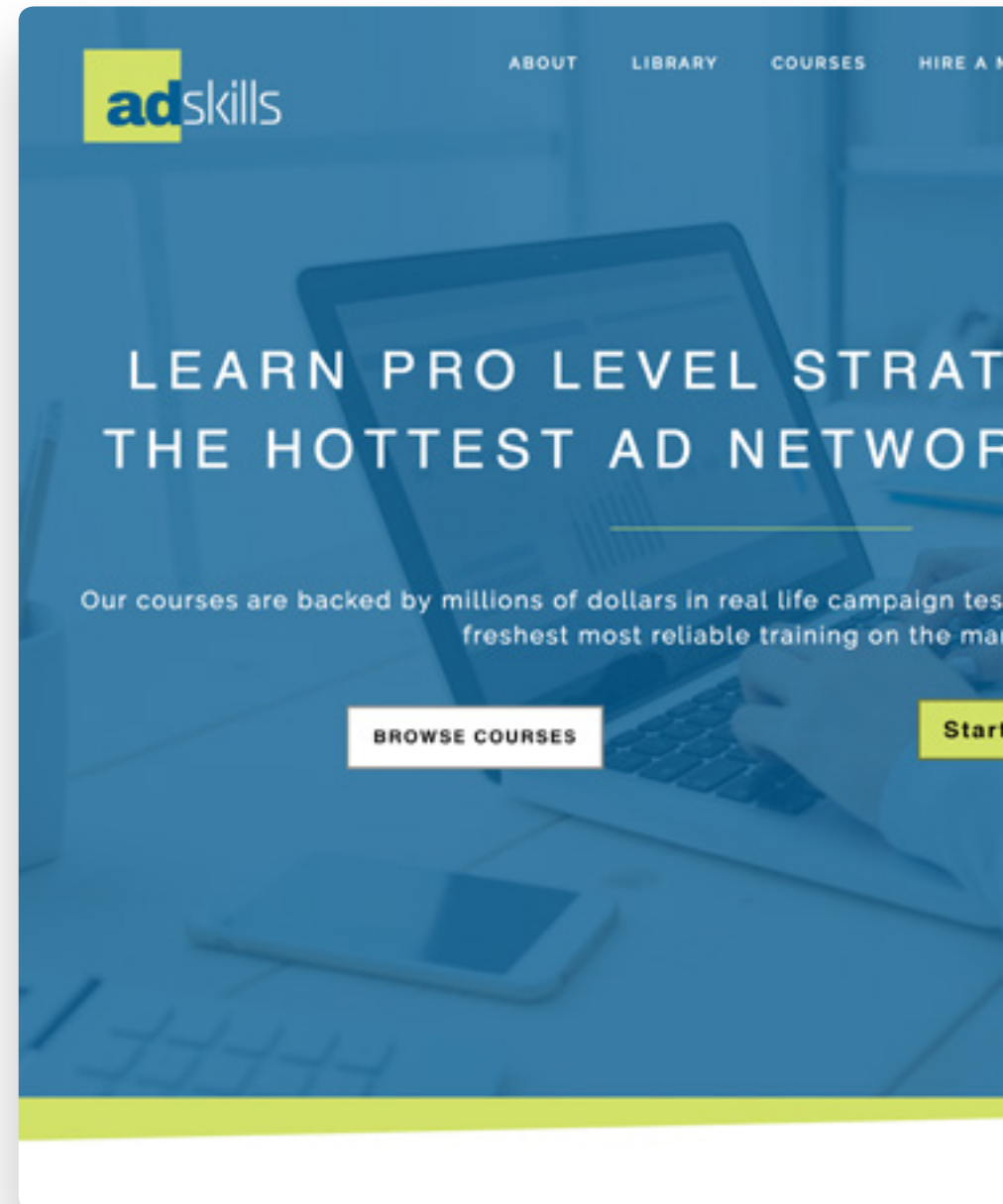


## Thinkific Case Study

# Scaling a training company with online courses:

How Justin Brooke's digital marketing training and certification courses earned him multiple 6-figures.



## Meet Justin

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Justin Brooke didn't hesitate when he told us that creating online courses changed his life. By building an online course business through digital marketing training and certification courses, he's been able to provide for his family and live a great lifestyle in the process.

Justin founded DMBI online, (now AdSkills.com) which has over a dozen digital marketing training courses to choose from. His courses range from \$49 to \$498 per course, as well as a few free courses to establish leads. We sat down with him to talk about how he grew a single online course idea to a booming 6-figure company.

“Creating courses can actually change your life. It can give you the life of your dreams.”

- Justin Brooke

## Riding the online education wave

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Justin Brooke launched his first online course almost 12 years ago. At the time, online education was still a brand new space, and he was offering a Joomla course for \$35. He played around in the online course space for awhile (there was a lot of room) offering courses on topics like how to buy and sell websites for profit, how to make money with website domain ownership, and more.

Suddenly, Justin saw the online education space getting more crowded. All of a sudden, there was a podcast, a YouTube channel, and a blog article about everything. However, the quality of this free content was sub-par.

In this sub-par quality, Justin saw an opportunity to rise above everyone else by creating great courses that people would want to pay for.





## People are willing to pay for quality information

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What Justin soon found was that even though the abundance of free information online was booming, there were also an increasing number of people willing to pay for online courses. People wanted quality content, organized in an easy-to-manage way, and thoughtfully presented.

“Last year \$172,000,000 was made off of just online coding bootcamps... that’s just one segment of the online education market that made \$172,000,000. It’s a boom time for teachers right now.”

# Creating online training and certifications for digital marketing professionals

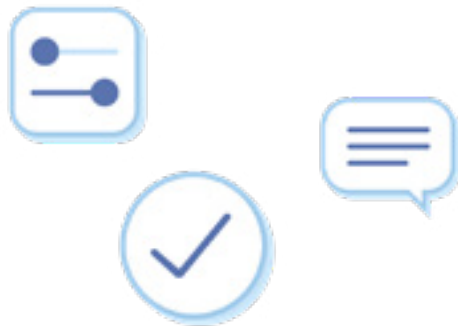
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When Justin started his own agency (before he worked on online courses full time), a big issue he found was finding people who had high-quality training when it came to online advertising and marketing. It was a newer space, and in hiring employees and clients, Justin realized not many people had the right education.

“A lot of the marketing courses online are usually about, ‘How to Make Money Online’ or, ‘How to do Affiliate Marketing. If you’re trying to build a career as a Google Adwords professional, or as a Facebook Ads professional, there wasn’t a lot of stuff out there”.

So, Justin fixed his own problem. He decided to educate and certify his team, as well as his clients. Today, Justin’s company has over a dozen courses on specific topics including Facebook Ads, Twitter Ads, Solo Ads, YouTube Ads, and more.

“It’s hard to find training – career building level training – for online advertising. So we just decided to make courses around that.”



# How to create targeted online course content —

## STEP 1:

Build a customer persona and find out where your audience hangs out online

Creating a customer persona is vital to begin with, before you even start creating courses or writing ads to promote your business online.

"Nobody wants to start [with a persona]. But the customer persona allows you to know who it is that you're targeting. Figure out what their pain points are, what their interests are, where they're hanging out online, and what their desires and their dreams are. You have to start there."

Knowing where your audience is spending their time online is important because that's where you will want to advertise. Without creating an in-depth customer persona, you run the risk of targeting the wrong audience or, even worse, putting a lot of work into content that might not have an audience at all.

"If you're teaching people how to become better at 'Call of Duty', then YouTube is going to be really good because there are a ton of gamers on YouTube. If you're trying to reach CEO's, though, CEOs are probably not spending a whole lot of time watching YouTube."

## STEP 2:

Create 'no-brainer' content that your market definitely wants to read

The next thing to do is create some form of content. Justin suggested to stay in the realm that's easiest and most comfortable for you. However, make sure you are using your customer persona to understand what type of content you should be creating. After determining what your target audience will be most interested in, create 'no-brainer' content that anyone with questions about your topic will want to click.

Here's an example from Justin's own blog: "I have a blog post called [10 Online Ads That Made Millions for Their Founders](#). To my market, that's a no-brainer. Anybody who is interested in anything about online advertising, they're going to click on that blog post."

## STEP 3:

Do research to validate your content ideas

Justin mentioned 'The Toothbrush Problem' as a great way to decide the type of content that would best attract your target audience. The Toothbrush Problem is a Google concept describing a problem that is so bad that you think of it twice a day. "So that's where you start," said Justin. "What is the problem your audience has that they're thinking about often?"

A great way to validate your content topic ideas by reading reviews on Amazon for similar products or services (especially the 3-star reviews!). Join groups and forums where your audience hangs out, read blogs people are asking questions on, and become a part of the community to see what people are wondering and what people are buying. Then, start writing and use marketing tools to validate if your educated guesses were correct or not.

# Marketing strategies to help boost your online course sales

Here are some of Justin's preferred course marketing strategies:

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## 1. Share your content on social media

It's always good to start close to home, where you know you'll gain a little support. Whenever you create new content, whether it's a blog post, a video, or perhaps a podcast episode, make sure you share that content on all of your social media profiles and pages.

## 2. Ask relevant influencers to share your content (in a non-spammy way)

Justin always looks for other people with large audiences that may be willing to share his content (aka influencers). Scan for influencers talking about the same things you are, and see if they'd be open to sharing your content, or hopping on a webinar with you.

Once you have a quality list of people who may want to read and share your content, reach out to them with a soft sell. Justin suggests something like: "Hey, I saw you shared this post the other day, I loved it. I happened to write like it something recently. If you want to share, great. I just wanted to let you know it exists."

"Remember: don't just go about approaching everybody. You really need to think about who would want to share this blog post and then approach them with an actual reason".

## 3. Start with small ad campaigns

Consider starting to put small amounts of money behind your content in order to choose exactly who you want to see it. Justin reiterates that small is ok: "I'm talking about \$5-10 a day – whatever you can afford."

## 4. Push enrollments by offering content upgrades

Begin turning your blog, or free content readers, into students for your online course. A content upgrade strategy depends on how much you're charging for your course. Justin's best strategy depends on how much you're charging in the first place.

"If you're selling something over a hundred dollars, the first thing to do is use a content upgrade. If you're reading a blog post about '10 Ads That Made Millions', you can say at the bottom, 'If you opt in [to my email list] I can give you a post of 50 ads that made millions'. They opt-in with their email for more of the same, and now you have a lead. And then you can use a follow-up email sequence to grow the relationship with them."

## Choosing Thinkific as the home for his online courses

It was obvious to Justin after reviewing the Thinkific platform that it was built by online course creators, for online course creators.

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We asked Justin the simple question: 'Why Thinkific?' Justin shared with us that it was obvious to him from Thinkific's platform that it was created by people who were online course creators themselves, and knew the best features for the market.

"There are two types of companies when it comes to software. There's a company who focuses on having a lot of features on their sales page. And there's the company who focuses on having the right features and making sure those features really work. And that's the difference with Thinkific."

Justin also loved the way Thinkific's features work. He told us that to him, the features worked great, and weren't buggy or clunky. "The interface is really tightly designed. You can tell that was added by people who understand how to market courses."

He also remarked that he loved the mobile responsiveness of Thinkific's platform. He chose Thinkific for the seamless way the order forms, pages, and everything else worked on mobile. In his view, people underestimate how important it is to have a mobile optimized checkout process.





# Advice for first time course creators

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Justin's final words of advice for course creators was to find out what you are really good at, and go from there. Find out how to integrate it into your business.

He told us:

"Everybody's great at something. Some people know how to make a grilled cheese like nobody else's business. Some people know how to fold t-shirts like nobody else's business. Some people know how to clean a house. Everybody knows something. I have seen a guy make 6 figures in 90 days from a course about how to make fried pork rinds. So don't discount your knowledge. There's something that you know how to teach. It's not really going to cost you much. And today, you have tools like Thinkific. It's a no-brainer."

