



THE LANDGEEK

The Art of Passive Income Podcast With Mark Podolsky and Scott Todd

Today's Guest: [Phil Ebiner](#)

Transcript

Mark: Hey, it's Mark Podolsky, the Land Geek, with your favorite nichey real estate website www.TheLandGeek.com. And I'm really excited for today's guest because there is a lot of applications that we can use by extracting his geeky knowledge of lots of different things. But before we talk to our guest, I would be remiss if I didn't properly introduce my co-host, Six Sigma. You know him, you love him; he is dominating on Craigslist and Facebook with PostingDomination.com/TheLandGeek. He is also dominating the world by helping us market our properties on LandModo.com. It is a pleasure to have with me again Scott Todd from ScottTodd.net. Scott, how are you?

Scott: Mark, I'm great. How are you?

Mark: Good, good. See how I mixed it up this time?

Scott: Man, I feel like I should be a NASCAR driver with like stickers all over my shirt like Land Modo...

Mark: No, you should. I think you should. I think you should have PostingDomination.com/TheLandGeek sticker, LandModo.com sticker, ScottTodd.net sticker and it's all good.

Scott: Wait till the next Bootcamp. Maybe I will come in with like a driver's jumpsuit with all that stuff on there.

Mark: I don't think it's a bad idea. I also want to remind all the listeners today's podcast is sponsored by [GeekPay.io](https://geekpay.io). It is the automated set it and forget it system for getting paid online, [GeekPay.io](https://geekpay.io). Today's guest is really, really cool because he started in 2012, which when you think about it isn't that long ago. 2012, this guy is like a rocket ship. He created his very first online course through consistency which is really important, persistence, which may be just as important and quality which is just as important. He has over 400,000 students enrolled in his many courses. He is the CEO and the creator of Video School Online and his courses have become best sellers on many of the most popular online learning platforms. He started the Online Course Masters podcast. Let's just face it. We are going to learn a lot from Phil Ebiner. Phil Ebiner, how are you?

Phil: Hey, I'm doing so good, excited to be here. Thanks for having me.

Mark: So, Phil, you've got 400,000 students, you've got 50 courses, you've got 400 plus free tutorials, it's all about creation, right? So, let's kind of talk about like the whole genesis of all this for you.

Phil: Yeah. I started my career doing video production and that was my goal. I wanted to be a video editor, make documentaries and that was what I was doing after college. I graduated college in 2011 and I was bouncing around from a few different full-time jobs but always trying to make my own business on the side. I was doing wedding videography, freelancing video editing, all kinds of stuff on the side. Then I heard about this whole passive income thing and I was going to do a book but that didn't end up working out. And at that same time when I was writing my own book, I found out about online courses and this website called [Udemy.com](https://udemy.com) was just launching.

So, I created my very first online course about video editing which is what I know and I made 60 bucks in that first month on [Udemy.com](https://udemy.com) and I got hooked. Ever since then, I just kept creating courses. It took me seven months to make \$1,000 in a single month and then about two years to make \$10,000 in a single month. It's just grown since then and like you said, being persistent, consistent, just putting out more courses but also just a lot of content to build my brand and try to be everywhere so people somehow find me in my online courses.

Mark: It sounds a lot like Grant Cardone, Scott Todd. He wants you to just stick with this.

Scott: Yeah, omnipresent, right? Like just be everywhere. Everywhere we turn around, we are going to see Phil.

Phil: Yeah, be on YouTube, social media. To be honest, I'm bad at a lot of this stuff and I'm learning a lot of this on my own. That's the cool thing is that you don't have to be an expert at social media to be good at this but you can learn things along the way. So, I've got my presence on social media but mostly through my website and YouTube, that's where I drive a lot of my own traffic to my courses. But also these platforms like [Udemy.com](https://www.udemy.com), another one is [Skillshare.com](https://www.skillshare.com), we are the author of our course and we have the rights to our course and we can put it on multiple websites which is my strategy. These marketplaces have millions of students on there already. So, if you can get your course ranking in the search engines of these sites, you can have a lot of what I would call passive income from your course sales.

Scott: So, Phil, I have a question. Yesterday, literally I kid you not, last night I'm on Udemy and I find this course. I just did a Google search, I ended up Udemy. I find this course; it's like 10 bucks because they have it on sale or something. I buy it, I go through it. It's like two and a half hours. It's really lame. Like I know I can do better.

Phil: Is it my course?

Scott: What's that?

Phil: Is it my course?

Scott: No, no, no, I'm sure yours are much better. This thing is kind of lame, right? I know I could do much better. Should that stop me? Should that stop me like the fact that there is a course out there already or maybe 10 courses already on the same topic? Should that stop me from looking at it and going, "Well, maybe the market is saturated," or is there just enough for everybody?

Phil: I personally feel like there is enough for everybody. Like you said, a lot of courses still are kind of that low quality in terms of production value but also just like the quality of teaching. Because it's such a hot industry right now and everyone is trying to create an online course right now. But I also think that on Udemy, students buy multiple courses too. I have an account manager at Udemy and we kind of work together and they've told me that it's okay if there are other courses in your niche because students buy multiple courses. Even off of Udemy, I think you can find your own audience. There is just enough people in the world to find your own audience. Every

class that I have ever taught, there is always being another class or multiple classes on all of the platforms. So, I wouldn't be scared of creating a class if there are others within your topic already.

Scott: It's a lot like land, Mark, right? There is just enough. There is just enough. I think that's the whole secret here. In the world, there is just enough of everything.

Mark: Yeah. It really comes down to the abundance mentality and I think when you have an abundance mentality, it allows you to be more persistent when you do hit a roadblock. Because you kind of know, "Well, if XYZ can do it, I can do it and I can probably do it a little bit better," right? It's right. Think of yourself like the way you consume anything.

If I'm going to read a book on marketing or management or sales, I'm not going to read one book on that topic. I will read multiple books from multiple authors and maybe I will have a favorite that I will buy another book from. But maybe I will have 10 favorites, right? So, information in and of itself, it's endless. It's massive and I really think that the market is actually as big as the marketing. But I would like to hear from Phil. Phil, what do you think of that comment?

Phil: Well, just that makes me think to just about where we are, we are recording this in the middle of 2017 and seriously, since like 2013 and 2014 people have been telling me, "Oh, it's too late to get in the market. There are already too many courses." Every year people are saying that. "I wish I would have started in 2013. I wish I would have started in 2016." I believe at least for the next few years, people are going to continue saying that. Who knows?

My personal opinion, I'm always thinking that... I'm like the worst case scenario guy. I'm like, "Okay, my course sales are going to dry up in a few months and I need to have some sort of like backup plan. So, if this continues for the next couple of years, I will be ecstatic about it." The reality is that online learning is here for I would say the long term. So, starting now and getting your footprint in now I would say is the best thing to do even if you haven't started yet.

Mark: Yeah. I think that it's so important in today's day and age when it's not like—let's say my parent's generation or our grandparent's generation—where you could work at one company. They are going to take care of you, you can put money away and 40 years from now you are will retire. For a lot of people, even the idea of staying at one place is like ineffable. So, it's almost like in today's worlds where let's face it... Scott, would you agree, in a

lot of industries robots and artificial intelligence are going to take your job, right?

Scott: Absolutely, yeah.

Mark: So, let's just take a mid-level management guy at a Fortune 500 company that job will probably get taken at some point. Then now that person has to create value somehow. A robot will not be able to create an online course. They just won't because someone has to actually plug that algorithm in. It can help you make online courses but it won't be able to do it in and of itself. Phil, what if you say, "Well, I'm not an expert in anything, who am I to make an online course?" What's your answer to that?

Phil: There is two sides of the coin with this. I think some people... I see online instructors who really get upset when there are people who aren't what I would consider the trained experts who have been in that industry for decades teaching courses about a topic. But I think there is a benefit in beginners or people who are who sort of learning a skill themselves in teaching that because they are closer to the beginner who is the student so you can teach it in a better way. I have courses on a lot of things that I wouldn't consider I'm an expert in, but I know a lot more than the people that want to learn it. And over time after creating 50 plus courses, I've learned how to teach things in a better way that helps students.

There is a couple of different strategies with online courses. I think some people can have a lot of success with teaching one or two courses on their expertise: what they have been doing at their job for decades, what they studied in college. But then there is the strategy that I have which is I create a lot of courses on a lot of topics. And now I'm actually partnering with a lot of other co-instructors to help them teach courses but also partake in the teaching and split the revenues. So, I have all these courses on all kinds of marketplaces that are all little streams of passive income and that's my strategy that I run my business off of.

Mark: Scott, do you like those strategies or should we put a close in it?

Scott: No, I like his strategy. I really do.

Mark: So, the strategy is let's say that WordPress for whatever reason goes down, Phil has got 20 other courses on 20 other different huge topics with huge markets like a WordPress, right? So, it's sort of like the shotgun strategy of online courses at a very low price point. What's the average price point of a course, Phil?

Phil: Well, on Udemy which is the biggest marketplace for online courses, the average selling price of a course is probably around \$15. Now that's another thing people get kind of scared about because they are like, "How can I make any kind of money when my courses are going to be sold for \$15? And hey, my courses are worth more than \$15. Why is Udemy selling them for \$10-15 every day?" That's just that marketplace and if you want to be on Udemy, those are the rules you have to play by. But they are such a big player and they have I think around 20 million students now that you can make a lot of money on that platform.

But if you are worried about that and if you think your course is worth \$200, \$500, \$2000; there are other tools now that make it really easy to create your own online course or online course platforms like [Teachable.com](https://teachable.com) or [Thinkific.com](https://thinkific.com). Just a few years ago, it was really hard to create an online course. You had to use your own website and plug-ins and video hosting and all these things put together. But now with those tools, you can start for free and it's your own online course platform which makes it super easy and that's when you can sell for a higher price. That's something that I'm moving towards—trying to sell courses at a higher price—because I know at the end of the day they I think are more valuable than \$10 or \$15 but it doesn't mean you can't make a lot of a lot of \$10 or \$15 sales.

Scott: You know I was watching a video the other day. I think it was on Sunday and it was a guy and he was basically saying that he created a course or something and I forgot the exact numbers but he got it to where he was making I think \$7,000 a month, just \$7,000 a month. Then he took it to ClickBank, okay? He took it to ClickBank, offered affiliates, he reduced his share to 25%, gave the affiliates 75% and then because of the Click thing traffic and because of the marketing that went behind it, his bring home now is 25,000 a month. That's pure scale. You can't do it by yourself. You have to have people. So, if you have to give up a little bit in order to get more. More beats nothing.

Phil: That's amazing. I got to take that strategy.

Scott: Yeah, there you go.

Mark: So, there is so many different ways to sort of create this passive income stream in online courses. What is the most difficult part of creating an online course, Phil?

Phil: I think that a lot of people get stuck with the creation process because most of these courses are video based courses and you don't have to do it but... For example, I interviewed someone on my podcast who teaches real

estate courses in Indiana and he's doing over 250k a year on his own basically teaching these classes and it's all just audio versions of a live training that he's done. So, super simple, not that high quality.

So, it doesn't have to be high quality but people get caught up on what camera should I use? What microphone should I use? How do I set it up? To be honest, that's kind of where I had a little kind of advantage because when I started, that's what I went to school for. So, I had that equipment already so I had that leg up in creating higher quality courses.

But what I say is that it doesn't have to be confusing. There are a couple of simple tools that you can use. For example, when you're starting out, just create a slideshow-based course. You can use Google Slides, [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com), PowerPoint, Keynote, whatever to create slides and just make an audio with your slideshow. You need a better microphone but you can get a Blue Snowball microphone on Amazon for 50 bucks and make it as simple as that. I think that's the most confusing part and it takes to learn how to create a great video but people also just get caught up on the perfectionism of it all. I think people just have to put something out there and then make it better later on, add the video aspect later on. But just start with something simple like a slideshow-based course with audio.

Mark: A slide show based course with audio. Scott, why are you smiling?

Scott: I love it. I love that strategy. I think like everything, we overcomplicate things. Like I think everybody overcomplicates their businesses and I think that the secret is just doing it. I will tell you, Phil, when I look at Udemy's quality requirements, I get a little nervous. Like "Man, I'm I going to go through this whole process and they are going to look at it and go, 'No way, it's not going to fly. It doesn't meet our quality requirements.'" How do I hedge that? How do I test that out?

Phil: Well, the good thing is that now on Udemy, you do have to post a test video. So, before you go through all the work of creating a course, they ask you to post-test videos to make sure you meet their requirements. So, you do have to do that on Udemy and that might take a little bit of practice. But again, with a slideshow and audio course, it shouldn't be that hard. But if you don't want to be on Udemy, you don't have to meet all of those requirements. You can post it on your own websites or other platforms. But like you said, it's just doing it and getting feedback and making tweaks along the way that is the answer.

A lot of people ask me like how to start, how to make a lot of money initially. And I will be completely honest, I don't have many secrets. It's just the fact

that I've been doing this since 2012 and I've been doing it every month and every week since then. I've seen a lot of people start and give up who never had success or a lot of people who had success and then sort of switched mindsets and did something else. That's fine if you're not enjoying it anymore, but if you kept it, you would be a lot further than if you stopped. So, for me there is no secret; it's just keep doing it.

Mark: Scott, is that the secret to success in any business niche whether it's online courses or real estate or selling widgets?

Scott: I think it is. I think it's showing up and just staying laser focused. That's the hardest thing is just staying laser-focused on what you're trying to do. I think that's where the goals and what you're trying to accomplish and knowing exactly where you are going next so that you can stay laser-focused. I like Phil's strategy too. I just think that how hard can it be to create a course? Just kidding, it's hard.

Mark: Yeah. The only tweak I would make it to that as far as let's just take a general success outlook is there needs to be some market research done upfront. So, if I'm starting to talk about selling on [MySpace.com](https://www.myspace.com), I'm already out of the water, I have no market there. I think that the first thing you've got to actually go out, ask 100 people, "What do you want?" Then go out and then create that value. I would actually make the argument, Phil, before I would make any online course myself or Scott. I would say sell if first. Make sure there is a market there then you're forced to make it. What do you think of that, Phil Ebner?

Phil: I like it. I like it. Well, for people that have never sold anything, I think that's intimidating to try to sell something before you create it but it's not hard to do anymore. Like I mentioned with those tools [Teachable.com](https://www.teachable.com) or [Thinkific.com](https://www.thinkific.com), you can create a landing page and sell a course before you've actually created any of that content itself. Just this whole idea of validation or validating your course topic before you create it is important when you start to grow your business.

I always tell people just create a course on something you love to see if you have fun doing the process, if you can do the process. So, if that means creating a course on brewing beer or adopting cats or whatever it is, just create that course just for fun. But to grow your business validation is huge and I've seen personally... I didn't really start validating my course ideas until probably a year and a half ago and I've seen my course revenue grow double and triple on a month to month basis from the past couple of years.

There are other ways that I do that too. One is surveying my audience like you mentioned if you have an audience. Super simple, just send out surveys, ask them what courses they are interested in or what they need help with or go on Udemy and Amazon and YouTube and see 'are there people searching for this topic?' I will bet that if you go on YouTube and you search for a topic and there are videos, not your videos, but just any video with millions of views and thousands of likes, there is going to be an audience for people who want that online course.

Since we are speaking about this today, on [Udemy.com](https://www.udemy.com) if you sign up for your instructor account, they have this brand-new feature that was just launched that allows to actually do keyword research and see what the demand is for any topic on the market, also the median revenue for those courses and the top revenue for the top selling courses for that keyword. So, it's actually really easy now to see at least on Udemy what courses are validated or viable.

Mark: Six Minutes Abs, no?

Phil: Yeah, I think so. You can do it.

Mark: So, health is big, making money is big, weight loss is big.

Phil: Programming.

Mark: Programming is big, Posting Domination is big.

Scott: Anything to do with financial.

Mark: Yeah, financial is big and we are all an expert in something. The definition I think of an expert is that you know something more than somebody else. So, I don't think you should be intimidated by it. I would make the argument—everybody should create an online course. Phil, great idea or no?

Phil: I say that everyone one can be successful or anybody can be successful teaching an online course. Not everyone is going to end up doing it but any single person can. At this point, I think any expert or any person that has their own sort of personal brand, a website where you teach something whether in the past, it's through eBooks or through blogging or YouTube or through a podcast; everyone should have an online course because people are coming to expect that and you see it now. You see every entrepreneur out there who teaches something creating their own online course now. It's kind of one those things nowadays; it's like you need to

have an online course to be considered an expert in your topic. At least it could be an extra income stream on your own website.

Mark: Well, yeah and that's the thing. Let's get into the nitty gritty, how long would it take to make an actual online course? What's my ROI on doing this?

Phil: Well, that's a difficult question because it depends on a lot of factors, but let's just say that an online course typically is between two to four hours. Some classes can be a lot longer. For me, I have been doing it for a while, but for me I can probably create a course if I sat down and actually did it—outlining, scripting perhaps, recording, editing—in a week to two weeks of basically full-time work.

But you think about that and you're getting paid month after month year after year. I'm sure you talk this about this on the podcast but this whole trading your hours for dollars is no more. So, the hours that I put into some of my courses, I have probably been paid back thousands of dollars per hour I actually worked creating that course and the follow-up work isn't that much. You get some questions from students, you have to update your course from time to time if there is something new in the topic you're teaching just to keep it updated but there is not that much work afterward in terms of the course.

Of course, if you want to grow your business, you will have to promote and I do a lot of content marketing and that takes a lot of work and stuff, too. So, I guess at the end of the day, it's not necessarily easy to get into. It's going to be a lot of work. It's not a get rich quick scheme. But I think you could create a course in less than a week if you sat down and actually just did it.

Mark: I love it. I love it. Well, now, Phil Ebner, we are at that point in the podcast where we are going to put you on the spot and ask you for your tip of the week: a website, a resource, a book, something actionable where the Art of Passive Income listeners can go right now—improve their businesses, improve their lives. What have you got?

Phil: Okay. My tip of the week I will say is if you are creating an online course is to focus on how much the students get out of your course and not how much you get out of the students in terms of money. Stop worrying about how much you're going to make from each student. If you care about actually creating a great course that helps students learn, you're going to get paid back because your course is going to get good reviews. Basically, on any marketplace, if you get a lot of good reviews, it helps your course in the search engine and that's going to help create more sales. So, really if

you're starting out, stop thinking about, "Oh, if I make all these courses, I can make this amount of money." Just focus on creating a course that students love.

Then I'm going to send people to my podcast not because it's my podcast but because I've interviewed up till now over 20 experts. We put out weekly episodes of the Online Course Master Show. We will teach you everything you need to know about online courses that we didn't cover today. You can find that OnlineCourseMasters.com.

Mark: Phil, you should have Scott and I on your podcast because we actually made courses.

Phil: Let's do it.

Mark: Yeah, absolutely.

Scott: I did one on the fly. I presold it and then I created the content. I knew kind high level what I wanted to do. I'm that intensive.

Phil: I would love to share that because I haven't had anyone talk about that idea specifically.

Scott: I did it and it was beautiful. I loved it and that's the way I want to create content in the future.

Mark: Yeah. We are experts in re-purposing content. Thinking it and doing it.

Phil: Love it.

Mark: Look how we have a podcast guest, Scott and then...

Scott: We sell him.

Mark: ...we end up becoming guests on his podcast.

Scott: Life, man, that's how you do it.

Mark: That's how you do it, exactly. You can't be shy in this world, right?

Phil: No.

Scott: The worst he could have said, Mark, was, "Look, I don't like you guys, no." He still might say that off the air as soon as we stop recording. He will be like, "I hated you guys, no." That's okay. Even if he said no, it's okay.

Mark: Absolutely, absolutely. I think there is a lesson to be learned like you've got to go out there and you've got to put yourself out there. It's not easy for Phil to come talk to two people about what he's been doing. It's probably easier now but when he first started, it was probably hard to start a podcast and create this content. Now he is more comfortable with it. I always say embrace the suck. You've got to start somewhere and you've got to just get out there. So, if we are going to revisit our success sort of template again, start with a good market, consistency, persistence, showing up and not being scared to look silly in a way, right?

Phil: Just know that there are hundreds or thousands of other people right now who are probably wanting to create a course in whatever topic you want to teach. So, there is an advantage of like you said just doing it now and getting it up there because there is a whole pack of people wanting to do it who might never do it but someone else probably will and you want to get there first.

Mark: There you go. Scott Todd, what's your tip of the week?

Scott: All right, Mark, this one is just for Phil. Okay, it's for other people too. It might be for you too, Mark, but I think Phil might like this. So, Phil mentioned creating slides and PowerPoint and Keynote all of those are great places to create slides. I know you like Slidebean, Mark?

Mark: Yeah. I like Slidebean but it's \$29 a month. It's not cheap.

Scott: Yeah. So, check out Deckset, [DecksetApp.com](https://decksetapp.com) I think it's what it is.

Mark: Deckset App.

Scott: Basically, it uses knockdown...

Mark: Markdown.

Scott: Markdown, I'm out of touch. It uses Markdown in order to create each of the slides. You can literally edit the slides very, very quickly. Like the one I have been messing with is the template called Big Text that kind of just fills it in on the whole screen. Great if you are going to do something

with a lot of words. You can do images too like screenshots etc. So, a great way of creating slides really, really fast.

Mark: Do you have to be a programmer though? Do you have to know Markdown?

Scott: No, Mark. Once you download it and you go to edit it, it opens it up and you can pick it up very, very quickly like, "Okay, I just do this. I put this here. I put that there." I think you can do it, Mark.

Mark: All right, it's \$27. It's less than one month of Slidebean.

Scott: Get the trial. Try the trial first. See if you like it.

Mark: How do I get the trial?

Scott: Right from their website. I know you like The App Store whatever but forget The App Store for a minute. It's right on the...

Mark: Oh, I see.

Scott: DeckSetApp.com. At the top it says free trial; give it a try.

Mark: Free trial, all right I'm doing it right now. I'm in. I'm downloading it.

Scott: You are saving \$29 a month.

Mark: All right, could I export out all my stuff into Deckset?

Scott: I don't know.

Mark: Because I'm kind of like locked in; I've got a lot of slides.

Scott: See that's how they get you.

Mark: That's how they get you. I mean...

Scott: Yeah.

Mark: All right, good on them. Okay, great tip. My tip is going to be learn more about creation at VideoSchoolOnline.com. VideoSchoolOnline.com: there are free courses, there are photo courses, there are video courses, there are motion graphics courses, there are business courses. It's a lot of courses. There is something for everybody just about. Again, I think

everybody should definitely create a course. We have now a Sherpa to kind of guide us on how to make a good course. So, Phil Ebiner, are we good?

Phil: We are great, yeah. This has been fun.

Mark: Scott, are we good?

Scott: I love it. I'm good.

Mark: All right, I want to thank all the listeners. Again, the only way we are going to get the quality of guests like a Phil Ebiner to come on this podcast is if you guys do us three little favors. You've got subscribe, you've got to rate and you've got to review the podcast. Send us a screenshot of the review to Support@TheLandGeek.com. We are going to send you for free the \$97, *Passive Income Launch Kit* for free. Easy, five seconds there you go. I also again want to remind everybody GeekPay.io, a set it and forget automated financial CRM, the only one of its kind. All right, thanks everybody. Scott, are we doing this? No?

Scott: Let's do it, Mark.

Mark: One, two, three ...

Mark & Scott: Let freedom ring.

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