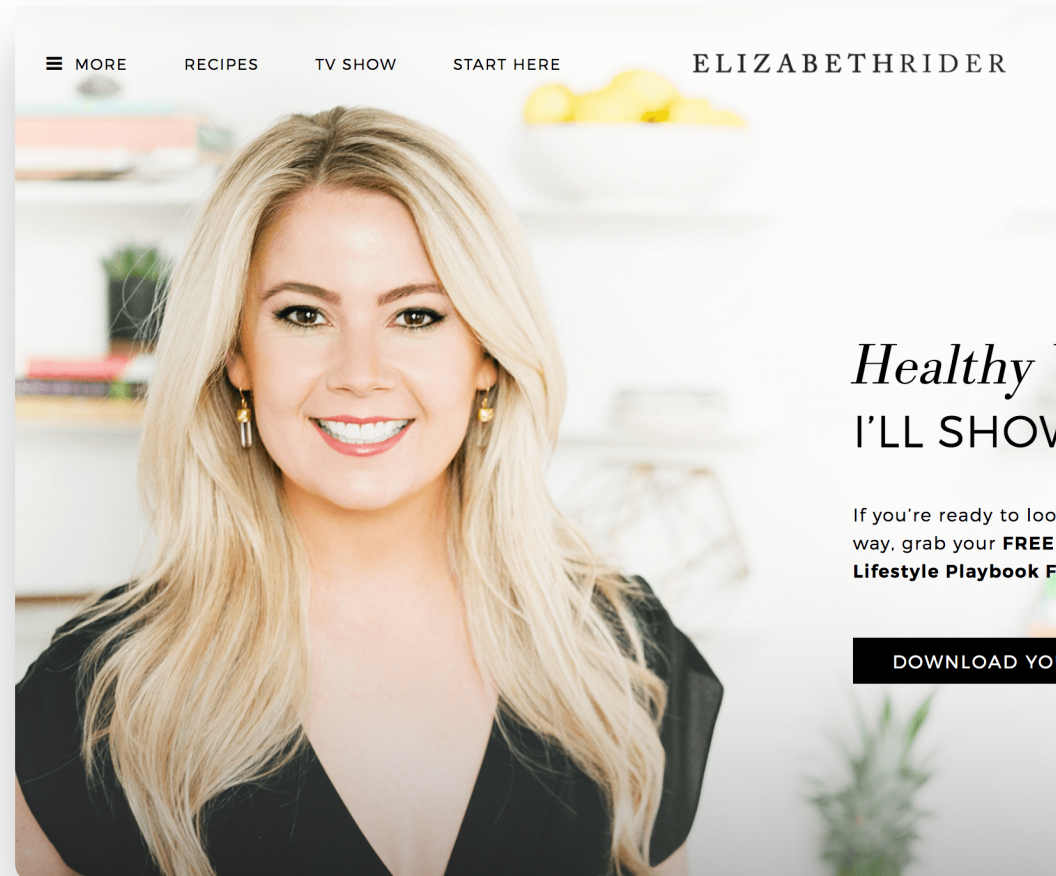


Thinkific Case Study

How Elizabeth Rider monetized her successful health & wellness blog and increased her reach by adding online courses to her business.



Meet Elizabeth



Elizabeth is a leading nutrition and whole living expert who teaches women around the world how to become healthier and lead happier, more successful lives.

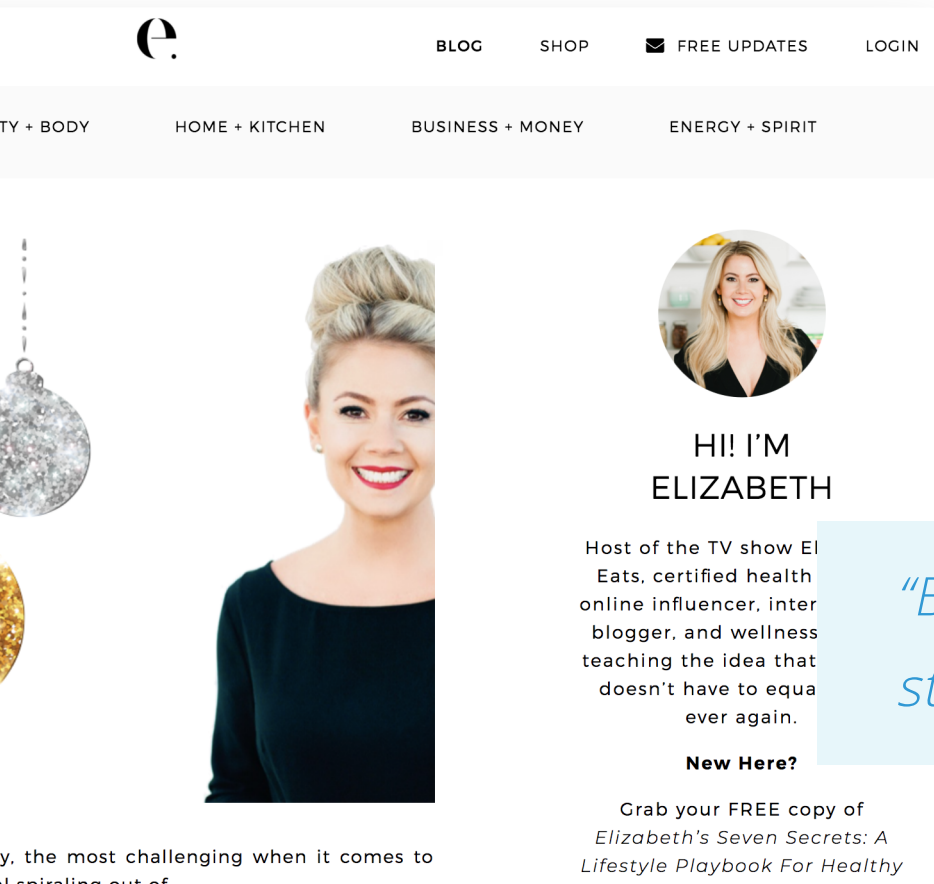
From her blog, which draws over 2 million readers per year, to her TV show on Food Matters TV, to speaking at TEDx, she's made quite a name for herself in her space.

Elizabeth is also a very successful online course instructor. Her signature programs Clean Up Your Diet, Purpose to Profit, and The Wellness Business Bootcamp have helped thousands of people, and allowed her to scale her business into the massive success it's become.

“With 1-1 coaching, I felt like a record on repeat, answering the same questions. So I took everything that people were asking me, and turned it into an online program.”

- Elizabeth Rider

It all started with her blog



"Blogging is what really started my business."

Nine years ago, Elizabeth started a blog out of her passion for health and wellness. Her blog began as a way to share her insights, nutrition tips, and healthy recipes for anyone interested.

"I realized I needed to start selling something in order to stay in business," Elizabeth shared with us. "People think that bloggers get paid a bunch of money, but they don't. There's no magic blogging God paying us."

While researching resources to help build her business, Elizabeth stumbled upon an online course by **Marie Forleo** called B-School, which taught her what she needed to know about online marketing and content marketing.

Initially, she had no plans to turn her blog into an online business, but as her readership grew, she realized the blog was something she could potentially monetize.

Moving from 1-1 coaching to online courses

After getting the training she needed, Elizabeth began offering 1-1 coaching services on her blog. She soon realized, however, that 1-1 time placed a limit on her earning potential.

"I only did 1-on-1 coaching for about 6 months because I realized it was very time intensive and you don't get paid a lot because you're only helping one person at a time."

She also found herself answering the same basic questions time and time again during her individual training sessions. Although it was tedious, it did provide her with good material to create her first online course. She realized that creating an online training program was something that was much more scalable for her, and had the earning potential and influence that she wanted.



"I just took everything that people were asking me in the 1-on-1 sessions and turned it into an online program."

Quick tips for successfully marketing online courses

Here are some of Elizabeth's most effective marketing strategies:



STEP 1:

Use social media and blogging to your advantage

Elizabeth's primary strategy for building her online audience has been through publishing articles on her blog and sharing them on social media. She also has a YouTube channel where she publishes free videos on a regular basis. Her YouTube videos have helped her build her personal brand and also send traffic to her website.



STEP 2:

Facebook Advertising works

Elizabeth definitely shares a lot of free content on Facebook (for example, links to new blog posts and videos). But when she wants to promote a course, she will spend money on Facebook ads to do so. "I use the promoted posts in Facebook a lot if I'm selling something", she told us.

"I don't think it's really worth promoting posts if I'm not selling something, but if it is leading people straight to a program I will pay to promote it."



STEP 3:

Try email marketing and joint ventures

In addition to sending emails to her own list of subscribers (something all online course creators should be doing), Elizabeth often partners up with other people who have email lists. "I also do joint ventures with friends who have big email lists", she says. "We will do a trade and include each other in our email list."

Bettering the student learning experience with screen recordings



Elizabeth's courses mostly consist of video lessons for her students. She created these lessons by recording her computer screen as she spoke into her microphone while presenting PowerPoint slides.

"The videos in my courses are actually screen recordings", she told us. "I would just create a PowerPoint with the information and then I use Snagit from TechSmith to do screen recordings." This method of course creation, according to Elizabeth, is easier than recording live video footage -- if you don't have the proper equipment, you may have to call someone in. As a creative person, a lot of times your ideas come on the fly, so it's useful to be able to do screen recording yourself.

The decision to add screen recordings stemmed from Elizabeth's desire to provide her students with a more effective learning experience. "Most people are watching me from their iPhones or on a tablet or a laptop. So doing the whole high definition and professional video shoot can be beneficial... but people just want your information", she explained to us.

"I think people learn really well with the PowerPoint slides and your voice because they're reading and they're hearing you at the same time."

However, she doesn't include all of her content in her PowerPoint slides. She prefers to include bullet points on the slides themselves, and then expands upon those points vocally. She also includes images throughout her presentations to make them more engaging and visually attractive.

Choosing Thinkific to run her health and wellness empire

Before Elizabeth started using Thinkific, she was using various WordPress plugins to add her course content to her website. After receiving a payment for a course, she would have to personally email them links to her video lessons.

"I actually started selling courses about four years ago. I tried some different WordPress plugins and then that got really complicated. I was using MailChimp email auto-responders but it was a very manual and time-intensive process."

Elizabeth loved Thinkific's user-friendly design and functionality, both for her as a course creator and for her students. She had much more time to focus on creating quality course content and marketing her business, because she was no longer needing to deal with the technical aspects of creating online courses, or manually inserting information or sending content to her students.

"If the delivery is challenging for a user it doesn't matter how good your content is. So I needed something that was user friendly for me as the creator but also for the student."



Advice for online entrepreneurs about online courses

Elizabeth has definitely learned a ton of valuable lessons from her experience as an entrepreneur and online course creator. Here are some tips she shared:

1. Know your target audience

Before you create your first (or your next) online course, make sure you understand the needs of your target audience. Take the time to ask them what they want to learn from you, then create your course based on their feedback. This will ensure that you create a course that you know people want, and not a course that you think they want.

"I've seen people spend like 6 months creating a course and then have very little sales because they didn't know what they were creating or who they were creating it for."

2. Build your email list

Building an email list of people who are in your target market gives you the opportunity to sell your course before you create it. It sounds counterintuitive, but when you have an email list you can literally ask people what they want, and then create a course to sell to them based on the feedback you get.

"You want to sell a course before you create it. Even if you're not actually collecting the money, get an email list of people who are interested."

When it comes to building your email list, the key is to consistently provide value to your subscribers for free. Send them information that helps them solve their problems or get the result they want. When you promote your course to them, they are more likely to purchase it if you've earned their trust by helping them for free.

3. Build a business you're passionate about

If you don't have a passion for teaching your topic and for helping your customers succeed, you should probably do something else. Get clear on why you are doing what you do, and use that as your motivation.

"Motivation comes from doing something you love. If you're not motivated, you're probably doing the wrong thing."