leads when you do the same.

ABOUT NICK

Nick Loper is an online entrepreneur and lifelong student in the game of business. He lives in Northern California with his wife Bryn and a lovable giant Shih-Tzu called Mochi. On a typical day you can find him writing, working on his latest business idea, rooting for the Huskies, or skiing the Sierra pow.

Nick built his first website in 2003, and was instantly hooked. Since then he's run a number of online businesses and consulted for dozens more.

As you can probably tell from the book, he gets really excited about this stuff and wants to help other aspiring and part-time entrepreneurs find success online.

Want to know more?

Drop by and check out his blog, SideHustleNation.com, a growing resource and community for aspiring and part-time entrepreneurs.

Connect with fellow side hustlers to share wins, get feedback, and support each other along The Side Hustle Path in the free Facebook group: Facebook.com/groups/SideHustleNation.

Do you have a side hustle success story you'd like to share? Get in touch and you might just be featured in the next book in this series!

THANK YOU

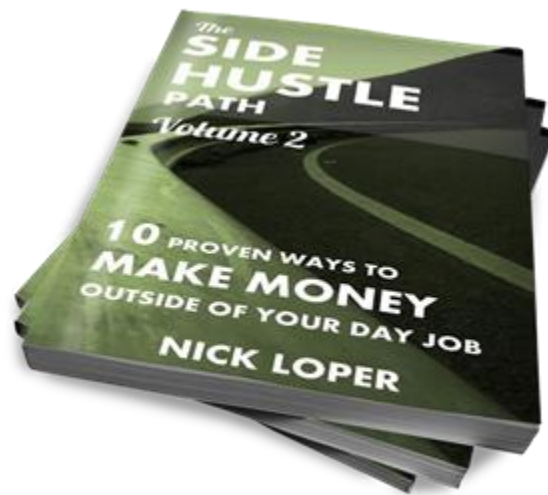
I'd like to say a quick "thank you" for purchasing this book.

Obviously there are thousands of books out there, but you took a chance and chose this one.

Hopefully it got the gears turning and you learned some new strategies to begin earning side hustle money.

As a **special bonus gift**, be sure to grab a free copy of the next book in the series, *The Side Hustle Path Volume 2*:

<http://www.sidehustlenation.com/path>



If you have any questions or feedback, please let me know (nick@sidehustlenation.com). Your comments are really valuable because they will guide future editions of this book and I'm always striving to improve my writing.

And if you liked what you read, I need your help!

Please take a minute to [leave a quick review on Amazon](#).

Thanks so much!

ALSO BY NICK

Nick is also the author of:

[*The Small Business Website Checklist: A 51-Point Guide to Build Your Online Presence The Smart Way*](#)

[*Treadmill Desk Revolution: The Easy Way to Lose Up to 50 Pounds in a Year – Without Dieting*](#)

[*Virtual Assistant Assistant: The Ultimate Guide to Finding, Hiring, and Working with Virtual Assistants*](#)

[*Work Smarter: 350+ Online Resources Today's Top Entrepreneurs Use to Increase Productivity and Achieve Their Goals*](#)