

From Course Concept to \$141,659 In Sales In 6 Months (Summary)

by Grant Baldwin

Validation Station

So why is validation so important?

1. **Validation allows you to tweak before you build**
2. **Validation prevents you from wasting time later**
3. **Validation gets cash in the door**
4. **Validation lights a fire under your butt to get the course built**

Alright, so we get it that validation is important, but how do you actually do it?

<http://blog.videofruit.com/make-money-blogging/>

- I created a doc in Evernote explaining what I thought the product would look like when it was finished. I talked about how it would help them and what they would get. I also covered my own story to establish some more credibility.
- And then I asked of the sale. I used [Gumroad](#) for this and after emailing ~200 people (in 3 different groups like Bryan recommended), I had 22 people sign up for \$197 each.

Keep in mind that I hadn't created anything yet. No lessons were made. I wasn't even clear on what the finished product would look like.

There were 22 people who just sent me \$197 essentially for thin air.

Crazy.

But this validated the concept, and I felt confident we were onto something.

Building

So now I have 22 people's money, and I have to deliver them something. Time to get to work.

Here's how I built the course...

1. Create a deadline.

2. Create an outline.

3. Connect the dots.

After I created my master outline, I did a few things I would recommend...

1. Send it to your early adopter test group.

2. Create your creation plan.

I knew there were a few things that needed to happen with each lesson...

1. Create lesson outline.
2. Create lesson slides.
3. Record lesson.
4. Upload to actual online course.

From that list, I knew I had to do 1 & 3. But I could have someone else handle 2 & 4.

So I hired Jeff. Jeff made things much easier for me. Jeff knows all that technical stuff. I don't.

You need to hire a Jeff.

Here's an example of how a given week looked...

- Me - create outlines for module 7 lessons

- Him - build slides for module 6
- Me - record lessons for module 5
- Him - upload lessons to site for module 4

We had validated and built a course in under 2 months.

Now let's see if anyone will buy it... :)

Launch

It's important to have an idea of how you plan to market and sell it.

- Will you do a big open/close launch?
- Will you work with JVs?
- Will your course just be evergreen and be available for purchase any time on your site?
- Will you use webinars?
- Will you just pitch to your email list?

I decided on using Facebook ads that would funnel to weekly live webinars.

Why?

A few reasons...

1. I had done a few Q&A webinars before and had seen the power of them. I had also heard/seen many others have great success with selling through a webinar.
2. Given the topic of my course (speaking), doing live webinars seemed like a great way to demonstrate my own experience and expertise as a speaker (credibility for selling) seemed like it would be more powerful than email, social media, etc (although we still use those to push people to the webinar).

3. I had seen this weekly webinar model work with others. When doing anything online or offline, there's no need to reinvent the wheel. Pay attention to what is working for others and see how you could do something similar.

To fill the webinar, we planned to do 2 things...

- 1. Email our own list.**
- 2. Let's try Facebook ads.**

From the first webinar, we had 13 sales totaling \$5,161. Not bad.

We had launched. Between the beta test group (22 people joined at \$197) and this initial launch, we were nearing \$10k already.

Pricing

Pricing can often be determined by how the course helps people...

1. Make money
2. Save money
3. Save time

After the initial test group, we started with 3 pricing options (which I learned largely from my friend [Nathan Barry](#)) and priced the tiers at \$197, \$297 and \$497 which was discounted to \$397 for the webinar.

We ran this pricing for several weeks and found 95%+ were just buying the top tier. So we raised the top tier price to \$597 and then \$697. Still, everyone was just buying that top tier.

So in 3 months of having the course out, we've already raised the price 4 separate times to the point where it's now \$1,000 over where it started. Granted, we've also added a lot of new content and value to the course, but again that goes to show, you pick a price you feel comfortable with in the beginning and then adjust accordingly to the market.

Another key rule we follow is this: when someone sees a price for our course, we promise that is the lowest price they'll ever see. If you've ever purchased something, only to see it discounted a few days later, you know that can leave a bad taste in your mouth as a consumer.

Alright, so that's how we've handled pricing. Let's keep cruising...

Ongoing Sales & Marketing (Webinar Strategies)

We launched on March 3 and have done a live weekly webinar just about every week since then.

We've tried JV webinars (joint venture) where we partner with someone else who has an audience who may be interested in our course. They invite their audience, I do the webinar and sales pitch. We split the profits 50/50.

Win-win.

These have worked extremely well, and we have several scheduled into the future.

But live webinars, primarily from Facebook ads, continue to deliver for us.

FAQs

Do you do your own Facebook ads? How do you do Facebook ads?

For the first three webinars, I did the Facebook ads on my own. I wanted to get a feel for how they worked and what I needed to know. I didn't need to know all the nitty gritty, but since they were going to be such a key piece to my sales engine, I wanted to have a general idea of how they worked.

After that I hired a contractor to help create and test ads. He has tested targeting, image, copy, headlines, etc. We're still doing a lot of testing, so while I don't have a definitive list of what works and what doesn't, I'm not even sure my do's and don't's list would work for your audience (and vice versa) anyway.

How many people generally show up for your webinar?

For us, it has varied between 7-22% of those who register but it has averaged out to about 16%. Meaning, if I have 100 people register, I can expect around 16 to show up.

How many people on the webinar will buy?

Again, this will vary depending on several factors. One big factor is the price of the course. As we've raised our price, the percentage of buyers has dropped (fewer buyers) but the revenue dollar amount has gone up (higher ticket item).

But so far, we've had between 4-18% conversion rates. That is based off the number of people on the webinar, not the total who registered. Our current average is 10%.

What do you do about the people who registered but didn't show up or buy?

Great question! To be honest, we're still trying to figure out the best ways of handling this. But if you're keeping score at home from my previous example, you can see that of the 100 people that registered, 98-99 did not buy. That's a lot!

Right now we're trying a variety of different things such as waiting a few weeks and inviting them back to another webinar, sending them through a 30-day email sequence to warm them up again, etc.

I don't have a definitive answer, but again, I think a lot of it would depend on your audience and what it is you're offering. The bottom line is continue to build that rapport and relationship with them, so you can stay top-of-mind.

When is the best day/time for a webinar?

Right now, we generally do all of our webinars on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday at either 3p CDT or 7p CDT.

Do you show a replay? If so, how long do you leave it up?

Currently, we do show a replay but we only leave it up for 48-72 hours. The longer you leave it up, the less likely people will be to actually watch it. If you leave it up indefinitely, they'll probably never watch it. You want to force them to make a decision.

Totals

At the time of this writing, we're 6 months from course concept to now. Here are some total numbers:

- Total Course Members: 212
 - From Initial launch: 22
 - From Facebook Ads Webinars: 158
 - From JV Webinars: 32
 - Total Revenue: \$141,659 (~\$71,000 of that total is in monthly payments we will receive over the coming months)
 - Expenses:
 - Facebook Ads - \$33,946.71
 - JV Split - \$7,077
 - List Growth: 11,099 new email subscribers
 - From Facebook ads: 9,993 (16 webinars)
 - From JV webinars: 1,106 (4 JV webinars)
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Tools We Used

One place a lot of people get hung up on with course creation and promotion is the tools. It doesn't have to be that complicated. While there are plenty of great options out there, here's what we've used and why...

[Leadpages](#)

[Google Hangouts](#)

[Chatroll](#)

[Wishlist](#)

[ConvertKit](#)

[SamCart](#)

[Gumroad](#)

Final Lessons Learned

I know we've covered a lot of ground here and it's easy to get lost in all the details, but let me summarize some of the big lessons I've learned in the past 6 months of creating and selling a course...

- 1. Solve A Specific Pain**
- 2. Validate**
- 3. Set A Deadline and Stick To It**
- 4. Focus on Version 1.0**
- 5. Test It**

Creating a course can be a game changer both for your business and for your ability to help others. But it won't just magically happen. How long are you going to keep watching others profit from their courses before you get in the game? What's it going to take for you to take action?

