

THINKIFIC

● THE DIGITAL

LEARNING ←

● ○ TRENDS

→ 2023

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# State of the Industry

## The creator middle class is here, and they're getting down to business

The creator economy is a juggernaut, valued at over \$100 billion and employing as many as 300 million people worldwide.<sup>1</sup> And while an exclusive tier of popular creators continue to generate the most revenue (and headlines), a creator middle class has quietly emerged in the background. This segment of creators is less motivated by fame and money than they are by intrinsic factors including self-expression and the ability to work on projects that give them a sense of meaning and purpose, like sharing knowledge.<sup>2</sup> They seek to make a living through their content and tend to operate as small businesses. In fact, today, nearly twice as many creators want to become business owners versus achieving some celebrity influencer status.<sup>3</sup>



“Not everyone can or should expect to get rich as an online creator or influencer, but [...] many more can earn substantial livelihoods from their creative production than they do today.

Dr. Richard Florida, University of Toronto Professor, Distinguished Fellow at NYU, and author of *The Rise of the Creator Economy*<sup>4</sup>

The e-learning industry is expected to be worth more than \$460 billion by 2026.<sup>5</sup> That's a big pie that can be sliced into a lot of pieces. There's more than enough room for (lots and lots and lots of) people like you who want to create a steady, sustainable, and scalable business – one that's resistant to upstream factors (hello, never-ending algorithm tweaks and platform updates).



Technological innovation is happening at a rate that is difficult to comprehend – research suggests technical skills now have a half-life of five years (and the more technical the skill, the shorter the lifespan).<sup>6</sup> To thrive in a rapidly evolving, content-saturated landscape, creators need to cultivate deeper connections to their communities, solid enough to withstand the next internet earthquake.

We surveyed over 2,000 people in the US and spoke directly with successful creators to understand current trends in digital learning, side hustles, and the creator economy. We hope this report will help you create and build a solid, sustainable business doing what you love in 2023 and beyond.

TREND 1

Microlearning  
emerges as a  
solution for life  
on the go →

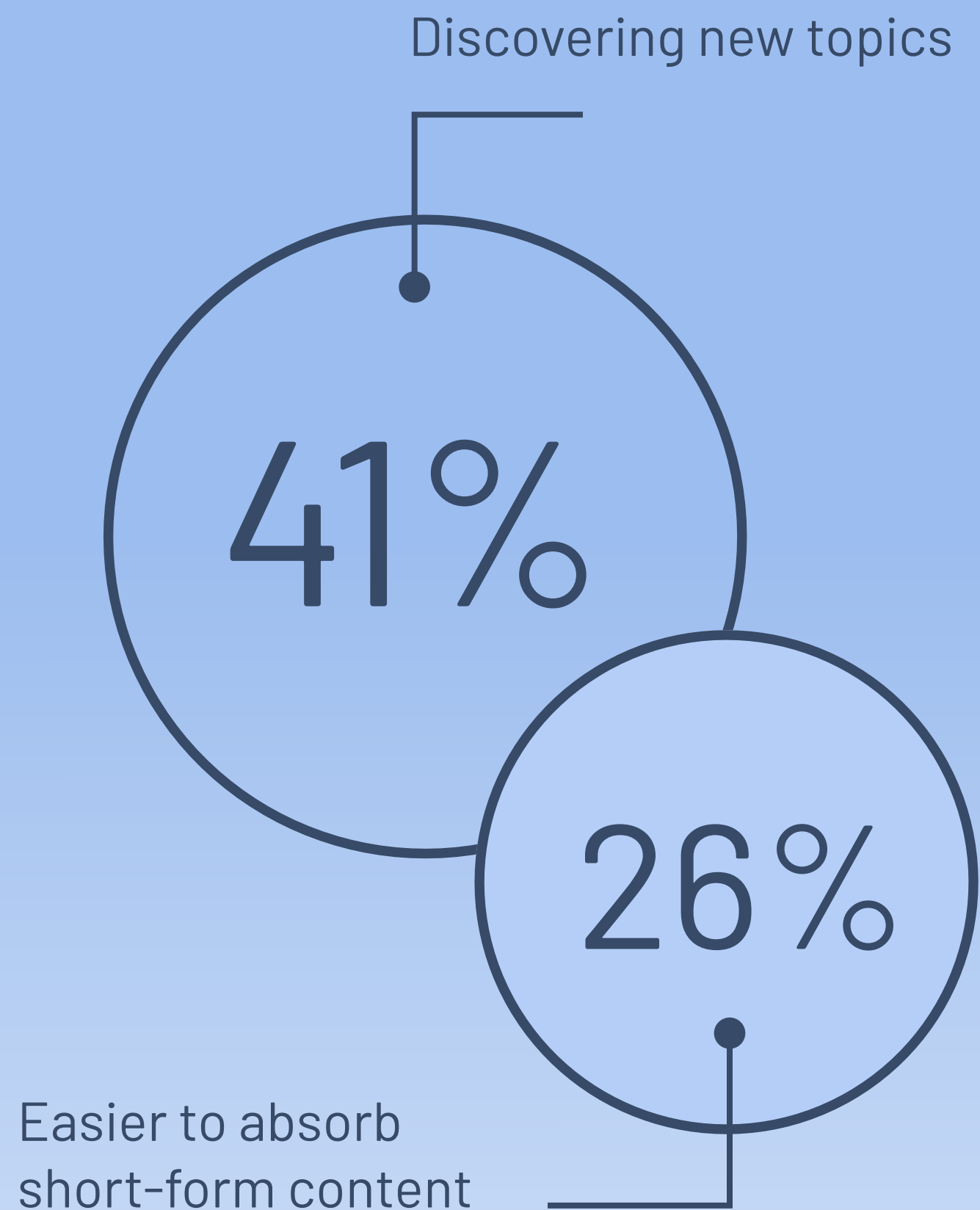
# Microlearning emerges as a solution for life on the go

## After all, time is the ultimate limited resource

We're in a golden era for e-learning – just look at the (many) headlines about Gen Z's use of TikTok as a search engine<sup>7</sup>. The last few years have turbocharged interest and participation, and there have never been more tools and assets available to creator educators. But the one resource we're all lacking is time. As we return to pre-pandemic levels of activity, any time for learning we do have will have to be squeezed in around work, appointments, and commutes.

It's big business, too: The mobile learning market is poised to nearly quadruple in value by 2026, up to \$155.8 billion from \$42.2 billion in 2021.<sup>8</sup> But just because our time is scarce doesn't mean we don't prioritize learning. **That's where microlearning comes in.**

## The two most cited benefits of short-form learning:

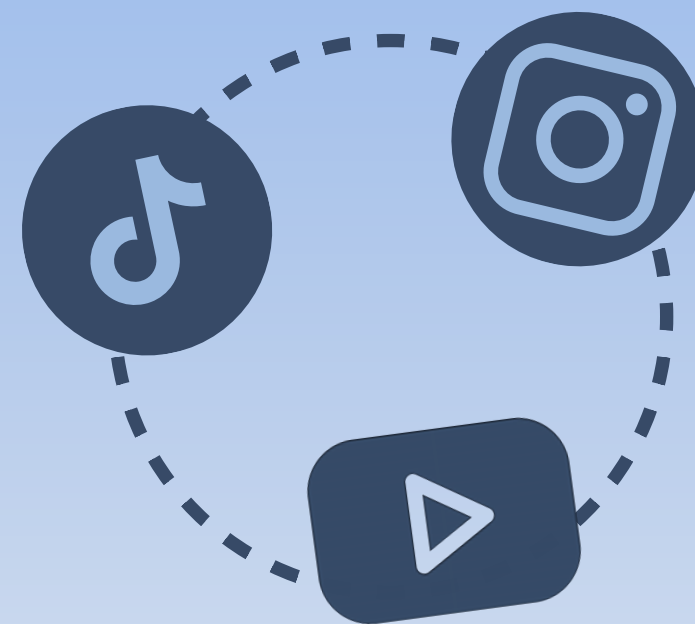


Compared to traditional models, bite-size classes – anything under 10 minutes in length counts, but think closer to the 30- to 60-second mark – are not only more convenient, but they're also more effective at boosting long-term retention. In our survey, the second most cited benefit to short-form learning after discovering new topics (41%) was that it's easier to absorb short-form content (26%).



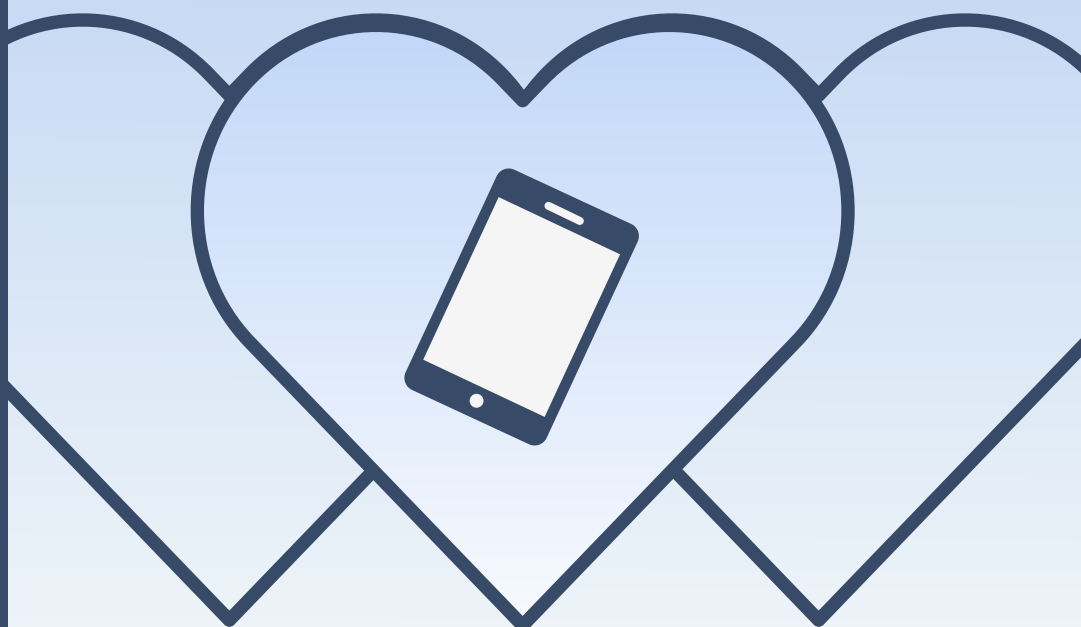
**Our data**<sup>9</sup>

Two out of three people commit time each month to learn or study something new; for Gen Z and millennials, it's more than 4 out of 5



More than 60% of people learn new things from content on YouTube, Instagram or TikTok

More than twice as many people (68%) prefer consuming digital content on mobile devices like phones and tablets than on desktop computers or laptops (29%)



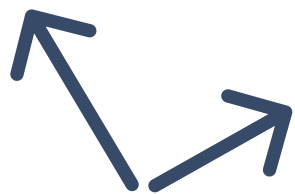
# 57%

57% of people said they're more likely to learn something online if they can do so on mobile (instead of a computer)

## More reinforcing data:

20%

of TikTokers are already using the platform for education and learning <sup>12</sup>



Roughly 60% of millennials and Gen Zs would like to learn a new skill but feel they'd don't have the time <sup>10</sup>



By studying material in short sessions over a continuous period – a.k.a. microlearning – we retain 80% of what we learn after 60 days <sup>11</sup>



The top three areas people want to learn about online are cooking, fitness and entrepreneurship <sup>13</sup>



## What this means for you

### Just starting out?

The growth of microlearning is, frankly, incredible news for creators who are early in their entrepreneurial journey. Shorter learning experiences are cheaper, faster, and easier to produce, meaning you can get a lot of content out into the world with limited resources. This is particularly valuable as you begin your business journey because you'll be iterating and testing quite a bit. It's a lot easier to pivot on a course topic or lesson when you've invested hours into it instead of weeks.

The other important thing microlearning brings to new creators is a mechanism for audience growth. Yes, microlearning is a trend to consider when it comes to your paid learning products. But more creators should be using microlearning as a way to grow and engage their audience. Take Miss Excel for example. She used microlearning on TikTok to build a massive audience (currently over 875,000 followers). Her content is concise, free, and highly-informative – all the microlearning staples.

**You can learn more about how she launched her seven-figure course business here.**

## → TL;DR

- Microlearning is cheaper, easier, faster to produce
- Use microlearning to quickly test and validate new ideas, courses
- Microlearning is also an amazing way to build your audience

## Looking to scale?

If you're an established business with existing learning products, you might be wondering if you really need to embrace microlearning. Not every trend is right for every business, but microlearning is firmly aligned with peoples' shortening attention spans and their growing reliance on mobile devices.

If you have an established course driven by long lessons, you may be missing out on a segment of your audience who simply no longer wants to learn that way. This is especially true if your target market includes millennials and Gen Z. The use of microlearning could expand your audience in these segments, helping you scale.

Also, microlearning doesn't require you to start from scratch. If you have established learning products, you may be able to reuse portions of that content or even split up lessons into more digestible chunks. Miss Excel does exactly this. She pulls quick tips from her lessons and if people want more information – which they often do: our survey showed 57% of people decided to learn about a topic after seeing short form content about it on social media – then her entire course is just waiting in the wings.

Shortening your lessons not only helps learners absorb and retain content better, it can also increase your discoverability. By featuring more, shorter lessons on your website you expose visitors and search engines to a higher number of keywords that might trigger interest or a sale.

## → TL;DR

- Microlearning can help you expand into audiences who prefer mobile learning or with shorter attention spans
- You can adapt existing content to a microlearning format to reduce effort
- More, shorter lessons can help with your discoverability and conversion



“ My audience is coming from TikTok, so I keep my videos short – one to five minutes. I want to make sure they have both the time and the mental capacity to complete it.

Maddie Spear, MSW, LCS



Maddie Spear, MSW, LCS, is a trauma therapist and private practice owner who works with children, teens, and young adults located in North Carolina. In addition to her work in direct trauma care, Maddie works to bring mental health tips worldwide. With a following of well over 285,000 on social media, Maddie strives to eliminate the stigma around mental health and promote healing for all with accessible mental health tips and tricks to promote self-growth and self-care.

TREND 2

Tides shift from  
creator entertainers  
to creator educators





# Tides shift from creator entertainers to creator educators

**Trying to choose your path?  
You don't have to be a household name to earn a living.**

But, honestly, you've probably already made your choice. While creator entertainers produce content anchored in the creator's performance or influence, creator educators create content designed to share knowledge or drive impact. Which one sounds more like you? And though the algorithm rewards the top tier of creators – a thin segment of superstar entertainers who retain a vast majority of revenue – the model is changing.

Platforms that allow direct payment, like Substack, Patreon, and Twitch, have seen skyrocketing investment, so monetizing your own (already heavily engaged) audience is increasingly accessible. And people are hungry for it. One big way creators are looking to build sustainable revenue is through digital learning products, which, along with books and podcasts, are expected to see the biggest year-over-year growth in creation.<sup>14</sup>

By focusing on sharing knowledge and driving impact, creator educators build trusting, long-lasting relationships with their audiences. That kind of community is much more sustainable, and can be monetized over time. Plus, unlike entertainment, education isn't a zero-sum game: You're not battling for the biggest share of eyeballs. (And waking up tomorrow to fight the same fight again — hello, creator burnout.) Look for educators to form the steady and sustainable backbone of the creator middle class.

NEARLY

**1 in 4**

people identify as a digital creator, and millennials top all other generations, with nearly half using this label

Our data:<sup>15</sup>

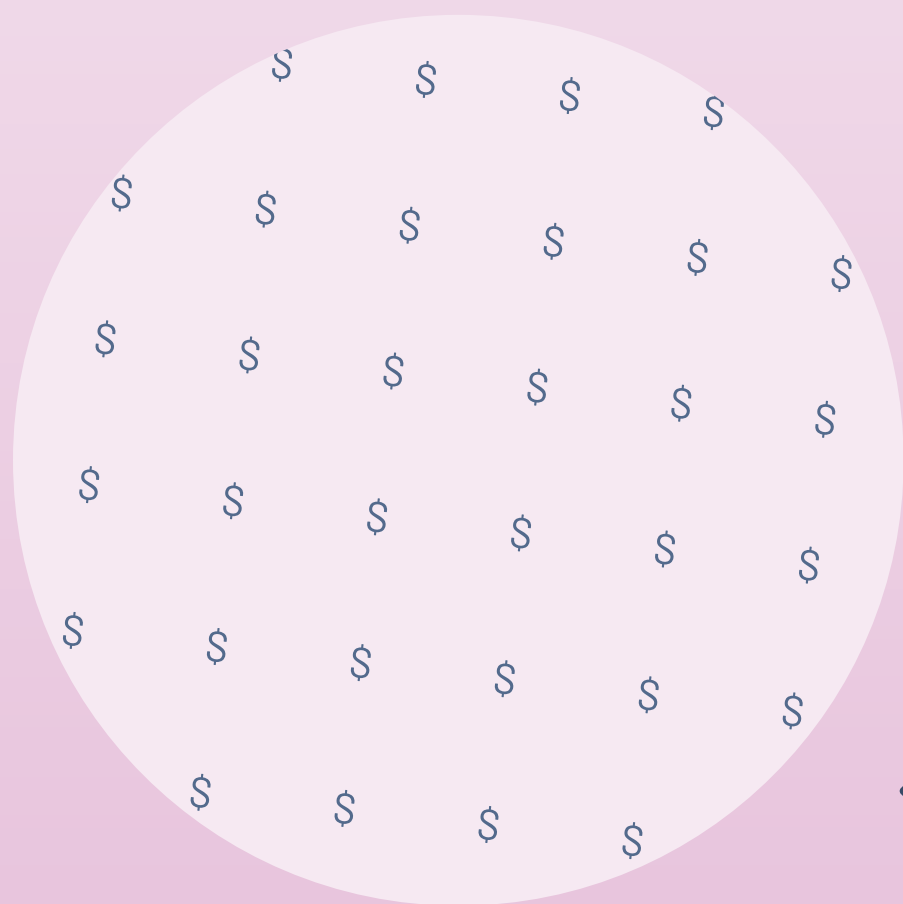
MORE THAN

**2X** AS MANY PEOPLE

are interested in creators making digital content for education than for entertainment

Other reinforcing data:

**Less than 3%** of creators make more than \$500K per year



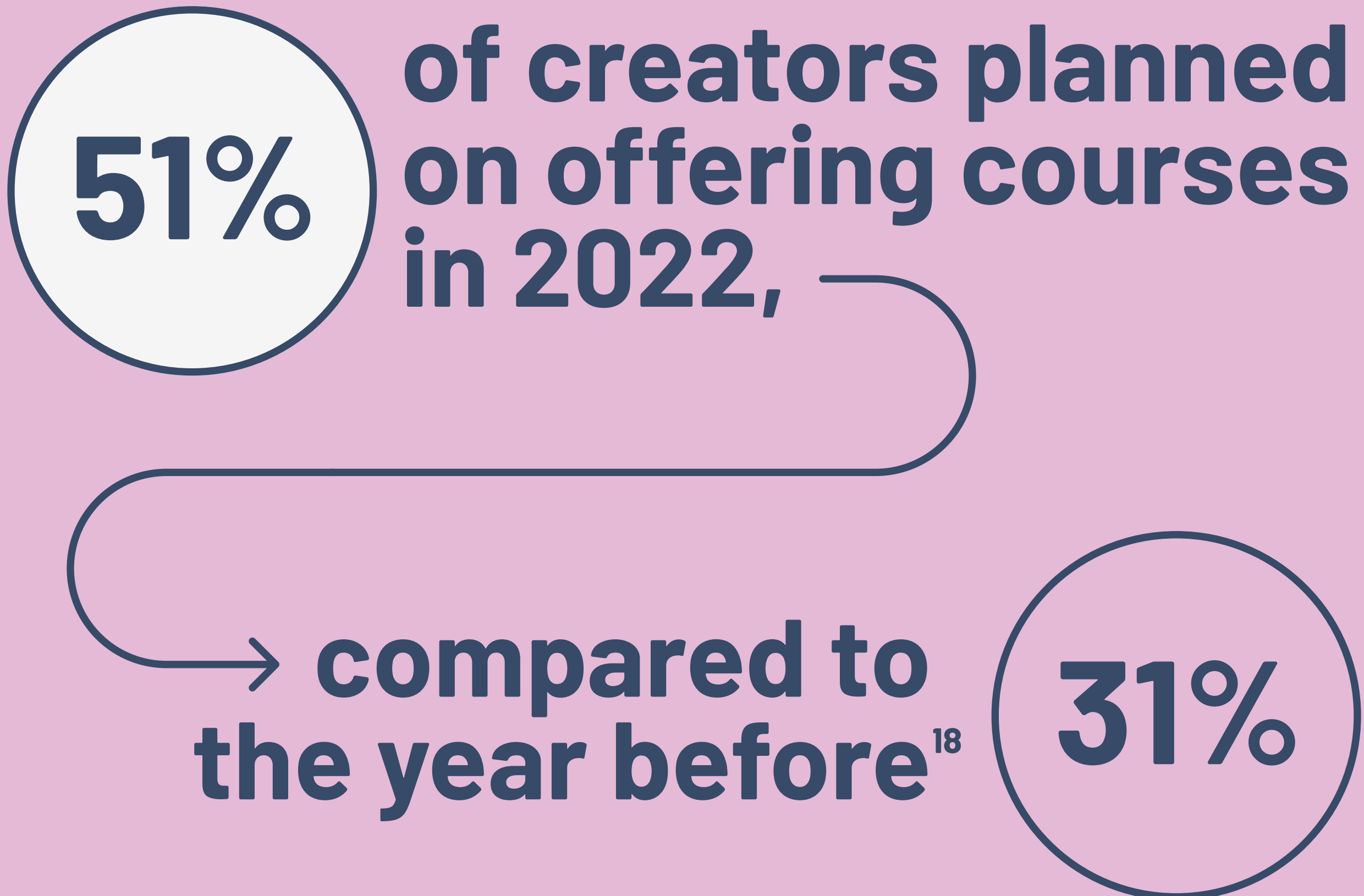
**and nearly 90%** make less than 100K per year<sup>16</sup>

Creator-focused companies like Patreon and Substack received **\$1.3 billion in funding in 2021,**

Other reinforcing data:

**tripling the previous year's amount<sup>17</sup>**

Other reinforcing data:



Ideas for educational content include subject matter 101s and intros, how-tos and demos, tutorials and tips, data explainers, myth-busting, recipes, and workouts.

## What this means for you



### Just starting out?

You're reading this report, so we're going to go ahead and assume you have an interest in digital learning products. Congrats! You're on trend. That said, while we believe that the most sustainable path towards success as a creator is through education, that doesn't mean you can't entertain. As you begin your journey, consider your strengths, your knowledge, and your goals, and then be really intentional about your voice and personal brand. If you are a natural entertainer or you want humor to be a part of your brand, you may be able to incorporate elements of entertainment into your learning products. In addition to your brand, consider what channels you're planning on using to build and engage your audience. If you want to grow through TikTok or YouTube, these channels do lend themselves well to a mixture of education and entertainment.

Maddie Spear, MSW, LCS has done an amazing job of this on her TikTok account [therapy\\_thoughts](#) – an entertaining account that actually drives more than 70% of new business to her therapy practice and the majority of her course signups.

The other thing worth mentioning is it can be tempting to look at some of the top creator entertainers in the world – Mr. Beast for example – and use them as a landmark for your own work and growth. Not only are you setting yourself up for failure when you position yourself against these iconic creators, ultimately creator educators have different goals and needs. As a creator educator, you can monetize a very small but engaged audience. You don't need millions of followers. And you don't need to compete with other creators. Focus on your own goals and that of your audience, find your niche, and take small steps towards helping people learn and transform. Business success will follow.



### → TL;DR

- Focusing on education doesn't mean you can't entertain – find your voice
- Don't compare yourself to the biggest creator entertainers since they have different goals
- Educators can monetize a very small audience

## Looking to scale?

If you have an established education-focused business, this trend is largely a reinforcement of the decisions you've already made. You made the choice to focus on impact through learning, and the good news is the market for that continues to grow.

As you're looking to scale, one area you can take a look at is your pricing. If you've proven your learning products provide value, take a step back and think about how much people are truly willing to pay for that growth. Or even ask former students. You may be surprised by what you find out and even a small increase in price can really help a business scale.



We don't have much to add here other than to say great job, and maybe provide further validation with this quote from Natasha Pierre, Video Marketing Coach and Founder of Shine With Natasha:

"You can go to someone for entertainment and that gives you like a short burst of dopamine, right? But when you're able to offer just a little bit of a transformation, like 'I'm getting this one tip that changes how I think, or changes how I do something,' it keeps people coming back for more."

## → TL;DR

- The choices you've already made align with where the market is headed. Awesome job!
- Make sure your prices are aligned with the value you're providing



“Once you step into that educator role, you can more effectively sell services. That means you're not just relying on reel payouts, brand partnerships, and affiliate income to generate income as a creator.

Natasha Pierre, Video Marketing Coach  
and Founder of Shine With Natasha



Natasha is the host of [The Shine Online Podcast](#) and a Video Marketing Coach that helps small businesses shine online. Through [her signature group programs and educational content](#), Natasha helps you build your brand with a video strategy that is fulfilling and fun without the overwhelm.

TREND 3

Your community  
is your first and  
most important  
product →

# Your community is your first and most important product

## How a strong community can work for you

We used to say that members will come for the content but stay for the community. In 2023, the dynamic is changing: they'll come for your community, then pay for your content. Creators have clued into the idea that the secret sauce for selling content is to start by building community. That's your first product, and your most valuable asset.

A strong community will foster more engaged followers and increased retention by providing students with the support (from you and from their peers) they need to tackle the highs and lows of growth. Debbie Rosas, founder of [Nia Technique Inc.](#), said she was initially surprised at the level of intimacy that was forged in their online community, especially considering members are located across the globe. Now she has come to expect it, as "the nature of human beings is to be in relationships, to be connected. And the beautiful thing about the online learning experience is that people can feel safer to be who they are."

As learners build connections with other members of the community, their odds of success in a course or even in implementing their learnings in real life increase – a benefit which will always be tied, in their minds, to the community you built. And then when you're ready to ideate on, plan, promote, and sell your next learning product, your community is already engaged, loyal, and interested in what comes next. Sounds like a recipe for success.

Our data:<sup>19</sup>

NEARLY

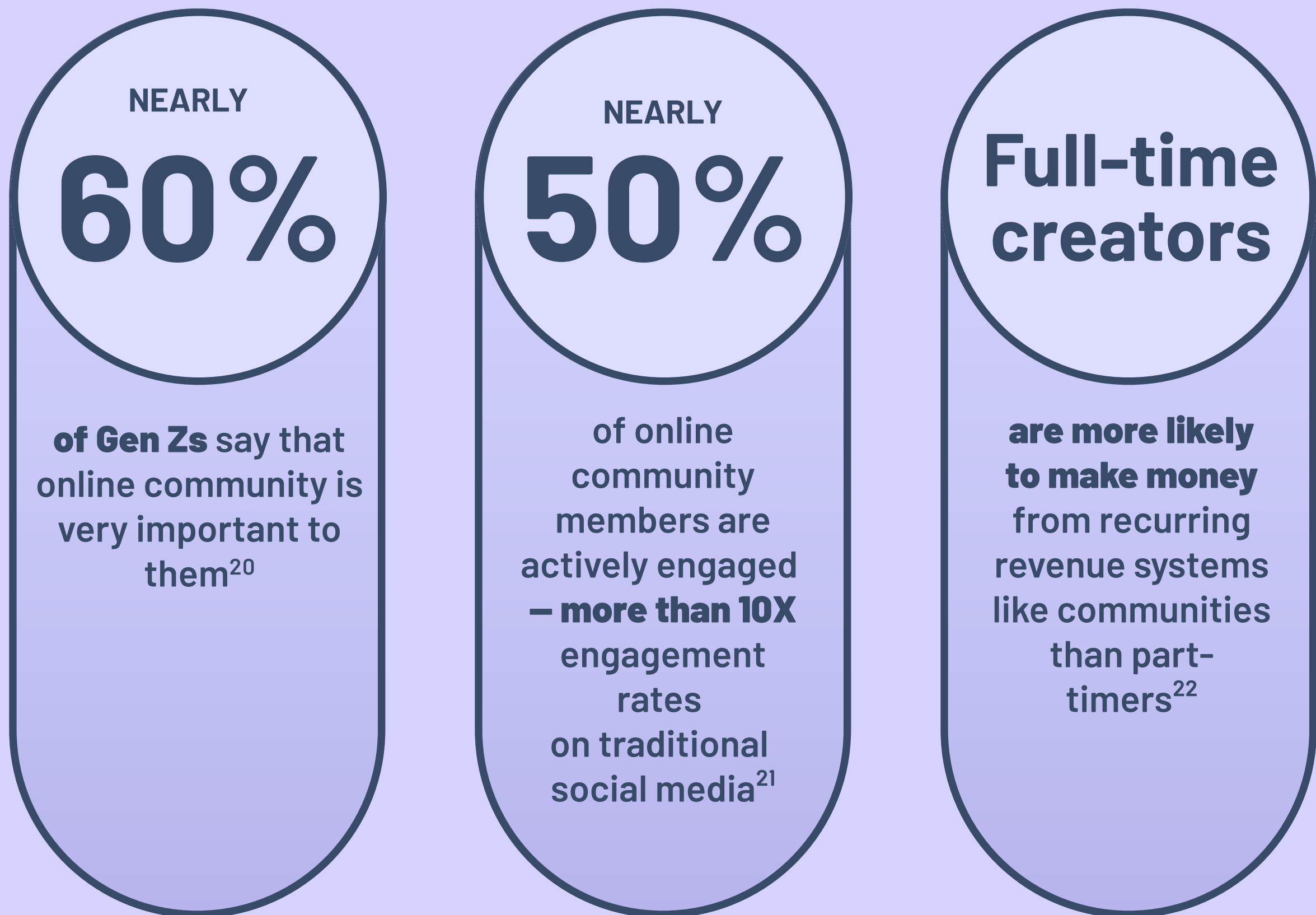
**60%**

of surveyed Thinkific creators are currently selling, or are planning to sell, an online community as a learning product

**53%**

of people say they're more likely to buy a product if it's recommended to them by a member of a community they belong to

## Other reinforcing data:



60% of full-time creators use email and newsletters to grow their communities. Newsletter referral programs are a great way to incentivize your audience to share your work and get new followers.<sup>23</sup>



## What this means for you

### Just starting out?

Building a big, powerful community isn't easy. But neither is building a successful course. It is, however, much easier to start a community than almost any other learning product.

Getting started with a community is a great way to get your learning business off the ground quickly. You can literally create and launch a community in under an hour. And it almost forces you to focus on building and nurturing your audience first, which is one of the hardest parts of growing any business. If you've been debating where to begin or putting off a launch like so many creators do, this might just be the kick in the pants you need to start gaining traction and momentum.

The other thing to note for early creators is that you really do need to be active in your own communities. This is not a “set-it-and-forget-it” tactic. “It all stems from you. If you are not replying to every comment, if you are not encouraging your students to support their peers, they're not going to come back,” explains Melissa Guller, Founder of Wit & Wire. Be the community member that you want everyone else to emulate. Post topics and prompts, ask and answer questions, and drive engagement and value. People will follow your example.



## → TL;DR

- A community is quick way to get started – you can build one in under an hour
- It forces you to focus on nurturing an audience, which is an important step for new creators
- You need to be your own ideal community member. Others will follow.



## Looking to scale?

There are a number of ways a community can help a business scale besides simply representing a new monetizable channel.

First, communities are an incredible source of information. By listening to your members' conversations, either as a fly on the wall or by actively asking questions and soliciting feedback, you can tap into their brainpower to gather insights that inform what you create next. This can help you plan content or entire products that meet the wants and needs of your audience so you can deliver content and products that your audience actually cares about.

Then, as discussed above, there is likely no more powerful sales channel than a strong community. If you have an engaged, trusting audience waiting in the wings, you have a massive advantage every single time you launch a new product or service. Promote and sell your next learning product right from within your community.

As an added benefit, communities are a great place to seek out beta testers for new products and testimonials for old ones. These advocates will provide honest, helpful feedback to increase your odds of a successful launch and strong social proof to help you market it.

## → TL;DR

- Use communities to get ideas for new content or products
- A community might just be the best possible sales channel
- Community members can also act as beta testers or testimonials/case studies



“ Client acquisition is one of the most expensive parts of business, which is why community is important. Once they’re there, as long as we can retain them then they have the potential to engage with all the different services we offer.

Christina Mae Wolf, General Manager of Nia Technique Inc.



Christina Mae Wolf is the General Manager of Nia® Technique and is a leading Nia® and Yoga teacher, studio owner, conscious business coach and transformational leader. Holding a BA in Business from the University of Washington, Christina blends her passions for business and conscious movement mastery as a 500hr RYT, 2nd Degree Nia® Black Belt Teacher, motivational speaker, choreographer, and studio owner offering classes, workshops and trainings in Nia and business best practices.

TREND 4

Diversify,  
diversify,  
diversify –  
*especially* in hard  
economic times



# Diversify, diversify, diversify – especially in hard economic times

## It's the only path to full-time creator

With a looming recession, tightening budgets and uncertain times ahead, everyone's feeling the pinch: Nearly 1 in 3 don't earn enough to meet their needs, while even more than that (35%) don't have one month of emergency savings in the bank (while fewer than half of us have the recommended three months stashed away).<sup>24</sup>

As the creator economy navigates its first recession and companies rethink their marketing budgets, brand sponsorship offers and ad revenue payouts are on the decline (as if the creator economy wasn't precarious enough).<sup>25</sup> Creators might also see less income from monetization features like gifting and tipping as consumers reduce their discretionary spending.

Diversification can help creators future-proof their businesses while giving them more control of their content, offsetting losses and maximizing revenue. A little market research within your community can help identify opportunities to expand your offering. The good news is that as a creator who focuses on value generation over pure entertainment, you already engage with your community in a deeper way, meaning stickier loyalty (and you trade in your own ideas, knowledge and expertise, which are fairly immune from supply chain disruptions).

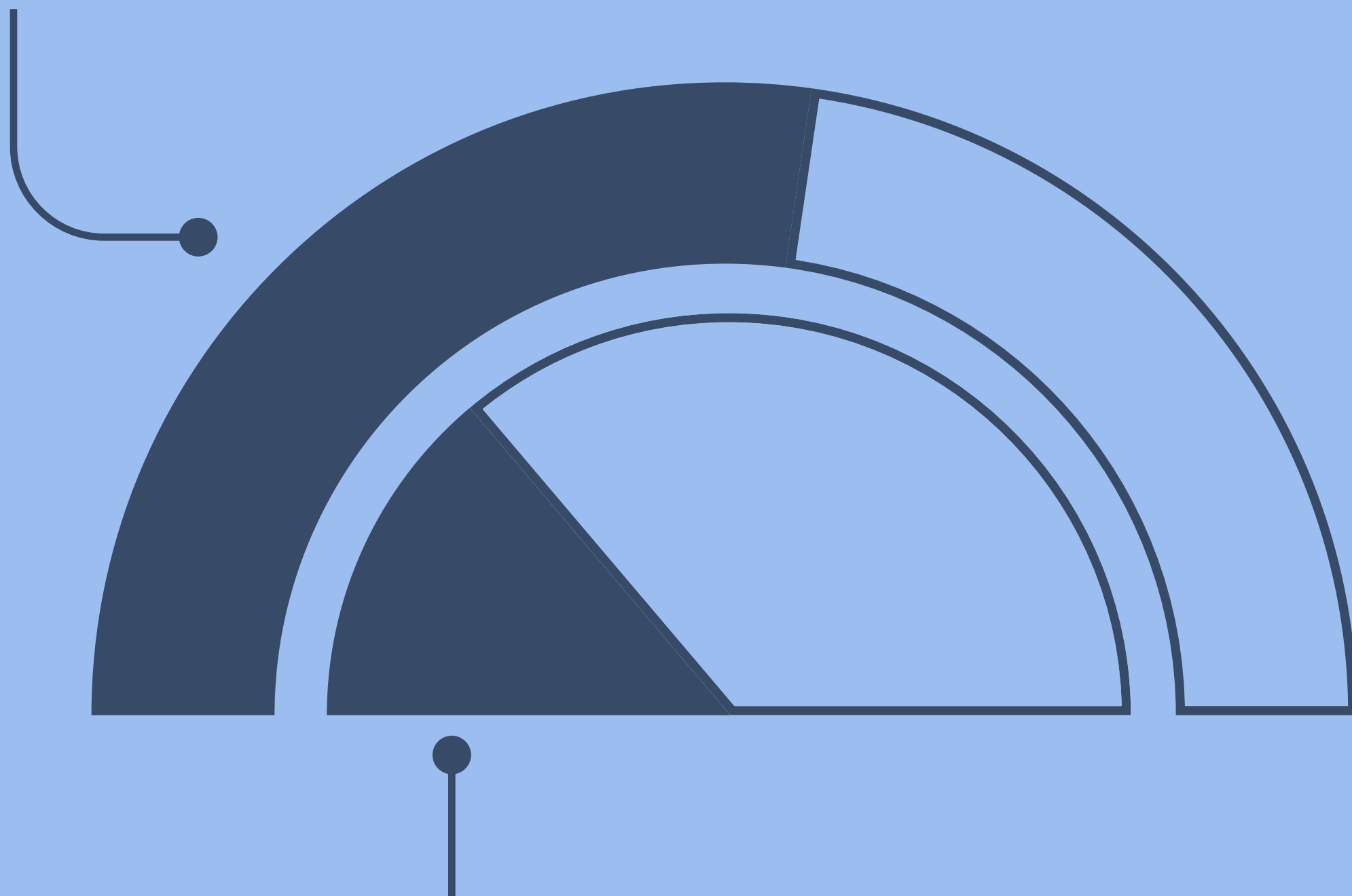
**Our data:**<sup>26</sup>



**More than 7 out of 10** of people are considering pursuing additional income streams because of the economy

Our data:<sup>26</sup>

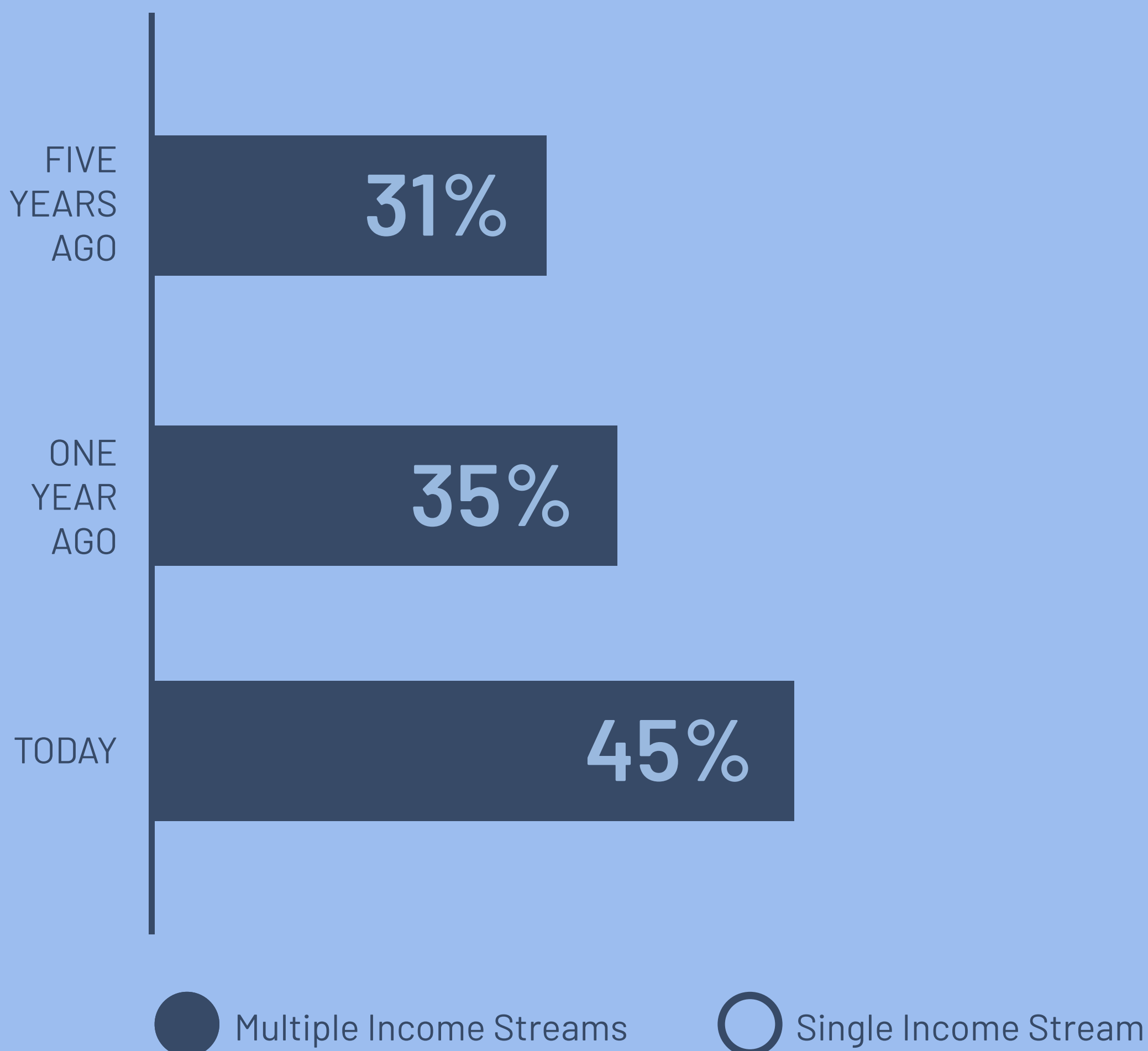
**43% of people say they currently have a side hustle and**



**27% of those say they work on it on another employer's time.**

Our data:<sup>26</sup>

The share of creators with multiple income streams has **risen by nearly 50%** over the past five years

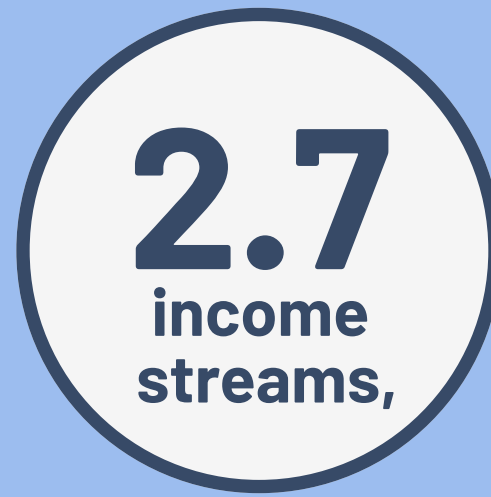




Other reinforcing data:

**Full-time creators have an average of**

which is more than part-timers (2.1) and hobbyists (1.8)<sup>27</sup>



**More than**



**of top educational creators** already offer multiple services and products<sup>28</sup>



The top products e-learning creators intended to sell in 2022 includes memberships, coaching, evergreen courses and digital downloads.<sup>29</sup>



## What this means for you

### Just starting out?

Many creators fall into a trap of putting all their eggs in one basket as they start their business. They decide they want to launch a course and spend weeks or even months recording videos and building it out. And then when they launch, well, they realize that the course isn't their one-way ticket to financial freedom. This mistake can be challenging in the best of times and potentially devastating during an economic downturn.

You don't have to wait until you've already found success in order to diversify income streams. For starters, many people begin their creator journey part-time while they maintain a regular job, and that's perfectly okay! But even if you decide to go full-time as a creator, you can diversify income streams from the outset as a means of hedging your bets and learning about your audience.

Start with two or three streams, not 10, and see how your audience responds. A microlearning experience, a low cost ebook, or some one-off coaching sessions are examples of income streams that don't require a ton of upfront investment and can be launched even as you get going. And based on the performance of each income stream you can double down on one or two while deprioritizing those that don't work as well.

One last note on diversifying income streams for creators who are just starting out – consider your own time and resources. There are only so many hours in a day and your goal is not to sacrifice your well-being to build financial security. It's easy to spread yourself too thin while trying to check all of these boxes. Instead, focus your efforts on what you feel will be most impactful and then consider some more asynchronous, hands off revenue streams as a means of diversifying.

## → TL;DR

- Even new creators can diversify out of the gate as a means of creating security
- Diversification in the early stages also helps you learn about your audience's needs and preferences
- Don't stretch yourself too thin – look to low effort, asynchronous revenue streams

## Looking to scale?

If you're an established business looking to scale your business, diversifying your income streams is a natural way to grow. And an easy way to approach that is by building a value ladder. A value ladder is like an outline of your products or services arranged in ascending order of value and cost. Order your existing learning products in this way and see if you notice any gaps.

Maybe you only have a free product and an expensive thousand-dollar course. In that case, you may want to consider a middle step or two. Maybe a template bundle that you charge \$50 for and a coaching session that you charge \$200 for. This can be done using existing content catered to different formats or platforms, so you're not starting from scratch. Using a value ladder in this way can help you identify opportunities to reach a wider audience by creating tiered offerings for different income brackets. As they learn and grow, it's also much easier to upsell them.

Another step you should be taking is considering how a recession or economic downturn will impact your existing target audience.

Diversifying income streams can help you pull in new learners, but it can also help you retain the ones you already have. If your audience has less disposable income, less job security, or perceive themselves to have less time to invest in learning, this is something you'll want to address. A new, more affordable offering can keep a learner engaged until they get back on their feet.

An async versus in-person or cohort-based course offers flexibility to people with changing lifestyles or work habits. In fact, our survey showed that the top two reasons people chose to pursue digital learning were that it's accessible from anywhere (41%) and it fits into a busy schedule (20%). Not only will this help with retention, if you do support your audience during a difficult period and show flexibility and compassion for their needs, you can expect greater trust and advocacy and a longer-lasting relationship.



## TL;DR

- Build a value ladder to spot opportunities to build new revenue streams
- Diversify offerings to support your existing audience through hard times



“ We have brand partnerships and advertising revenue, affiliates and shop-based content, but the goal is always diversified revenue. That’s how we got into digital classes in the first place.

Jill Koziol, CEO and co-founder of Motherly



Jill Koziol is the co-founder and CEO of Motherly, a wellbeing destination empowering mothers to thrive. An Inc. 5000 Fastest Growing Private Company and a Parity.org Best Company for Women to Advance, Motherly is built for mothers, by mothers. Engaging an audience of 40 million+ readers and viewers a month, Motherly offers on-demand parent education classes, Webby-award winning videos, The Motherly Podcast, essays and articles, and a highly-engaged social media community.

TREND 5

Invest in personal  
branding – not  
crowded  
marketplaces





# Invest in personal branding – not crowded marketplaces

## As creators take control, marketplaces will begin to decline

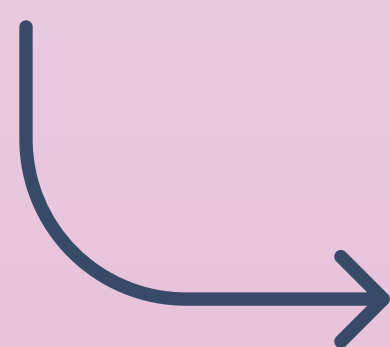
A course on a marketplace is just one in a sea of thousands, with a generic look and feel. “This makes it difficult to differentiate your course against every other course of the same type,” explains creator Kyle Scott, President of SERHANT. Ventures, a real estate brokerage firm that offers sales training and coaching courses. “And it makes it difficult to differentiate your experience as the entrepreneur and the thought leader from the experience offered by the course marketplace.”

Learners are after singular solutions to specific challenges. And as we already established, your community is your most valuable asset. With course marketplaces, you often don't have direct access to them. The marketplace also decides how often you can communicate with them, what you can promote or not, how much you can charge, and how long you have to wait to get paid.<sup>30</sup>

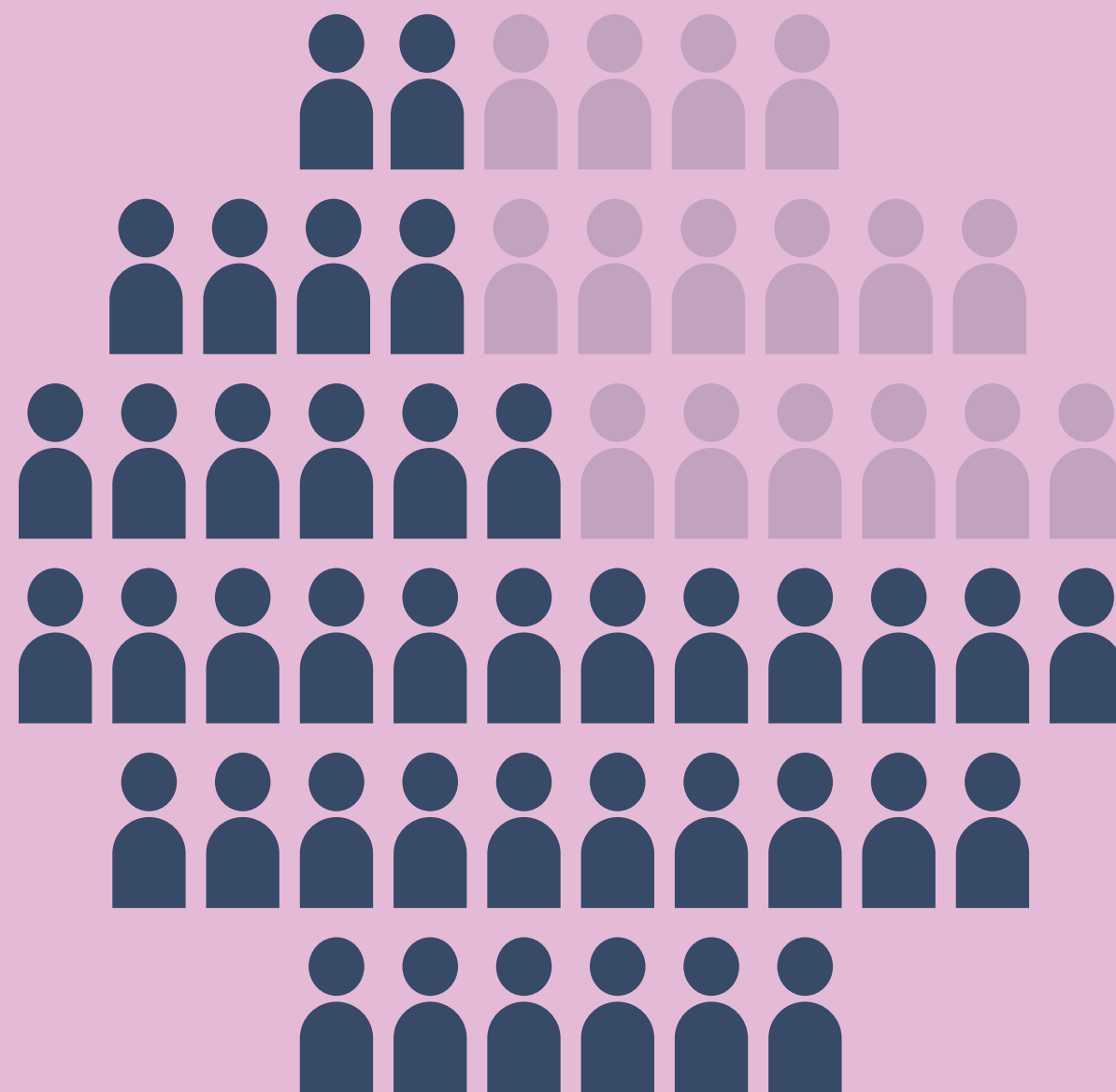
Further, they drive prices down, creating expectations that online learning should be free. That's not a place to grow a business (or complete a course – completion rates of paid courses are much higher than free ones.<sup>31</sup>). With full control and access to your community, self-hosted courses are an investment in your personal brand.

**Our data:<sup>32</sup>**

When signing up for a digital course, **people are far more motivated by the course content (65%)**



**than by the platform it's hosted on (8%)**



Our data:<sup>32</sup>

**65%** of people agree that too much importance is placed on the educational institution/organization (**instead of the content or people teaching it**)

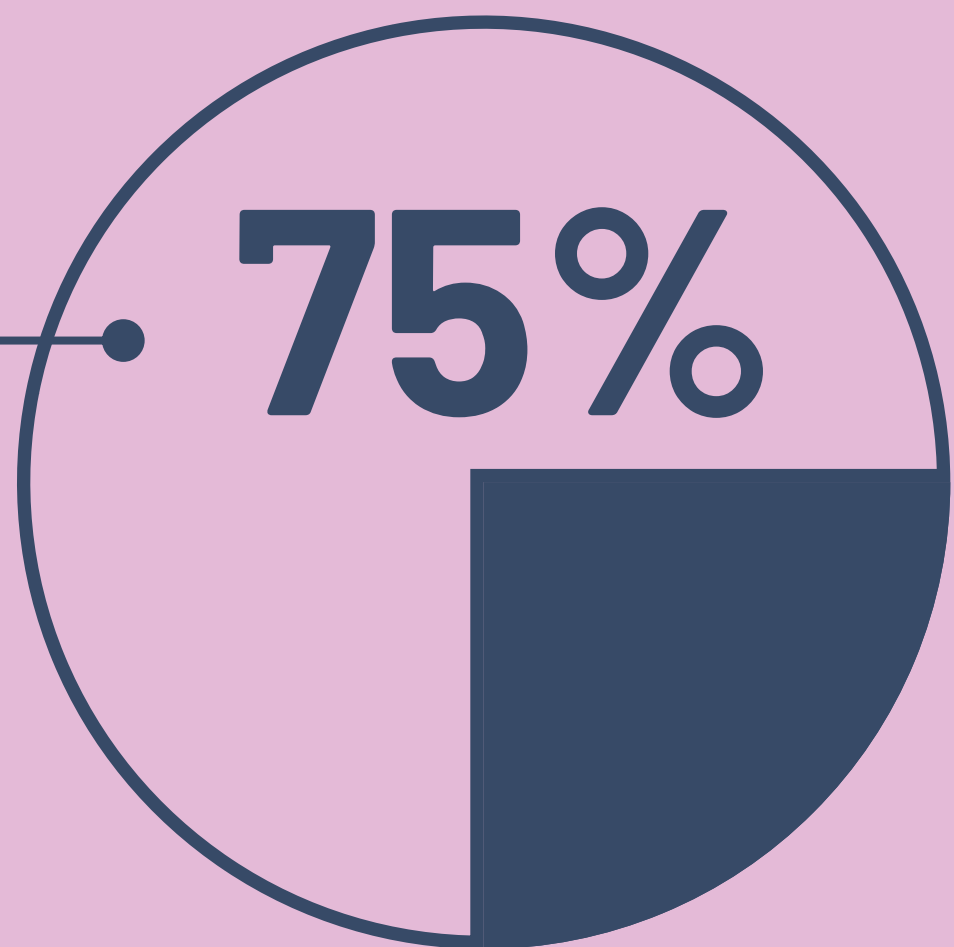


Our data:<sup>32</sup>

**of surveyed Thinkific creators don't promote their courses in marketplaces**

Other reinforcing data:

**Marketplaces can take up to 75% of the revenue from course sales<sup>33</sup>**



For Gen Z, the most important quality in a teacher is kindness, even outranking academic experience.



## What this means for you

### Just starting out?

Listen: if you're just starting out, marketplaces might not be the worst tool. They allow you to offload a lot of the marketing and sales work and can be a great means of validating ideas. The flipside of that approach is that the longer you put off actually taking ownership of your own marketing and sales, the harder it becomes to pivot once you want to grow. You get used to a certain way of operating that actually limits your ability to scale. So the choice really boils down to: take the harder route now and reap the benefits later, or start on the easy route and deal with whatever challenges may come down the line.

Whichever path you choose, it doesn't change the fact that the course content matters way more than the platform it's hosted on. The best thing a new creator can do to free themselves from the limitations of any one tool or platform, marketplace or otherwise, is to just create high-value, high-quality content. If you focus on driving transformation for your audience out of the gate, it makes everything else easier. You'll have strong testimonials to support your marketing, powerful advocates who speak on your behalf in your communities and on social channels, and great content you can wield to build your audience.



## TL;DR

- Marketplaces might be fine for beginners, but you will eventually need to change your approach if you plan to scale your business – better to start early
- Content matters way more than platform so focus on value creation

## Looking to scale?

If you're an established company that uses a marketplace to sell your product, now is the time to take control of your business. Aside from all the obvious limitations around pricing and technology, as long as you use a marketplace you're at their mercy. They can change their algorithm, bury your course in the list, or even go out of business and leave you without any established marketing channels. This type of reliance is a huge risk, especially in the current climate of economic uncertainty.

The way to create security for yourself is to build your personal brand and take control of your audience. In the words of SERHANT. Ventures President Kyle Scott, “Consumers are investing in you as the teacher, they're not investing in a generic textbook. That means the best way to invest in the marketing of your course is to invest in your personal brand.” Once you've established your brand, your audience will follow you across platforms and channels. And if you try to diversify income streams, it's a lot easier to sell new learning products to a receptive, trusting audience that you can communicate with directly.



## TL;DR

- Using a marketplace puts you at the mercy of the platform, which is high risk
- Continuing to build your personal brand increases the security and malleability of your business even if you change platforms





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I always recommend self-hosted courses. Not only can you forge relationships with your own audience, but frankly you have a higher profit potential. My entire marketplace revenue from a year is equal to one self-hosted course sale.

Melissa Guller, Founder of Wit & Wire



Melissa Guller is a course creation expert and the Founder of Wit & Wire, where she helps business owners expand their income and impact by selling top-rated online courses. Previously, Melissa worked full-time in the online course industry as the Senior Launch Manager for Ramit Sethi's 8-figure course business and the Director of Marketing for Teachable. Today, Melissa has become a sought-after speaker and educator in the course creation industry, and her students often share that Wit & Wire programs are the best they've ever taken. You can learn more about Wit & Wire's programs at [witandwire.com](https://www.witandwire.com) or follow Melissa on [TikTok](#) or [YouTube](#).

# The big takeaways

That was a lot of data. Don't worry! To put those numbers to action, we came up with a handy mnemonic. In 2023, content- and course-creation has to be about the **3 Cs**:

**Community, Convenience and Control**



## Community

Your community is your most valuable – and maybe most underused – asset. Engage with them early, often, and authentically, and they'll (gladly) do a lot of work for you, from ideation and market research to lead generation and quality assurance. In order to scale your business, you need a direct line of communication to your community, so make sure how your learning products are hosted can support that kind of growth.

## Convenience

The content you create needs to be convenient, tailored to how and when your audience wants to consume it: short, sweet, and designed for mobile. Anticipate their needs through every step of their customer journey so that just before they find themselves asking "You know, a \_\_\_\_\_ would be super helpful right now," they're getting content from you that fills in that blank.

## Control

In the face of economic uncertainty, you need to take control, as much as possible. Insulate your business from external factors through self-monetization, revenue stream diversification, and course hosting solutions that put you, not a marketplace, in the driver's seat. After all, it's your expertise, your time, and your money – it's your personal brand.

# Get started with Thinkific for free

If you're ready to put these insights into action, Thinkific has everything you need to create and sell online courses, build vibrant communities, and monetize memberships—all on a single, scalable platform.

GET STARTED FREE →



# Methodology

Thinkific partnered with survey panel provider Centiment to conduct a study of over 2,000 individuals in the US to understand current trends in digital learning, side hustles and the creator economy. Centiment has completed the ESOMAR 28.

# Forward-Looking Statements

This report includes forward-looking statements and forward-looking information within the meaning of applicable Canadian securities laws (“forward-looking statements”). Often, but not always, forward-looking information can be identified by the use of words such as “trends”, “plans”, “is expected”, “expects”, “scheduled”, “intends”, “contemplates”, “anticipates”, “adoption rates”, “believes”, “proposes” or variations (including negative and grammatical variations) of such words and phrases, or state that certain actions, events or results “may”, “could”, “would”, “might” or “will” be taken, occur or be achieved. Forward-looking statements in this report include statements regarding industry trends; growing demand for online learning, growth in our industry; addressable markets for our solutions; capturing market share; advances in and expansion of our offered platform service and the anticipated benefits of Communities and their features for the Company’s customers. Such statements and information are based on the current expectations of Thinkific’s management, and are based on assumptions and subject to risks and uncertainties. Although Thinkific’s management believes that the assumptions underlying these statements and information are reasonable, they may prove to be incorrect. A number of risks, uncertainties and other factors may cause actual results to differ materially from the forward-looking statements contained in this report, including, among other factors, the risk factors described in additional detail under “Risk Factors” in our most recent Annual Information Form, and in our other filings with the Canadian securities regulatory authorities, all of which are available under our profile on SEDAR at [www.sedar.com](http://www.sedar.com). Except as required by applicable securities laws, forward-looking statements and information speak only as of the date on which they are made and Thinkific undertakes no obligation to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statement or information contained in the report, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. The report should not be relied on and is not a substitute for the skill, judgment and experience of the user, its management, employees, advisors and/or clients when making purchase, investment and other business decisions. While Thinkific has obtained information from sources it believes to be reliable, Thinkific does not perform an audit and undertakes no duty of due diligence or independent verification of any information it receives.

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