



# MASTERING UDEMY



HOW I PUBLISHED MY FIRST  
ONLINE COURSE

CRISTI VLAD

# **Mastering Udemy:**

How I Published my First Online Course - Express Walkthrough

**Cristian Vlad Zot**

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*Note to the reader (disclaimer)*

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in the book is complete and accurate. However, the author is not engaged in rendering advice to the individual reader.

Mastering Udemy: How I Published my First Online Course - Express Walkthrough

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## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
That Insomnia Provoking Idea!.....	7
How the Outline came to Life.....	10
Things you need before you Start.....	13
Opening an Account on Udemy.....	19
Writing the Transcript.....	24
The Recording Process.....	30

Getting the Course Published - The Struggle.....	38
Promotions, Marketing, and How to make it Better.....	45
Concluding Remarks.....	54
About the Author - And Gratitude.....	56



## Introduction

I don't want to pose as grandstander, but I was able to create from scratch and publish my first online course on Udemy (<http://udemy.com>) in less than 3 weeks. Looking back to the massive volume of work I've put in and the stress I've been through during the process, it almost seems unbelievable.

But let me back up for a moment...

One of the driving factors of my current philosophy of life is to safeguard against superficiality. I do not believe in overnight success or get-rich-quick schemes.

Why a course created in three weeks would not be considered unsubstantial or superficial? Let me give you a few my reasons.

First of all, it is about knowledge; the kind of knowledge that turns you into an intimate connoisseur of the subject matter; that kind of knowledge that is heavily supported by experience.

The topic of my course is how to combine ketosis - the metabolic state where you primarily burn fat for fuel - and intermittent fasting - a meal timing strategy where you restrict your food intake to a certain timeframe everyday.

I have been researching and experimenting with these two strategies since 2013. I also wrote two 200+ pages books on each of these subjects. So I could uninterruptedly spew practical information on these two protocols for dozens of minutes at a time. And that's what I actually did.

I was able to write the entire course manuscript of ~22,000 words in

less than 4 days. This is the equivalent of a 150-page book.

Secondly, it is about obsessive focus. During these three weeks of hard work, the course was the central preoccupation of my days. I planned and programmed my life around this single goal, while everything else faded onto the 4th and 5th place.

I had to say *pass* to a lot of social gatherings, I severely limited my online presence, my blog activity and also the time I devoted to reading (which is one of my top priorities).

I am glad that I also broke some of my lifestyle rules, working all day long, sometimes from 7 A.M. until the next day at 2 A.M.

My computer ran uninterrupted days at length, rendering videos - a resource demanding and time consuming process.

Third of all, it is about persistence in the face of disheartening obstacles. I learned a lot about myself during these 20 days of mentally-exhausting work.

I know that it may not seem much in terms of the time I consumed with this project, but I'd like to stress that it is possible to achieve high-quality work in a limited amount of time, given that you adopt an appropriate approach.

I went through a lot of challenges ever since the very beginning. As you will later learn, Udemy, probably the biggest online course platform at the moment, is strict with its quality guidelines.

One of my first obstacles regarded hardware. The microphone inside my phone, which I initially used for recording purposes, was not enough for providing good sound quality. The room that I made the recording for my promo video had poor lighting and the audio came with a lot of echo. That's how/why my initial settings (recording hardware + environment) were rejected by Udemy's review team.

I needed to do something, otherwise I would not reach the positive end of story I was looking for. Since I already had the content (manuscript) all laid out, the only thing left was to record and publish the lectures. But without the proper hardware and setup, I would not be able to pull it off.

To make matters worse, I was camera shy, I had 0 experience with video production, 0 with using video editing software, 0 with using audio editing software, and on top of that I did not have the basic tools to do this. Given the circumstances, was I to quit?

Well, yes! I battled the thoughts of quitting countless times throughout the process. I often thought of letting it go (course publishing) and possibly repurposing the manuscript into a book. That would be easy. And it would not look like a total defeat. But there was something more to it that made me want to push through. And...

The first thing I did was to buy an external microphone, a cheap one for \$10. Since my smartphone would not handle audio quality well enough I thought, an external microphone should do the trick. Little later I found out that the microphone cannot be recognized by my laptop due to an incompatibility of audio jacks.

You see, newer laptops have a combo audio jack that is good at recognizing speakers/headphones and microphones that come in the same package (like the headset of your phone or the headset optimized for Skype chat - headphone + mic) and not external microphones alone. More reasons to quit...

And also more reasons to seek solutions and alternatives. Focusing on the latter, I found out I could use a USB microphone or a tiny external USB sound card which comes with a dedicated jack for speakers and another for the microphone.

With this workaround, I could use any microphone I wanted. So, I purchased the external USB sound card for \$10 and a better microphone for \$15, which was not more expensive than the first one, but it was better (and it

had more positive reviews than the first one). This would satisfy the audio recording requirements.

But I would still have to do something to eliminate the echo from my recordings. I was filming them in my living room. You will later find out what I did.

After recording all my lectures, 58 in number, I submitted them to Udemy for review. At that moment I thought that all the hard work had been done and it would be just a matter of time until becoming a published instructor.

It wasn't like that. I was subjected to another bout of harsh reality. The reviewer told me he could not approve my course to the platform because the sound volume for all my lectures was too low. He gave me some suggestions on how to fix the issue.

Fixing the issue would mean editing every single one of the 58 lectures and going over through the entire rendering process one more time. This would translate into another 48 hours of non-stop computing runtime. I was really not looking forward to that.

You will get the detailed version of this as you read through the book. But in short, I was able to force myself, edit and re-render every lecture, ignoring the fact that I developed a fairly intimate relationship with my laptop (sleeping with it by my side).

The Udemy reviewer, my nemesis, became my redemption. Acknowledging my efforts, he approved my course. It was 4 A.M. when I received the email. I went to sleep a few hours earlier...

You may probably not get too much of what I said because of the chaotic order in which I presented the facts. But as you read along, your vision of my strategy should become clarified.

Before moving on, I would like to briefly mention a few of the turning points and achievements of my journey:

I wrote the full outline for the course in ~2 hours. It was during a very long flight from Mexico to Romania. I was under acute alcohol intoxication.

I wrote the 22,000 word manuscript in 4 days.

I created the PowerPoint presentations in 3-4 days.

I recorded, edited, and rendered the 58 lectures (about 4 hours of video) in 4-5 days.

I went through a 1 week drama with my Udemy reviewer. I ran into countless obstacles, coped with the idea of quitting with every obstacle; pushing through, I was able to pull it off eventually.

From a logistics standpoint, my course was created on Windows 8. I used a fairly cheap microphone, my webcam and the camera of my Samsung Galaxy S5 phone. I used Camtasia Studio 30-day trial (with full features) as my video editing software. I also used Camtasia for recording my screen. I created the presentation for my lectures in Microsoft Office PowerPoint and I used Audacity (free software) to enhance the quality of my audio.

To make this guide clear and straightforward, I will specifically refer to these tools and these tools only. Obviously, there are many alternatives to each of them:

Mac, Linux instead of Windows,  
iPhone, more professional microphones and cameras for recording the lectures,  
Paid video/audio editing software,  
and so on.

Since I have little to no experience with them, I will not discuss them. But I want you to know that they exist.

Because you may feel confused right now, let me start this guide by introducing myself.

## **That Insomnia Provoking Idea!**

*By training, I am a construction's engineer. But ever since I graduated from my Masters in 2013, I didn't get a chance to work in the field because of the increasing passion for optimizing my health.*

This is what I tell you in the promotional video for my course. In short, this is who I am.

To give you a little more detail, I struggled with maintaining a healthy weight and a decent physique all my life. But I wasn't able to achieve my desired goals until I started implementing some *unconventional* strategies, such as ketosis and intermittent fasting, in late 2013.

I call them unconventional because very few folks used them, and they only used them periodically and situationally. For me, what I initially proposed to be short-term experiment ended up becoming part of my lifestyle.

For the two month experiment that would (and that did) last between

October and December 2013, I documented every step of the way. Thus, I was able to quantify my approach and to fine tune it as I went along.

As I reached my desired results and with the vast data I had on hand, I decided to write about what I did. And that's how two of my books were born. Those two books, *Ketone Power* and *Periodic Fasting*, were the basis for my first online course.

It wasn't easy coping with the idea of doing an online course. It looked and sounded like a very complex endeavor. And, indeed it was.

The first time I thought about it was in March 2015. Sadly, I gave in to procrastination and fear. Let me explain...

The online platform that I published my course to is Udemy. I knew about it ever since the beginning of 2015 when a virtual friend gave me a free coupon for one of his courses on that website. Oh, have I had started it then...

I remember the combination of feelings I had the first I visited the website: thousands of courses, some of them with thousands of students enrolled and probably \$ millions in revenue for their instructors. You can imagine the interest it sparked in my mind.

That's when I first pictured myself as a teacher. I thought I would publish a course on ketosis - the metabolic state where you predominantly burn fat for energy. It should come easy, right?

Well, not as easy as the initial unpolluted thoughts I had about it. The big mistake I made was to tell someone about what I intended to do. This person was a reader of *Ketone Power* - my book on ketosis. I told him I would write a course and publish it on that platform.

I don't think he was bad intentioned, but he made me think that very few people would be interested in taking this course. Add to that the thought of having to go over my camera shyness, the thought of recording myself, the thought of learning to work with recording and editing software - basically, the fear of the unknown - and you have the clear-cut recipe for shear

demotivation.

And sadly, I gave in. And I forgot about the whole thing.

A few months later, by the end of September 2015, I was about to take a trip to Mexico. Two days before leaving, I was brainstorming for different ways to diversify my online portfolio. Obviously, I could keep on writing books and publishing them on Amazon, but I felt like I was ready to try something new.

And then I remembered about course publishing and Udemy. The combination of excitement and fear came rushing in. The feeling didn't last for long because I had tons of preparations to do for the upcoming trip. Unlike previously, I didn't forget about the whole idea of course publishing. It somehow remained pending deep into my neural networks.

By the middle of my stay in Mexico, the thought came back to my mind in a flash. I went daydreaming about the first step into publishing the course: creating the outline.

As I pictured, the course would not be on ketosis alone, but on a combination of ketosis and intermittent fasting. This would highly differentiate my fat loss approach from the rest of the courses published on this topic. I saw this as an advantage that could possibly attract a higher number of students. This provided me with hope and eagerness to get started.

So much so, I let the project concoct into my mind as life happened in Cancun. We had a great time! The return trip was a pain in the ass though. It lasted for more than 30 hours. We had to change 3 airplanes and the longest flight lasted for 11 hours.

Before embarking on that flight from Mexico City to Madrid, I was coming up with ways to make the time pass faster. In my mind:

*"How about the draft for a new blogpost? a movie?!"*

*Wait, I got so much reading to do! Yes, reading! Sleep? If I can, of course.*

*Hmmm, the outline for the course...This is the priority!*

*What if I can make it more interesting by having 2 glasses of wine before allowing my inspiration to*

*kick in? On an empty stomach..."*

And so, the 11 hours turned out not to be so lengthy after all. My 2 servings of red dry wine knocked me out to dreamland for a short-while. Then, out of the sudden I pulled my laptop from my backpack and started ravenously jotting down the outline for the new course...

Two hours later, it came to reality. It took physical form on virtual paper - a Word document. It was then when I had the certainty that I was going to publish the course. I didn't care how. I just knew it's gonna be published. The dopamine rush from that thought provided rocket fuel motivation for the struggles that were about to come. I wish I had that drive with every goal I pursue...

**How the Outline came to Life**

Let me provide you with a few technical details about the outline creation process. In case you don't know, an outline should typically contain the major steps that you will take in/during a certain project.

In my case, the outline for the course contained the names of the 6 sections that I decided it will have, as well as the name for each lecture of every section: a total of 58 lectures. This gave me clarity for what I was about to do.

I did the outline in a Microsoft Word document. Simple enough! I started with the names of the sections:

*Section 1: Introduction to Ketosis and Intermittent Fasting*

*Section 2: ....*

*....*

*Section 6: Resources*

Then I started breaking-down into these sections and writing the names of the lectures. This made everything become even clearer. Each lecture was going to describe a single idea/concept.

From what I learned, I have to say that you do not need super-complicated software to create an outline. It should be as simple as 1-2-3.

Many Udemy instructors use paid software to create a map or an outline for their course. If you think that's helpful, go ahead and use paid software. But, you can as easily do away with the humble pen and paper (or a Word document). Instead of Microsoft Word, you can use Google Docs or Open Office, which are free.

I believe that writing the outline is a critical step into the successful completion of your course. From what I learned in Daniel Levitin's book *The Organized Mind*, the human brain craves for order and organization. It seems to work more efficiently when it can easily make sense of the information it is being provided.

Additionally to that, having a blueprint of your course will most

likely get you closer to getting it done, compared to a situation where you come up with sections and lectures as you go through the course creation process.

Let us now focus on some of the prerequisites for creating the course.

## **Things you need before you Start**

Producing a good and, I'd dare to say, even fairly professional online course should not require you to take a lot of money out of your pocket. In fact, you may not need to take too much at all. Heck, you could even do away for free.

Assuming that you own a laptop and a smartphone, there may be a few additional tools that you have to have to deliver a decent course. Let's

begin with the recording requirements.

The basics are: microphone and camera. Your smartphone comes with both. Your laptop may do too. If you set them up correctly, you should meet the minimum Udemy quality requirements.

You can see the current (Nov. 2015) Udemy Course Quality checklist following this link:

<http://bit.ly/udemyquality>

According to Udemy, one of the critical requirements is to have 60% of your lectures as video.

But what exactly is considered *video*?!

*Video* can also be when you record your screen as you talk over a presentation (PowerPoint, Keynote, etc).

If you go this route, and your lectures will consist of screen recordings of you talking through a slides-presentation, I recommend you have a minimum of 3-4 slides for every lecture. This way, the transit (move through) the slides will be considered as video.

To make a case in point, some instructors have had their course rejected because they did not have enough video content. The mistake was that their lectures consisted of them talking over presentations (PowerPoint, Keynote, etc) with only 1 slide. Since there is no movement (moving image), this would be like talking over a picture and this is not considered *video* by Udemy reviewers.

Then, they require the videos to be shot in HD (720p minimum). If you have a fairly new laptop, its webcam should meet this requirement. Mine does. If you own a smartphone, chances are that it records in HD.

If you decide to do voice-over-slides as video, then you will be using software to record your screen. Most screen-recording software usually records in 720p or higher resolution. I have recorded my lectures with the

screen-recording feature of Camtasia Studio, which is a piece of software for recording and editing videos. I will talk more about it later on.

Another very important requirement refers to audio recording. According to Udemy, the audio must be clear and free of distracting noises including:

*echoes; “pops” on ‘P’ and ‘T’ sounds; background hum; fuzziness.*

And this is where the frustration of many *to be published instructors* comes from. When you start recording yourself outside of a studio using amateurish equipment, you will see the big of a challenge that removing noise and echo can become.

Before starting with the recording of the lectures, Udemy gives you the opportunity to test the hardware (the equipment you want to use) and see if it meets their minimum requirements. For this, you will have to go to the 'Test Video' section of your Course Dashboard and upload a video that was recorded with your desired equipment.

For reference:

I used my smartphone's camera (Samsung Galaxy S5) to record my first test video. I did it in my living room. When I recorded myself, my phone was 6-7 feet away from me. The video was about 1 minute and half long.

I uploaded it into the 'Test Video' section and I eagerly waited for a reply from one of Udemy's support team members. After many hours, I received a reply saying that I have to fix the audio quality and the lighting of my setup before moving on with recording the lectures.

Since I would be mostly doing voice over presentation lectures, I would need no lighting to be fixed (because I will only record my screen with Camtasia Studio screen recorder).

However, I would have to fix the lighting because I'd still have to record myself for the promo video. This is the video that potential students

see when they get to your main course page. Naturally, you would not like this to be a low-grade video.

The current Udemy Standards do not require instructors to have promo videos for their courses. However, they highly suggest you have one. Otherwise, it may not be easy to pursue students into taking your course.

For my promo, I also had to fix the audio by removing the echo from the recording or from the setting. So what did I do?

At that moment, my most important objective was to get my equipment and settings to meet the minimum Udemy quality standards. I knew I had good video quality from my smartphone and from Camtasia Studio screen-recording feature.

Next, to fix the lighting, I was to position myself below and 1 foot behind the light bulbs and turn the lights on. This small hack would have me not have to buy additional lighting equipment.

To fix the audio was a bit trickier. For some reason, the audio quality settings of my phone seem to be poor (maybe a factory defect?!). It would output unreasonable echo when recording at a distance.

To deal with the audio issue, I decided to record in a different room. The living room was off the charts because it was too big. I also decided I could not rely on my phone for good audio quality. I had to buy an external microphone and use it with my laptop.

The first mic that I bought was cheap, around \$10. You can find it under the name Trust Talkee. As a desktop microphone it came with a standing foot. I removed (cut) its standing foot and I plugged it into my laptop. Its cord was long enough to use it as a lapel microphone.

At this point, I was recording video with my smartphone and audio with my laptop. To make a workable video, I had to plug both recordings into Camtasia Studio (the editing software) and overlap them, making sure they synchronize perfectly. It took 2-3 days to get the promo video ready. I have

to admit, it was very frustrating.

In the meantime I was also actively writing the transcript for each lecture. And I was learning how to use the video editing software.

I recorded four test videos (that I will use as promo) until I got it right. I was able to meet the minimum Udemy audio and video requirements using my phone for video and a cheap \$10 external microphone for the audio.

What was about to come was not easy. I learned about the annoyance of removing echo from recordings. The wonders of professional equipment and Studio-proof setup...

### **Quick tip:**

Make sure that you're in a relatively small room with little to no echo-promoting objects and surfaces: such as glass, tiles, pottery or too many windows. Having echo dampening objects (carpentry, pillows, curtains, etc) would be a +1.

Recording the 58 lectures would require additional measures of safety and quality if I wanted my course to be approved painlessly. To improve the quality of my audio, I decided to buy another microphone.

It was still relatively cheap (\$15). But it was marketed as efficient for vocal recordings, Skype calls, chat sessions, podcasts, etc. It can be found under the name Trust Starzz.

I knew that I didn't have to focus on the video output too much because the bulk of lectures would consist of screen recordings of me talking over the presentations, and the video output would be high-quality by default. I only had to make sure that my microphone had good sound quality and that the room I was recording in minimized the echo. I will become more specific on how I did it in a later section.

Before moving on, I want to reemphasize the current Udemy course quality standards:

**Video** - HD recording (720p at least).

**Audio** - Clear, Sharp, Echo and Noise Free.

**Lighting** - Make sure your face is fully visible and properly lit when recording.

What I used:

### **For the promo video:**

I recorded it in my bedroom, which is small. It's not echo free (like a studio) but the echo I get is very low. To minimize noise and echo, I closed the windows and draw the curtains. My recording tools:

**Video:** Samsung Galaxy S5 camera (1280p)

**Audio:** External Mic for Laptop (Trust Talkee) - *engineered* to be used as lapel

**Lighting:** The light bulbs in the room. I positioned myself below and one feet behind them.

Here's a link to the promo video so that you get an idea of what I did:

<https://www.udemy.com/draft/369648/test-video/>

### **For the 58 lectures, I used:**

**Video:** Camtasia Screen Recording feature (set to 1280p)

**Audio:** External Mic held close to mouth (Trust Starzz)

**Lighting:** Not needed since the videos consisted of screen recordings.

**Environment:** My bedroom. I positioned my laptop and my external microphone above the bed covers so that I can further minimize the potential echo.

Now, let me travel back in time for a moment. I want to discuss some key principles on writing the transcript and also about some of the major steps of opening a Udemey account.

### **Opening an account on Udemey**

Let's return to the point of just having finished with the outline. I had it written in Microsoft Word. The next step that I wanted to take was to set up an account with Udemey and rush into completing the first details of the course. These included the course description, the target audience, the level of knowledge that the prospect student should have, the course image, etc. I wanted to have these details out of my way so that I can focus on content creation: the transcript, the presentations, and the recordings.

The first step. Go to:

[https://teach.udemy.com/?ref=teach\\_header](https://teach.udemy.com/?ref=teach_header)

You start by typing in the name of your course. Hit *enter* and you're taken to the Course Roadmap page.

I recommend completing/filling-in as much as you can with respect to your Course Goals and Course Info (basics, course summary, image, and promo video). Then, I recommend you focus on finishing up the details of your instructor account and getting verified so that you can set a price tag for your course.

Before having your instructor's profile completed and verified, your course will be published as free. Getting verified should not be difficult; most instructors are accepted as paid instructors (and can set a price for their courses) in a matter of 1-2 days.

To get this off your list and become a paid (premium) instructor, go to:

<https://www.udemy.com/user/edit-profile/>

Once there:

1. Set up your basic info and short bio
2. Upload a photo of you. Make sure your face is visible.
3. Go through the 'premium instructor' section

Once you have these ready, your application should be reviewed and (hopefully) approved in 1-2 days. In the meantime, you can return to the Course Dashboard.

## **Course Dashboard Flash Walkthrough**

The **Course Roadmap** will walk you through the entire course publishing process, from the very first to the very last step. I highly

recommend you steer your way through the process by following the Roadmap.

Moving on to **Course Content**, the first step is writing down your course goals. If you didn't do it yet (as I suggested it previously), you can use my course as an example:

<https://www.udemy.com/ketosis-and-if-for-fat-loss/>

This should take you no more than 1-2 hours, provided that you have a clear view of your future course. Once you get this done, you will move on to **Curriculum** (on the left panel). This is the section you will (should) spend the most time with. This where you upload and publish your lectures, along with additional resources and potential end-section quizzes.

The first step you should take for the Curriculum section is to create the sections of your course and then the names of each of the lectures. As you may remember, I had done that in my Microsoft Word outline file. So what was left for me was to transcribe the data (names of sections and lectures) from my outline to the Curriculum.

You don't have to upload the videos for your lectures at this moment. Creating the sections and lectures names is enough to give you a clear view of the roadmap of your course. You will upload them at a later time.

If you haven't been through the **Course Info** section yet (which I suggested earlier), I'd recommend doing it at once. This is where you set the title, subtitle, language, for your course as well as the instruction level your prospect students need to have.

For my course, and from best practices, I learned that it is better to include both the title and a descriptive subtitle. Mine is:

**Title:** *Ketosis and IF for Fat Loss*

**Subtitle:** *Combining Nutritional Ketosis and Intermittent Fasting for Enhanced Fat Loss*

This way, the prospect student is able to understand what they are about to learn from my course. Viewing the promo video will make things even clearer.

Then, I set 'English' as the language for my course and 'beginner' as the instructional level.

Writing the **Course Summary** is next. This should be easy and should not take too much of your time. Looking over the outline you created should be helpful. Plus, Udemey will offer a guiding example when you are writing the summary. The system itself is designed to make your course creation experience as pain-free as possible.

Next, you upload your course image in the **Image** section. Please make sure you meet Udemey's requirements with regards to the course image. The current (Nov. 2015) requirements are found at this link:

<https://support.udemy.com/customer/en/portal/articles/1709115>

There are dozens of free websites where you could create professional course images. Two of them are:

<http://canva.com>  
<http://easel.ly>

Of course, it can take some time to do a well-crafted course image. If you do not want to wait or to spend time with this, you could opt-in (this option is available as of Nov. 2015) for a free course image created by Udemey's staff members. Both of these options are good because you can change your course image at any point after your course is published.

I designed my own course image. After my course was published I wanted to see if Udemey would do a better job so I opted for having them design a free course image for my course. I didn't like it as much as my own, but I left it on for more than a week. I wanted to see if it would drive more students than my personally designed course image. It didn't. So, I re-uploaded my own course image.

The next section from the left panel is about your **Promo Video**. As I previously explained, this is where you should upload the video that prospect students will see when going to the main page of your course. You are not required to upload a promo video, but you are highly suggested to do so.

In the **Test Video** section is where you make sure your recording instruments - microphone, camera, lights - meet Udemy's minimum requirements.

Then, in the **Course Settings** section is where you can set your course to be public or private. This is also where you select the price for your course. Remember, you can only put a price tag under your course name if you are a paid (premium) instructor. But you should fall into that category by now. In this same section is where you create discount coupons. But we will touch upon this later.

This flash walkthrough should take no more than 2-3 hours. When you are done with it, you can consider yourself 90% done with setting up your account and finishing the initial and most important steps of the course creation process. The remaining of your focus will and should rely on content creation.

Once your lectures are created and uploaded to the curriculum, along with the additional materials (should you have any), the remainder of the process would be to submit the course for review. Easy said, not as easy done!

You may be confused a little bit by now. I started by telling you how I got the idea of doing an online course. Then I described how I created the outline and I also delved into the minimal set of tools you may be required to have for recording your course. Then I gave you a flash presentation of setting up Udemy's course dashboard as well as your paid instructor profile.

What follows up naturally and what I am going to focus on next is about the transcript: how I wrote the 58 lectures for my course.

## **Writing the Transcript**

My outline was done in a simple Microsoft Word document. As I told you, instructors can use specialized software for doing the outline. I find it unnecessary. My outline included the sections of the course as well as the names of the lectures in each section.

Then, I transcribed them into the Curriculum section of the Course Dashboard. Next, I was to write the transcript for every lecture. I continued using Microsoft Word.

I wrote the full transcript for my course in about 4 days. It consisted of 22,000 words (the total word count of the 58 lectures). That is like half of a good medium size book.

I remember that writing the transcript was the only thing I could think of during those days. It was my most important to do on the list. I started it on a Sunday afternoon. By Wednesday evening the transcript was completed.

Thereafter, I ran a few times through it, for editing purposes. Simultaneously, I started doing the presentations (slides) for each lecture using Microsoft PowerPoint.

22,000 words may sound intimidating. But it's not. If you break it down over the course of 4 days, it means writing around 5,500 words per day.

Yes, it's not easy to write this word count/day if you have to struggle with inspiration and finding the right words for your inner voice. But like I

said, you have to master your content, theoretically and experientially, if you want to speed through the course creation process.

As I told you in the beginning of this guide, my knowledge and experience of the subject were very consistent. I had written 2 books on the subjects that would be the basis for this course. So, putting everything together in a coherent form would only be a matter of sitting down and writing continuously.

The words flew from my brain, through my hands, straight into each document (lecture transcript). No struggle with inspiration or writer's block.

I only had to put conscious energy into my fingers and my eyes so I could follow what my keyboard was outputting. For reference, when I wrote my first book *Ketone Power*, it took more than 2 weeks to write down 22,000 words.

I would have never been able to pull this through have I not had the intimate experience and the theoretical knowledge on the subjects of ketosis and intermittent fasting.

Getting the presentations done was a piece of cake. The process did not take long. So: the outline, the transcript (for each lecture), the presentations and the final step in the creation process would be recording the lectures (talking over the presentations). Hope you get the full picture by now.

Each of the lectures touched upon a single idea described in 300-500 words.

Let me be more specific:

*Lecture 1.5 - What is Ketosis*

*Lecture 1.9 - Types of Intermittent Fasting*

Lecture 5 of section 1 describes ketosis as metabolic state, while lecture 9 of section 1 introduces the various types of intermittent fasting protocols.

Having 300-500 words/lecture to discuss one idea is easily achievable. Most importantly, it's very convenient, especially when you design the presentations.

The initial setup and the selection of the presentation template was the time consuming aspect of this part of the process. Thereafter, each presentation would take little time. And each of the presentation would contain:

**Title Slide** - Name of section and lecture

**Slides 2, 3, 4...** - The bulk of content describing the main idea

**Last Slide** - Course Image

This would ensure that when I record my screen by talking over the slides, it would output (flow) like a movie.

Remember, Udemy requires 60% of the lectures to be video. With voice over 1 slide, it may not be considered a movie. So, I'd rather recommend you not doing that.

### **In review:**

1. I created folders names to reflect the names of the sections in the outline.
2. Inside each folder I created Microsoft Word documents with the title of each lecture.
3. Then I wrote 300-500 words for each lecture. I would focus on a single idea/lecture.
4. Once the lectures (Word docs) were done, I went and did the PPT presentations, with 4-10 slides for each lecture.

## Section 1: Introduction to Ketosis and Intermittent Fasting

Section 1 - Overview  
Different Metabolic States  
Extra - Macros and Food Examples  
The Metabolic State of Most People  
Ketosis as a Metabolic State  
What Implies Ketosis  
How to Measure Ketosis  
Carbohydrate Intake for Ketosis  
When Fasting Enters the Scene  
Different Types of IF  
Looking forward to Section 2  
End of Section 1 Quiz

## Section 2: Physiologic Aspects of Ketosis and IF - A call for Personalized Ap

Section 2 - Overview  
Fat Intake and Ketosis  
Common Mistakes People Make on Ketogenic Diets  
Ketosis and Keto-Acidosis  
Advantages of Ketosis  
Disadvantages of Ketosis

### The Outline - Section and Lecture Names

- [Introduction]
- [others]
- [Section 1]
- [Section 2]
- [Section 3]
- [Section 4]
- [Section 5]
- [Section 6]

### Folder Names

Name	Ext
Section 1	doc
Section 1 - Lecture 1 - Different Metabolic States	doc
Section 1 - Lecture 2 - Extra - Macros and Food Examples	doc
Section 1 - Lecture 2 - The Metabolic State of Most People	doc
Section 1 - Lecture 3 - Ketosis as a Metabolic State	doc
Section 1 - Lecture 4 - What Implies Ketosis	doc
Section 1 - Lecture 5 - How to Measure Ketosis	doc
Section 1 - Lecture 6 - Carbohydrate Intake for Ketosis	doc
Section 1 - Lecture 7 - When Fasting Enters the Scene	doc
Section 1 - Lecture 8 - Different Types of IF	doc
Section 1 - Lecture 9 - Looking forward to Section 2	doc
Section 1 - Quiz	doc
Section 1	pptx
Section 1 - Lecture 1 - Different Metabolic States	pptx
Section 1 - Lecture 2 - Extra - Macros and Food Examples	pptx
Section 1 - Lecture 2 - The Metabolic State of Most People	pptx
Section 1 - Lecture 3 - Ketosis as a Metabolic State	pptx
Section 1 - Lecture 4 - What Implies Ketosis	pptx

### Word docs and PPT - Reflecting the Outline

I had a total of 58 lectures. They resulted in ~4 hours of video content.

### Lessons Learned:

If I had to do it again, I would do it differently. Given the obstacles

that I encountered and the long time it took to render the videos twice, I would purpose for <1 hour of video material, with fewer sections and fewer lectures. And this is probably what I am going to do with my upcoming courses.

Letting your computer run continuously for days at length for rendering purposes is a burdening and stressful process. And you have to be there all the time to start rendering the next lectures as soon as the one that's currently rendering has finished.

Having less content and fewer course materials would make it easier to correct/edit/render content in case something goes wrong.

One of the drawbacks to having a shorter course, in video hours, is that you have to price it accordingly. Current Udemy requirements suggest pricing your course no more than \$25 per hour or course content. However, it is up to you to decide if you want to follow their suggestions or not.

### Hardware and Software review:

#### Hardware for the promo video:

**Video:** Samsung Galaxy S5 camera (1280p)

**Audio:** External Mic for Laptop (Trust Talkee) - *engineered* to be used as lapel

**Lighting:** The light bulbs in the room. I positioned myself below and one feet behind them.

#### Hardware for the 58 lectures:

**Video:** Camtasia Screencast (screen record) feature (set to 1280p)

**Audio:** External Mic (held close to mouth) - Trust Starzz

**Lighting:** Not needed. The videos were screen recordings of me talking over the PPT presentations.

#### Software (for all):

### **Outline and lectures (the transcript) - Microsoft Word**

You can use any text editor. You do not need to use fancy outline paid software, unless you want to.

If you do not have your Microsoft Office and if you cannot get a trial/free version, you can use other free software like OpenOffice which works on Linux, Windows, OS X, and other platforms.

## **Presentation of Lectures: Microsoft PowerPoint**

Alternatively you can use Keynote on Mac, and OpenOffice for free on all platforms.

<http://www.openoffice.org/product/index.html>

The two additional pieces of software that I used:

**Camtasia Studio** - screen recording and video editing

**Audacity** - audio editing (when needed)

As the presentations were ready, I had to start recording the lectures.

## **The Recording Process**

One of the reasons for which I was able to get the course up so quickly was my obsession with the intricacies of the process. Here, I purposed to open and maintain contact with like-minded people - other Udemy instructors.

I joined the Facebook group Udemy Studio. It has thousands of members. Some of them are published instructors, while others are in the process of creating their first course.

Many of them post questions everyday. Others show pictures of their revenues - very motivating for aspiring instructors.

It was very motivating for me as well. And I also learned a lot from the technical questions/answers that were posted on the group. I recommend you try it out.

From the group I learned about the different software instructors use when creating their courses. Since I knew I would be doing voice-over-

presentations, I had a few options with respect to the programs I could use. There was Camtasia Studio, Screen-O-Matic, Screener and a few others. I opted for Camtasia Studio.

I used it for recording my screen while talking over the PPT presentations. I also used Camtasia Studio for editing these screen recordings, adding the intro and outro to each recording, as well as for adding different effects and transitions to the recordings - to enhance their aspect.

I devoted the minimum amount of time possible to the editing process. I knew the rendering would be the most time consuming part.

Camtasia Studio is paid software. It is currently worth \$150 - for a lifetime license. I have heard that you can get a big discount coupon for Camtasia. The users of the FB group Camtasia Studio know more about this. I personally did not investigate this further.

Camtasia Studio (full version) can be used for free for a trial period of 30 days. All its features are unlocked.

My course was completed, from scratch, in less than 30 days. I didn't have to worry about paying for this software.

When you start working on your first online course you may consider this as a way to motivate yourself and to speed things up. I have to remind you that accelerating through the process should not provide a license for sacrificing quality. Quality should be your primary objective. Then you can work on good ways to smart-cut through the process.

To learn more about and to download Camtasia Studio, please visit their official website:

<https://www.techsmith.com/camtasia.html>

## **The Recording Process**

With the lectures written in Microsoft Word and their presentations

done with Microsoft PowerPoint, I started the recording process by using Camtasia Screen Recorder.

As I have previously specified, I recorded myself talking over the PPT presentations. There are multiple ways to do screen recordings with Camtasia Screen Recorder:

1. Record the screen alone
2. Record the screen and the microphone
3. Record the screen, the microphone and the webcam.

Some instructors record the webcam too. They will later engineer/edit their lectures into 'talking head videos'. To better understand the concept, please do a Youtube search for this term.

Talking head videos/lectures are recommended by Udemy. They think this a good way to increase engagement and course enrollment as students will see your face (since you record your webcam) in a short portion of the screen while you present the lecture. Some other instructors consider talking head videos as being more distracting compared to voice over presentation, where you only record your microphone as you go over the presentation. So, I would say this is a matter of personal choice.

Personally, I only recorded my screen and my microphone. Being my first time, I didn't feel very confident to confident of recording my webcam as well.

Here's the step-by-step recording process:

1. Open the transcript (Word doc). Open the PPT presentation.
2. Start Camtasia Recording. Hit the record button.
3. Start talking over the PPT.

I always kept the transcript at arm's length so that I could reach it whenever I felt lost. Simple enough! As I went through the first few recordings, I gradually started becoming more confident and natural on-air.

If you do not feel confident at all, you could simply read the

transcript as you go through the slides (PPT). If you do this, please make sure you sound as naturally as possible. You don't want to appear like a robot as this may make students flee/un-enroll.

### Sidenote:

Recording your screen is not the only way to do video lectures. You could also record yourself with a camera (phone, webcam, professional camera) and later edit the recording (with the video editing software of choice) and add slides/text/resources as needed. This would probably take more time, but it would also be more professional.

Each of my recordings would be between 1:30 to 5 minutes long, with a few of them going over 10 minutes. Keeping things short and simple is a good strategy, especially when our attention span is so narrow.

Surprisingly, it didn't take too long to record all 58 lectures for my course.

### Timeline review:

1. Outline + 22,000 words transcript - ~4 days
2. Creating the PPT presentations (+other side-tasks) - 3-4 days
3. Recording the lectures - ~2 days

After finishing with the recordings, the next step would be to edit them with Camtasia Studio editor. I tried to do away with the minimum of editing possible.

Camtasia Studio has a very straight-forward and intuitive user interface. You can get used to it in a matter of hours. Even the most non-technical users can master its basic features really fast.

Here are the edits I did to most of my screen-recordings (future video lectures):

1. Delete a few seconds from the beginning of the recording (the seconds between hitting the record button and me actually starting to present the lecture).
2. Delete a few seconds from the end of the recording.
3. Add the course image at the end of the recording
4. Add transition effects (whenever required) - 'fade-in' to the beginning and the end of the recording. It

would look better.

5. Fix/enhance audio quality with Audacity (whenever needed)
6. Make sure everything is in its place.
7. Hit render

This process would take between 2 to 6 minutes for each lecture. For a few lectures that were longer it took more than that, while for a few shorter lectures it took less than that.

For some lectures I had to enhance/fix the audio quality with Audacity, the reason being is that I kept the microphone too far from my mouth when talking over the presentation.

Same as Camtasia, Audacity is very easy to work with. For the screen-recordings with low audio volume, here's what I would do:

When you do a screen recording (voice-over-presentation), the output file is a video of your screen and the audio that was recorded from your microphone:

### **1. Extract the audio portion** from the Camtasia recording file.

In Camtasia Studio, I used the combination of CTRL+D to extract the audio. The output is a wav file.

### **2. Open Audacity** (<http://audacityteam.org/>) free software and load the extracted wav.

Did the following edits:

- noise removal
- normalization
- amplification

Save the edited audio. Exit Audacity.

### **3. Load the enhanced audio wav file back into Camtasia Studio.**

I would make sure to synchronize the timelines of the initial screen-recording and the enhanced audio. Once completed and once all other edits are finished, I could hit the render button.

But before rendering, I would reensure that everything is in place.

Since rendering is time consuming (with my hardware capacity), I would not want to go through it more than once.

## **The Rendering Process**

If you did not know, rendering is the process of putting all the recordings, transitions, and edits into a cohesive video. So, it's basically putting multiples files of different formats into a single video file.

In Camtasia Studio, to render you have to hit 'Produce Media'. This puts you through a step-by-step wizard process, where you will select different options and characteristics you want for your future video.

For my lectures, I selected the wmv format and I made sure that the resolution of the final video is 1280 x 720 pixels, which is in line with Udemy's requirements.

After hitting 'Produce' at the end of the wizard process, I would have to wait 20-40 minutes for each lecture to be rendered completely. This was the time killer for my course creation endeavor:

58 lectures x 30 minutes on average. You do the math...

It took about 2 days for my computer to run continuous to finish with rendering all the lectures. The sad part is that I had to be there all the time to hit render on a new lecture as soon as another one finished rendering. I wanted to minimize the waste of time.

It is possible that more powerful computers and laptops would take less time to run this process.

Anyway, two days later and the video lectures were ready. They were in Udemy-friendly format (wmv). What was only left from me to do was to upload them to the Curriculum, submit my course for review, and wait...

As I previously mentioned, I already had the name of the sections and the lectures set up in my Curriculum on the Course Dashboard. The rest of the details for my course were completed, my account setup was completed, and I was already approved as a Udemy paid (premium) instructor.

With the video lectures rendered, uploading them to the Curriculum was as fast as 1-2-3. Uploading all 58 lectures took less than hour.

Additionally and for every lecture I uploaded the transcript (the written version of the lecture - the .doc file) so that students could follow along more easily if there was something in the video they could not understand.

Often times during the presentations I referenced links and resources that students would find in the transcript. So, uploading the transcript and other additional resources was necessary. I recommend doing that.

Then, at the end of each section I considered appropriate to have a quiz with 10 multiple choice questions. I reasoned that such a quiz would verify and consolidate the knowledge acquired by the students.

I got a lot of positive feedback from the students with respect to the quizzes, which is why I would recommend using them. It took me less than 10 minutes to create each quiz. With 6 course sections and 5 end-of-section quizzes, it took less than an hour to get it done.

With the video lectures and the resources being uploaded and with the quizzes being finished, I was now left to submit the course for review.

## **Getting the Course Published - The Struggle**

As I hit the review button, a cocktail of feelings flooded my body. I was very anxious and at the same time I could not believe how everything happened so fast.

I realized that while I was doing the outline during my trip back home from Mexico, I purposed for an initial deadline by the end of 2015. Submitting my course for review two weeks later was really unbelievable.

My excitement did not last long though. Roughly 12 hours after submission I received a reply from the Udemy reviewer that was assigned to deal with my course. He reported that he cannot approve my course until I would fix some issues he encountered with the course.

He provided some recommended fixes (which did not impact my submission process and which were easy to address) and a few required/critical fixes.

The critical issue that I had to fix had to do with the audio. The Udemy reviewer said that the audio volume in my lectures is too low and that

he has to turn his speakers up to maximum to hear me speaking.

He suggested using Audacity to address this issue. He gave me links to a few Youtube videos that I could follow (step-by-step) to fix the problem. I would have to go through the painful rendering process once again.

My first reaction was, obviously, to fight back. I wanted that my audio is fine and that I tested it myself with multiple devices. I urged him to test the audio with different operating systems and from different devices.

I also motivated (to my shame) that many other courses (already approved) from the platform have poorer audio quality compared to mine. What a childish reaction...

As I can see it now, I did not want to cope with the idea of having to fix all 58 lectures. It would be very stressful and very time consuming. Prolonging my anxiety was not a priority. I just wanted to see the course up there and start focusing on my next project.

Weak thoughts transitioned through my mind. I wanted to forget about the whole thing and repurpose the project into a book; a book that would come out of the manuscript (transcript).

At the same time, my reviewer did not want to give in to my pressure. He had no reason to do so. I'm glad he didn't.

A few short moments of lucidity made me try to see things from his perspective.

I realized it wouldn't be productive to keep pushing this matter back and forth. He would not give in. After all, he had no vested interest to get my course approved and published. He was just a reviewer and his job was to approve courses that meet the basic quality requirements of the platform. Outside of that, it was only his pure goodwill to provide me with directions to meet the requirements.

He was more than willing to collaborate. Thank God I saw that

before putting a means to an end.

He told me to try to fix only 1 lecture by following the tutorials he suggested. He said he would look over it and tell me if my corrections/edits are good or not. If it turned out to be good, I could proceed on with the tedious process of editing and fixing the audio to the rest of the lectures. I was not looking forward to that, but seeing his willingness made me push through my debilitating thoughts.

I would have been stupid not to follow along. So, here's what I did:

1. Opened the final un-rendered Camtasia Project (.camproj) file of one of my lectures.
2. Extracted the audio portion only (which had already been edited for noise removal) with CTRL+D.
3. Opened Audacity and did the following edit: amplify
4. Saved the enhanced audio wav file
5. Imported it back into Camtasia Studio; I made sure everything was synchronized and into place.
6. Rendered the lecture into its "enhanced" version. I hate rendering.

This entire process (without rendering) took about 3-4 minutes. Rendering took another 20 minutes.

Then, I re-uploaded the enhanced lecture on Udemy and after about 12 hours of waiting I received a reply from the reviewer saying that my edit was good to go. I could proceed with doing the same thing for all of my lectures.

I was still somewhat reluctant to throw myself into the process because I knew how stressful and time consuming it would be. But here's the thing...

While waiting 12 hours for the reply from the reviewer, my ADD mind was already prospecting other online platforms to publish my course. After all, my course was complete. Everything was fine with the course, except that that one person from Udemy subjectively thought the audio volume does not meet the requirements.

You can imagine that during my online quest, I stumbled upon dozens of platforms and prospect websites where I could publish my course.

Since there were so many, I had to filter through them. After hours of browsing and reviewing many of the platforms, my attention was narrowed down to only two of them. And I made a decision to upload my course to only one. I would later upload it on the second platform, should I consider it necessary.

Coursecraft (<http://coursecraft.net>) provided a course-oriented platform for my content. This website comes with a very instructor and student friendly interface, which makes the processes of publishing and taking courses straight forward and super-intuitive.

It took me about 3-4 hours to create an account, to set it up and to upload my course content to Coursecraft's platform.

The deal breaker for choosing them was that they did/do not care on the specifics and the quality of your course (not that this is a good thing all the time).

Their grand purpose is to provide instructors with a specialized platform for course publishing. Plus, they are free to join and to use.

You only pay them a fee when someone buys your course. The fee is processed automatically with every payment. And their pricing strategy is very instructor-friendly:

The graphic is titled "Pay As You Go Pricing" and is divided into two columns. The left column features a large "5%" with "of sales" underneath, followed by "No setup fee", "Up to 100 participants", "Up to 1GB of uploads", and "Optional custom branding (+4% fees)". The right column is titled "Pro Upgrade" with a "PRO" badge, followed by "\$49 per course" and a bulleted list of features: "Unlimited participants", "Unlimited uploads", "Bundle with other pro courses", "Customized URL (eg. coursecraft.net/c/my-course)", and "Free custom branding (no extra fees!)".

Coursecraft Pricing (Nov. 2015)

I believe the '5% of sales' option is more than sufficient to start with. That's what I have been using. Should I decide to upgrade in the future, the \$49 per course looks appealing and very convenient.

Once I had my course up and running, part of my anxiety faded away. The thought of forgetting about Udemy and moving on was close to becoming reality.

Students started flowing in as I sent an email to my subscribers list letting them know about my course on Coursecraft.

Yet, there was something inside me that didn't allow me to give up. I was so close. And I am a person who does not like to quit on something that I devoted so much of my mental energy, my time, and my focus.

Another aspect that did not allow me to quit was that during my quest for course publishing platforms, Udemy was on the top of the list - featuring more than 5 million students, 30,000 courses and more than \$7,000 as the average revenue per course. I would be a fool to give up when the finish line was at reaching distance.

So, it was midnight when I started the burdensome process of editing the lectures. I was somewhat relaxed because I knew my course was already published on another platform. And I was already interacting with some of the students taking my course.

I only edited a couple of lectures and then I went to sleep. I wanted to get myself into the process so that I could flow through it when I would resume it in the morning. I knew that the next two days would be all about editing and re-rendering. What a delight!

Fixing the issue with Udemy (in review) was about:

- Extracting the audio from every lecture
- Amplifying it with Audacity
- Importing it back into Camtasia Studio
- Rendering the "enhanced" version of the lecture
- Re-uploading lectures to the Curriculum

I wanted to have all the lectures edited first. Then I would render them, one at a time.

It took a couple of hours to finish with the editing. It was a Tuesday afternoon. I wanted to have all the lectures re-rendered and re-uploaded as soon as possible so that I could have the reviewer look over my course sometime before Friday. The reason is that Udemy employees do not work during weekends. Re-submitting my course for review on Friday or during the weekend would result in having to wait until Monday or Tuesday for a reply from the reviewer.

There was no time to lose. From Tuesday afternoon until Wednesday night (early Thursday morning) my computer (once again) ran continuously.

It was all over by Wednesday night. I was somewhat happy and in peace with myself because I pushed through and because I was able to pull it through.

And, at that moment I knew that if my course would not be approved, I will most likely not do further edits. It was too burdening. Plus, I enjoy doing creative and not repetitive work.

This whole process of course design, creation, editing and publishing made everything more clear to me with respect to my limits, both physical and mental. It was satisfying to learn about my newfound abilities: the aggressiveness in pursuing my goals and the willingness to push through adversity.

I went to sleep comforting with the thought I did not care so much if my course would be approved or not. I knew that I put in all the effort available for this endeavor.

I didn't sleep much. I woke up at 4 A.M. I drank a glassful of water. While gulping, I thought to myself: why not check the status of my pending Udemy review.

Turning on the Wi-Fi on my smartphone, one of the notifications that I got was an email from Udemy Review Team. It contained a congratulatory message saying that my course was approved and available on

the platform.

On top of that, I had another message from Udemy notifying me of my first student!

I was happy and calm at the same time. My course was available on two online platforms, 2 months earlier than my initially self-imposed deadline. I went back to sleep for another 6 hours...

## **Promotions, Marketing, and How to make it Better**

As soon as I woke up the next morning, my mind would be on the lookout for my next project. Once again, I started flirting with the idea of repurposing the transcript of the course into a book.

Two weeks later the book was completed. I edited the transcript, added sections to it, and provided more details for some lectures. In the meantime, I also created a cover for the book. I published the book, both as a digital copy (Amazon Kindle) and as a printed version (physical copy - paperback). I was on a roll...

Before getting into the details of promotions and of spreading the word about your course, I'd like to reiterate a few suggestions.

### **Good Practices**

Once again, you may want to have everything ready with respect to your course, before submitting it for review.

By the time you upload the lectures into the Curriculum, your paid (premium) instructor profile should be set up. The description, course goals, course image, promo video, and course setting should also be ready. In one sentence, all things related to your course should be completed.

I also recommend you do a promo video and make it between 1-2 minutes long. Udemy does not require you to do so, but they highly

recommend it. This is going to be the video that your prospect students will see when they visit your course's main page.

In this promo video you should introduce yourself (10-15 seconds), while the rest of it should highlight what the students will learn and take away from the course. Make sure to use a pleasant and warm voice. Make sure to have good light in your recording environment and also make sure your message and body gestures are expressive and reflective of a positive attitude.

Besides the promo video, I recommend you have another free video (Introduction), a video or lecture in which you become more specific about what the students will learn in each section. Here's an example from my course:

<http://bit.ly/coursedetailedintro>

The promo video is by default free to view. Your introduction video should be also free. More over, I extend this recommendation:

One or a few of your video lectures should be also made free to view. This way, your prospect students could get a taste of the course and know whether they are in for it or not.

To make a lecture/video free-preview, you simply select the free-preview option in your Curriculum section for that specific lecture.

Not to forget:

During the review process you will have to deal with Udemy's review team and staff members. Most, if not all, of them are nice people who are willing to help you along with publishing your course. It would be more productive to work with them and not against them.

As soon as your course is published (and, on some occasions, even before), let me try and give you some tips you can use to promote it and increase your enrollment count.

## **On Promotions and Marketing**

As a caveat, I need to mention that I have yet to achieve extraordinary feats with my course. The purpose of this guidebook is to help you ease your way through the course creation and publishing processes as quickly and as less painfully as possible, without sacrificing quality. And of course, you have to remember:

You cannot do this on an accelerated pace if you do not master your topic of expertise.

If you have to go through lack-of-inspiration moments during the creation process, it will most likely take much longer to reach the end point. As another reminder, I was able to write the 22,000-words long transcript (the meat) in roughly 4 days. Whenever I stood at my desk, I wrote continuously and uninterrupted for hours at a time.

I strongly believe that you should write and/or create a course about something you are very good at. Not only that you will be able to speed the process but you will also actively and joyfully engage in the process and in spreading the word out there about your endeavor.

And if I failed to specify this in the guidebook, your published course is not set in stone in terms of its content. You can always update the lectures, add new lectures and resources and even create new sections. You can refine and further enhance the value you provide to your students. You can also modify the price of your course to reflect the changes and enhancements you make.

Moreover, once you have your first course published and you have a few students enrolled, you should consider creating other courses on similar topics, besides promoting and marketing your first one, of course. It may be unwise to have your second course in molecular biology when your first course was about teaching introductory piano. Be consistent with your expertise!

Now, let me give you a few of the practices I undertook to spread the

word about and to promote my first course on Udemy. It was relatively simple.

For starters, I blog at <http://cristivlad.com>. This is where I write about my life and the topics of my interest. I debate nutrition science as well as neuroscience. I wrote a lot about the ketogenic diet, healthier nutrition and the practice of intermittent fasting.

To build followership many people with blogs collect email lists of subscribers. Building my email list is a priority when it comes to writing on my blog. My email list includes people who are interested in what I write and who want to receive updates from me whenever I post something new on the blog.

At the time of releasing my course, my list consisted of about 1,700 people. By any means, this is very modest compared what others have achieved: collecting tens and even hundreds of thousands of subscribers. However, I play the long game so I'm quite confident that my list may grow in the near future.

The readers of my blog have supported me during my past book launches by purchasing the pre-launch versions of my works. Since they are on my list and since I consider them my virtual friends and some of them my real-life friends they receive everything I release for free or at bargain prices. This is how I show gratitude for their followership.

After uploading my course to Coursecraft, I sent an email to the list letting them know about the course and giving them a 70% discount code. A few dozen students enrolled in the initial hours after the release.

I am really glad that I didn't give up on publishing the course on Udemy. I was very tempted to do it when I saw that my course was doing well on Coursecraft.

As I dealt with the issues at Udemy and as my course got approved, I sent another email with a few free Udemy discount coupons. I also gave the opportunity to a few students of my Coursecraft course to try the Udemy

platform - as it has some extra features that make learning a bit more enjoyable. I gave them free coupons as well.

Then I posted about my course release on the Facebook support groups for my books (3 FB groups). I gave away a few 60% discount coupons for my Udemy course. More people have joined the course.

I also posted about the course to a few other Facebook groups - that are relevant to the topic I was writing about, that is ketosis and intermittent fasting.

At this time I was emailing back and forth with a few students - from Coursecraft and Udemy. Their feedback was mostly positive.

Most importantly, I was leveraging on Udemy's organic sign-ups. When you are submitting your course for approval on Udemy, please make sure you opt-in to their promotional programs, as they promote your course to potential students whenever possible.

This is how I got a few more students. They used the discount codes provided by Udemy (they do this with all published courses that opt-in to their promotional programs). On top of that, I had a few students who paid the full price of the course.

There are instructors who do not have blogs or email lists and who do not promote their courses on Facebook or other social media platforms. And they still make thousands of dollars per month by leveraging on Udemy's organic searches and their promotions alone. So, once again please make sure that when you submit your course for approval you opt in for their promo programs.

On the other side, there are instructors that opt-out of these promo programs. Many of them have huge followership and price their courses north of \$100. They do not want to see students enrolling their courses with the bargain prices provided by Udemy's promo programs. As you can see, your promo strategy should be tailored to your individual context (needs).

With my course, my current purpose is to have more students sign-up, increase the review count, and make some money in the process.

Once again, I think it's important to give away a few free discount coupon codes. I'd recommend giving those codes to people you know personally: friends, acquaintances or virtual friends who would gladly leave you a review after they complete the course.

You may not want to put 100 free coupons up for grabs on social media platforms. Many instructors made this mistake and ended up with hundreds of enrollments and very little activity in their courses.

It so happens that many free coupons result in students who enroll in the course but never go through any of the lectures. You can track the progress of each student of your course in your Course Dashboard.

Providing free coupons to people you do not know may result in poor engagement and will most likely lead to low or no reviews for your course.

If you have a blog you could send an email to your subscribers list (assuming you have one) or you can write a post about your course.

You should give plenty of discount coupons (30, 40, 50 or more % off) to the list or in the blog post and a few free coupons to your closest followers. This is how you could get the first crucially important reviews for your course.

I believe it's not fair to ask students for positive or 5 star reviews, but for honest reviews. Asking for reviews should be one of your priorities. 5 star reviews improve the image of your course, but I personally do not care about the number of stars as long as the review is critical and to the point. Negative reviews can be extremely helpful, especially if instructors can accept them objectively.

If you own a blog, I'd highly recommend you to post links, banners, and/or buttons that link to your Udemy course. These banners should provide your blog visitors with a discount coupon for your course, courtesy of just

visiting your blog. The banner can be an image with some background text that would read something like:

Enroll in my course. Here's your 40% off!

Additionally, you could have a pop-up box that would prompt blog visitors to subscribe to your email list. The pop-up message should list all the benefits they will get if they subscribe to your list, such as: free ebook, free book chapter, free webinar, and, of course, a big discount to your online course.

This would be like a double win-win situation because: you collect subscribers that you could sell your future courses/books/products and also potential new students enrolling to your course.

From their perspective, they will be the first ones to know about your future releases and they will benefit from the discount prices you give to them, courtesy of being on your list.

Any one or more strategies you may choose, please sure to create **visible** links to your course on the blog.

After posting on your blog and after notifying your list, you could post about your recently published course on Facebook groups. Additionally, you could ask a few close friends to share discount coupons (30, 40% off) with their friends and social media followers.

You can do this on all social platforms. Another promo tactic would be to invest money in paid advertisements on these platforms (FB, Twitter, Google, etc.). If you know how to do it properly you can get a lot of sales out of this strategy. Be advised that several instructors complained on Udemy's Facebook group about the very low ROI (return on investment) they got from FB advertising.

Another way to extend the reach of your course is to appeal to Udemy affiliates - people who promote Udemy courses on the web.

Reaching affiliates to promote your course could be a win-win-win situation because they, as affiliates, would receive a commission with every student/prospect enrolling in your course through their affiliate link. Then, you will receive a certain percentage of the price, and Udemy will get its share too.

Of course, you may not generate a lot of money/enrollment this way, but then again, it's more convenient than receiving nothing. After all, your implication is minimal. In short, with affiliates, the earning breakdown goes something like this:

- affiliate - x % of the price
- you - x % of the price
- Udemy - x % of the price.

Reaching affiliates with huge followership and convincing them to promote your course may get you solid income with this strategy. I am considering this as one of the strategies that I will invest time in the future.

Having students enrolling in your course, it's important to communicate with them. Ask them what they like about your course in particular, what they don't like, what they would like to see changed, and also what they would like to see in your future courses.

This is how you build an organic relationship which can possibly lead to more reviews, to (free) word of mouth marketing for your course and in some cases to very pleasant and long-lasting virtual and real-life friendships. You are building a tribe after all, not a cold list of people to brag about your stuff.

There are many other ways to spread the word about your course. These are only a few of my good practices. I highly recommend you use them. I also recommend you seek for other strategies yourself. I am also on the same journey...

## Concluding Remarks

With this guide, I purposed to maintain an overall abstract approach with the hope to give you a very good big picture of my online course creation process - from the very beginning to the very end. Often times I provided additional details as I considered it necessary. However, I did not fully dive into details for every step of the process because this was not the goal of the book.

The level of details that I provided should allow you to get through the course creation process with little stress. Please learn from my mistakes and please feel free to use the tips and advices I provided.

If you feel that I was not very explicative at times, please consider visiting <http://udemy.com> and going to the left of the screen where you see 'Create Course'. Clicking on that, you will be provided with extensive detail for every step of the process.

Had I done that in this short guide, it would have resulted in 500+ pages of unreadable text and I would have not been able to provide my personal experience along the way. You may not have gotten the bigger picture...

My greatest hope is to have helped you get the whole course creation and publishing process in a glimpse. Once more, by focusing on some of my struggles and obstacles and by providing my possible solutions I hope to help you steer clear from them.

Please close this guide book with this message in mind:

Knowledge and intimate expertise of the subject you teach is the prime requirement for you to get the course up as soon as possible, without being superficial and without sacrificing quality.

As a final word, if my book did not rise to its purpose and to your

expectations, please do not hesitate to contact me as I will be more than glad to help you with any of the struggles you may encounter as you create and publish your first course online. To reach me, go to my blog at <http://cristivlad.com>

If, by any means, you think my course is to your interest, please take this 60% discount coupon code as my gift to you and as a show of gratitude for you reading this guide:

<http://bit.ly/persistcourse>

To your first published course! And to the more courses to come!  
Cheers and good luck!

Cristi Vlad

**About the Author - And Gratitude**

Cristi Vlad researches and experiments with nutrition science, nutritional genomics, neuroscience, exercise physiology, and entrepreneurship. A mouthful!

He holds a Master's Degree in Civil Engineering since 2013, but he did not get a chance to use it yet because at the time of his graduation he was already deep into the rabbit hole of self-experimentation...

In his own words:

*I try to gather as much input as possible from my daily activities, analyze it, and come up with solutions that can help me and other people as well. And I thank the divinity for blessing me with the privilege, inspiration, and the time to do what I do.*

Other books from the same author:

- 1. Ketone Power - Superfuel for Optimal Mental Health and Ultimate Physical Performance***
- 2. T-(Rx) - The Testosterone Protocol - On Achieving True Male Status***
- 3. Periodic Fasting - Repair your DNA, Grow Younger, and Learn to Appreciate your Food***
- 4. Urban Escape - A Digital Entrepreneur's Travel Guide for New York City***
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