

12 Ways to Make Your First \$100 Online

HERE'S HOW TO START
MONETIZING YOUR
KNOWLEDGE AND
EXPERTISE AS A CREATOR,
WITH PRO TIPS FROM
CREATORS WHO KNOW
HOW TO MAKE BANK.

THE
& LEAP



So, you have an audience, and knowledge or an expertise you want to share with others. Luckily for you, there's endless space — and demand — for unique and engaging content from creators across thousands of niches.

While the creator economy is a very exciting space to be in, getting started isn't always easy. In fact, 59% of beginner creators (those with less than 12 months of experience) struggle to monetize. To help you prove that statistic wrong and get you started on the right foot, we cover 12 ways you can start making money online with honest tips from creators who've been there.

As you read, remember this: You don't need to have a massive audience to start earning. Even 1,000 engaged followers will do the trick. Let's get started!

12 ways to make money online

1.  Sell templates
2.  Publish ebooks
3.  Create UGC for brands
4.  Sell digital downloads and tools
5.  Build online courses
6.  Start a paid newsletter
7.  Create a membership site
8.  Make a paid podcast
9.  Start freelancing
10.  Offer your time
11.  License your photography
12.  Join affiliate programs

1

Sell templates

Ready-to-use templates are a sought-after commodity for people in all industries. Why? You're saving people time by doing the heavy lifting for them. If you have a template in mind for a specific industry, build it out!

What kind of templates can I create?

The possibilities are endless. Find out people's pain points in your field and build a template to solve the problem.

How much can I charge for a template?

Think volume! Since you only have to create the template once, consider selling it at an accessible price to encourage more sales.

How can I market my template?

- Promote it where your audience is most active.
- Talk about it with your community as you're building it.
- Share sneak peeks.
- Build a clear and enticing sales page.



HOT TIPS

Discover the gap: What are people missing? What will make their lives easier? Find out where the struggle is, so you can swoop in with a template to help.

Study your competition: There are likely similar templates out there! Find them, dissect them, and make yours better.

Highlight the benefits: Avoid fluffy language when marketing your template. Get to the point with clear statements expressing exactly how your template will improve people's lives.

LEARN FROM THIS CREATOR

Barbiana Liu

Barbiana is a freelance designer who's created an editable contract template for other freelancers in her field. She sells it on Gumroad for a minimum of \$12 and has had over 150 sales to date. We love that she markets her template via Instagram Reels, then guides her audience to a well-branded landing page that highlights the benefits of her template. Barbiana currently sells eight different templates priced from \$6-\$45. Check them out!

2

Publish ebooks

If you're a creator educator with an active audience and in-depth knowledge in a given field, consider writing an ebook. It's a great way to give your followers a one-stop-shop download.

How do I know when I'm ready to create an ebook?

- After you've built a following and their trust via free content.
- When your audience requests more information on a given topic.

What's in an ebook?

Your ebook should:

- Educate people on a given topic.
- Include credible information.
- Be applicable in real life.
- Be written in your brand voice and tone.
- Have catchy aesthetics.
- Be readable and digestible.

How long should it take me to write an ebook?

Put in the time and effort without aiming for perfection. You don't need to put everything you know into one ebook. Break up your knowledge into subtopics to build a collection of ebooks, so you can monetize through time.

HOT TIPS

Ask your audience: Survey your followers with tools like [Typeform](#) to find out what exactly they'd want you to create an ebook about, taking the guesswork out of what will sell.

Prioritize readability: Break content up into sections with headings, lists, sidebars, and pull quotes that are clear and easy to follow. While the content is important, so is the layout!

Reflect on these questions: Is the information I offer helpful and interesting? Is the text easy to navigate? How does my ebook stand out from the competition?

LEARN FROM THIS CREATOR

Dana Rao

The creator behind @cookwithdana launched her first e-cookbook in 2021 after becoming a full-time food content creator. Having built traction on TikTok and Instagram for her cooking videos, Dana then launched a food blog documenting her recipes (which she admits wasn't her bread and butter, yet an essential part of any creator educator's success as free, accessible content is the gateway to building a following). Not only does Dana's blog help build organic traffic to her brand, but it also serves as an online storefront for her products. Today, the *Homecooked* ebook sells on her website for \$19.

3

Create UGC for brands

User-generated content (UGC) is a great monetization method for those skilled at content creation, whether or not they have a big following. Brands are indifferent to a UGC creator's audience and instead value their ability to create high-converting content.

What is a UGC creator exactly?

A UGC creator gets paid by brands to create content that's intended to have the authentic feeling of true user-generated content. The difference is that the content is posted on the company's own channels, rather than the creator's social media profile.

What type of content do UGC creators make?

- Organic social media content.
- Video content such as product reviews.
- Blog posts such as reviews and how-to guides.
- Reviews and testimonials, including Yelp reviews!

Where can I find gigs as a UGC creator?

Check out these platforms!

- [Trend](#)
 - [Insense](#)
 - [Influee](#)
 - [TRIBE](#)
 - [UGC shop](#)
-

HOT TIPS

Do your research: Before creating UGC, determine what good UGC looks like to you. What tactics did they use to make you decide to buy the product? Put on your evaluation cap and study high-converting content.

Build your content creation skills: Your success as a UGC creator is directly linked to the quality of content you create. Take time to build your photography, video, script writing, and editing skills. Experiment with different techniques, and even ask for feedback from your community and more experienced UGC creators.

Be patient: You might have thought that becoming a successful UGC creator is easier and faster than becoming an influencer, but the truth is both take time and work. Be patient and continue focusing on the quality of your output.

LEARN FROM THIS CREATOR

Charlene Izere

Charlene is a UGC creator who prides herself on building quality, aesthetic, and relatable content for brands. She started creating UGC in July 2022, and has since been able to make \$4,000–\$5,000 a month! She does offer a caveat, however: “UGC is not a get-rich-quick scheme.”

For those just getting started in the UGC world, Charlene suggests familiarizing yourself with direct response marketing, getting in front of brands by posting your own content, pitching local brands in person whenever possible, and “continue to learn, be professional, and be consistent.” If you’re curious about how to set rates when you get the ball rolling, Charlene shares her best tips here!



4

Sell digital downloads and tools

The world of digital downloads is projected to reach \$519 billion in 2023! These can be tools ranging from Photoshop brushes and Lightroom presets, to sample packs for music production and even pricing calculators.

Why should I consider selling digital downloads and tools?

- They see a higher profit margin than tangible products.
- It's a great way to multiply yourself — if you don't have the bandwidth to take on 100 clients, 100+ people can download your tools.

What kind of digital downloads and tools should I sell?

Do some research before digging in. What do people need? What are people missing to do their jobs well? Ask your audience and use their responses to guide you.

Where can I sell my digital downloads and tools?

On your own website, or on online marketplaces such as [Gumroad](#), [Etsy](#), and [Amazon](#).

HOT TIPS

Promote a lead magnet: To get people hooked, consider offering part of your product for free, then gating the rest. This will help build trust with your customers for better sales down the line, plus you can retarget your email list when you have new downloads to sell.

Find affiliate partners: Look for like-minded creators with an audience that can benefit from your digital download, and pay them commission for every sale.

Offer a money-back guarantee: The confidence it takes to offer this is a sure sign for prospects that you really believe in your product, which is likely to inspire more sales.

LEARN FROM THIS CREATOR

Lissette Calveiro

Lissette is an influencer coach and content creator who sells digital tools to service people who work on their own. One of her most popular downloads is the Creator Calculator, a tool born from creators frequently asking her how to price themselves for brand campaigns. All of Lissette's digital downloads combined allow her to earn about \$5,000–\$7,000 per month.



“Most business owners think they have to create a ton of content explaining what each and every feature of a product is. Consumers care way less about that and care more about the end result. The ‘why this works’ is more important than the ‘what.’”

5

Build online courses

E-learning is expected to be valued at \$374 billion by 2026! For creator educators, online courses can be a lucrative way to scale and automate an income when there isn't enough time for 1:1 tutorials or consulting.

Where can I build an online course?

Use an all-in-one platform like Thinkific that allows you to create your online course website, upload the content, and distribute it to people across the globe.

What does an online course consist of?

- A series of videos on a given topic.
- PDFs.
- Images or drawings.
- Sound bites.
- Interactive quizzes.
- Downloadable resources.

How much should I sell my online course for?

We suggest pricing this on the higher end. For something as in-depth as a course, you don't want to diminish its credibility. Take a look at competitors in your space!

🔥 HOT TIPS

Build a course outline: Before you start filming, get organized. Create an outline that reflects the curriculum you'd like your course to follow, as well as milestones you'd like your students to reach along the way.

Appeal to different learning types: People retain knowledge in different ways. Consider offering video, audio, transcription, and even PDF summaries of your lessons to cater to different styles of learning.

Build a stellar sales page: Really drive home the benefits of taking your course, as well as your credibility as the instructor.



LEARN FROM THIS CREATOR

Taylor Loren

Taylor is a social media and content marketing strategist who used to run the marketing division of Girlboss. Now, as a full-time creator educator in the same field, she offers The Reels Course to help creators succeed with Instagram Reels. The course (priced at \$497) has helped her bring in over \$100,000 in the first month of sale alone!



“Don’t stop talking about [your course]! Bring your audience along the journey of creating the course with you — don’t build it in secret. Your audience will be invested in the outcome and more excited for you at launch. Even if they don’t purchase, they can help with engagement and sharing.”

6

Start a paid newsletter

This is a great way for creators to keep in touch with their audience in a meaningful and intentional way, all while monetizing it. But what kind of content are people willing to pay for? Let's break it down.

What makes a newsletter worth paying for?

- Expertise.
- Behind-the-scenes content.
- Exclusivity.
- Deeper access to valuable information and knowledge.
- Deeper access to the person behind the brand.

How do I get people to subscribe to my newsletter?

Market your newsletter like a product in and of itself, and be clear about the value it offers!

How do I price my newsletter?

Most paid newsletters are subscription-based and typically range from \$2–\$15 a month, with potential discounts on annual plans. Your price will depend on how often you send a newsletter and how much content is offered in it.

HOT TIPS

Create a schedule: Decide on how often you want to send your newsletter and stick to it with a clearly defined schedule. If you market it as a monthly product, you better show up in their inbox! Consistency and reliability is key.

A/B test: Experiment with different copy and graphics on your newsletter landing page to gain insights into what language, graphics, and overall feel resonate with people.

Ask for testimonials: Showcasing positive feedback from subscribers is a great way to get more people to sign up for your newsletter. When possible, aim for testimonials from people of influence in the field to give your newsletter even more credibility.

LEARN FROM THIS CREATOR

Emily Gaudichon

Emily offers a paid newsletter on Substack called *A Week in Paris* that shares what she and her family explore in Paris every week. It offers deeper insight into Paris as well as her personal life than her free, weekly posts, which is why it's incentivized behind a paywall.



“Get comfortable with promoting yourself on social media and do it regularly. Use the recommendations feature on Substack and connect with other writers to collaborate. Substack is all about community, so get involved (I even went to drinks organized for Substack writers in Paris recently to meet new writers), genuinely support others, and watch your readership blossom.”

7

Create a membership site

A membership site offers gated content exclusively to members who pay a monthly or annual fee. If you're an established creator who's serious about earning revenue by producing content consistently, a membership site could be your golden ticket.

How do I know if I'm ready to build a membership site?

- You've successfully built an engaged audience with your free content.
- You're committed to producing consistent content for both your ungated and gated communities.

What are the benefits of creating a membership site?

It lets you build closer and more authentic relationships with your audience, which in effect keeps them around for longer, securing you some great recurring revenue!

How do I charge for a membership site?

Subscription is the way to go. As you begin to conceptualize what you'll offer behind the paywall of your membership site, consider breaking it down into pricing tiers that give access to different amounts and types of content.

HOT TIPS

Survey your audience: Find out what people are willing to pay for before gating your content. Simply ask your audience what they want from you the most!

Pre-launch your site: To create hype, try pre-launching your site 30 days early with an early-bird price that'll inspire your audience to purchase a membership.

Offer a free trial: Many subscription-based models offer a 15- or 30-day free trial that gives complete access to the content before beginning to charge. This lets people really see the value of your membership site for themselves!

LEARN FROM THIS CREATOR

Anela Malik

Anela's membership site Magic at the Margins is part newsletter, part digital magazine, and part community. In the past 2.5 years, she's made approximately \$140,000 from her membership site with an inclusive "come as you are, pay as you can" space that leaves her monetization up to the support of her community.



“You have to market relentlessly and show up to sell yourself. People are used to getting professional content, very high-level content, for free. You have to explain the why behind your subscription as well as what people will get from signing up. But as a content creator, you show up to sell for others all the time, so why not do it for yourself?”

8

Make a paid podcast

When asking your audience to pay for any sort of media, the golden rule is that you need to offer a free version first. So, if you have a podcast with an established audience, you can consider shepherding people into a paid version. Here's how to approach a paid podcast.

What's different about a paid podcast?

- Premium content.
- Ad-free content.
- Extra audio and video content.
- Bonus episodes.
- Downloadable resources.
- Uncut interviews.
- Access to a community.
- Access to YOU!

Where do I host my paid podcast?

Many podcasters use [Patreon](#), a membership platform that offers creators the tools they need to run a subscription service, offer perks to their subscribers, and build a real community. It charges a commission of 9-12% of a creator's monthly income.

What type of equipment do I need?

Not much!

- Headphones
- Microphones
- Recording software
- Good lighting
- Video camera
- Mixer

This [article](#) covers it pretty well.

HOT TIPS

Be a guest: Moving beyond traditional marketing tactics, aim to be a guest on like-minded shows to promote your own podcast in an organic way.

Contribute to communities: Find communities related to your topic and be authentically present. That means don't just spam people with a link to your podcast, but be an active contributor.

Turn the camera on: One simple way to really elevate your podcast for Patreon is to film, not just record, your sessions. Video brings a whole other dimension to the content!

9

Start freelancing

Selling your services as a freelancer is a great way to begin monetizing your expertise. It allows you to hone in on solidifying your niche, and get your name out there by leveraging the reach of companies you work with. We do suggest, however, thinking of building other online revenue streams at the same time that are more scalable and lucrative in the long run.

What fields can I freelance in?

Sky's the limit!

- Writing
- Graphic design
- Data entry
- Web development
- Social media

And so on...

How can I find clients?

You have to put yourself out there and toot your own horn. Research clients you'd like to work with and send them individualized messages.

How do I charge for freelancing?

Come up with standard rates that reflect your expertise, experience, years in the industry, education, etc. However, freelancing comes with the need for flexibility and working with the client to determine a plan that works for everyone involved.

HOT TIPS

Network: Get out there and sell yourself (both virtually and IRL). Make meaningful connections with other creators as well as prospects, because no matter what business you're in, you're in the people business.

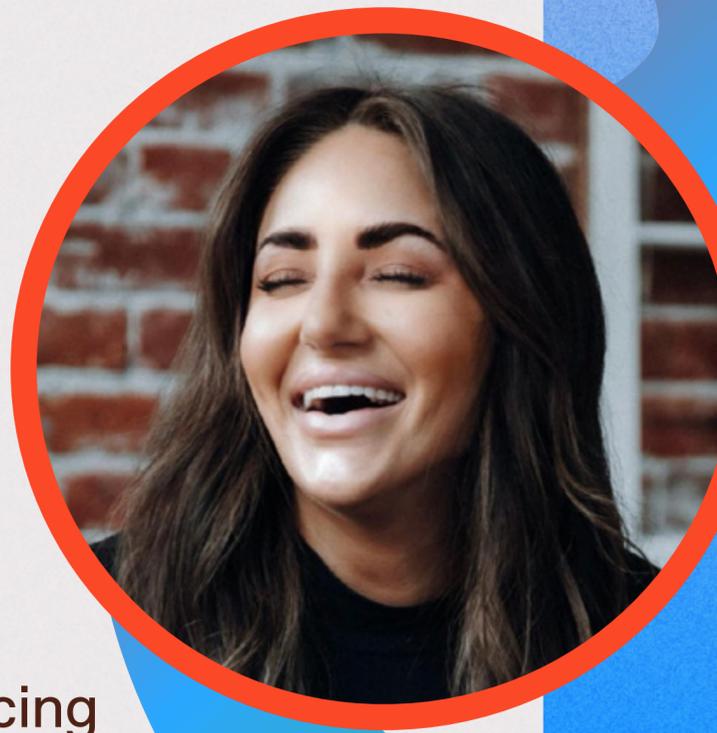
Create a solid portfolio: Have an easily accessible database of your past work to share with new prospects who want to vet your talent. A website including your rates would be ideal!

Collect testimonials: Including testimonials in your pitches or on your website will help close the deal. No one says it better than a happy client.

LEARN FROM THIS CREATOR

Ally Pintucci

Ally is a full-time freelancer specializing in commercial content for luxury brands. She's brought in \$15,000 for a single Instagram campaign by white-labeling content (outsourcing social media marketing efforts to an external company), but the majority of her income comes from photography, social media, and branding clients.



“Be prepared to get messy and put in work. There is so much fluff out there about fast money-making and glamorizing being your own boss. It's such a rewarding career path to be able to get paid to create, but put in the time to work on your craft, take courses, connect with other creators, collaborate, get okay with rejection and keep going.”

10

Offer your time

This form of consulting lets you work directly with clients to help them build their own expertise, start their own business, or solve challenges they're facing. It's a coaching role that lets you put your own expertise to work in a more time-consuming but also more personal way.

How do I charge for a consulting session?

Because the user gets access to your knowledge directly, you can charge quite a bit more money. Most consultants charge hourly. Consider your education, expertise, and experience when deciding on your price.

How do I promote my online consulting business?

- Talk about it with your audience and community!
- Include lead magnets in your current free content.
- Build an on-demand “sneak peek” with the fundamentals of your offer.

What are some of the tools I'll need to get started?

Video tools

- [Zoom](#)
- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Google Meet](#)

Document sharing and collaborative tools

- [Google Workspace](#)
- [Miro](#)

Scheduling tools

- [Calendly](#)
-

HOT TIPS

Offer 15-minute discovery calls: Offer free phone calls with prospects to let them see if working with you is a good fit based on their unique needs.

Invest in your own learning: Stay up to date on new skills and information in your field through certifications, readings, and courses. It tells your audience that you're serious and passionate about your expertise — a great selling point!

Create a coaching contract: Before entering into a partnership with a client, ensure that the cost, the expected outcome, and offerings are crystal clear. If you need help putting together an agreement, try platforms like [Contract Market](#).

LEARN FROM THIS CREATOR

Sydney McDonald

Sydney is a social media coach who offers 1:1 consulting video calls to help people with their content strategy. She offers a ton of free, helpful content on TikTok and in downloadable guides, leaving room for individualized strategic discussions during her 1:1 sessions. She charges \$95 for a strategy call. On her landing page, she includes exactly what she offers during one of these calls, as well as testimonials from past clients to demonstrate her value.

11

License your photography

Stock photo websites like [Shutterstock](#), [Getty Images](#), [Alamy](#), and [500px](#) are a few great websites to license and monetize your photography. They each have different pricing models and all-around styles, but whichever you choose, you'll be able to automate your sales and make money without lifting a finger.

What kind of photographs should I sell?

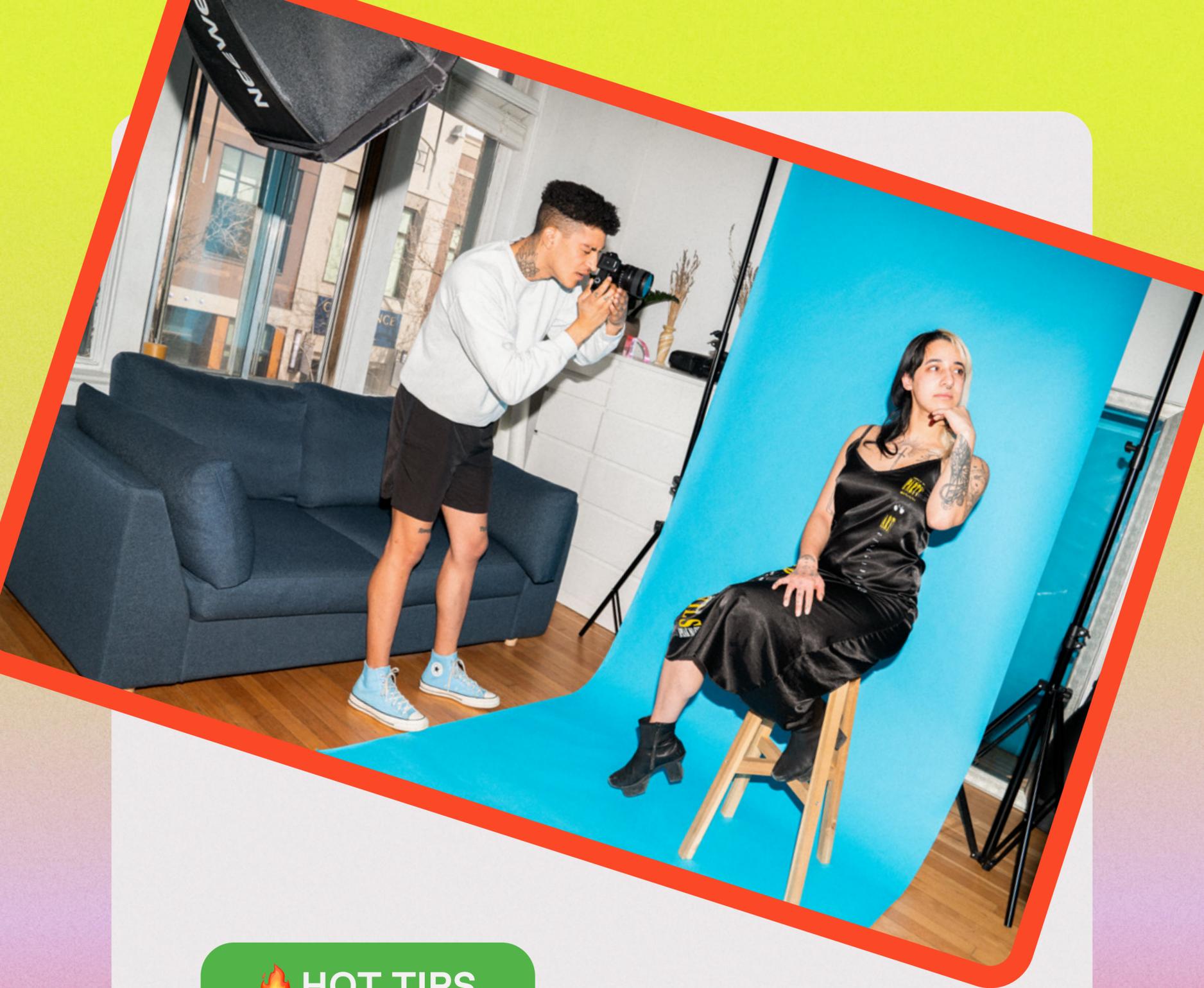
The kind of photos you enjoy taking the most. However, we'll say that companies often look for photos that represent more abstract ideas, if you're up for that challenge!

What type of equipment do I need?

- A camera (digital, film, iPhone).
- Photo editing software (try [Adobe Photoshop](#) or [Canva](#)).

How do I choose which marketplace to sell on?

Test out different ones to see where you get the most sales traction. However, you might have an inkling as to which marketplace will suit your style best.



🔥 HOT TIPS

Find your niche: What types of photographs do you feel the most proud of? That's where you will thrive.

Be consistent: Build up a bank of photographs for a consistent output. The more you can share, the more you can build a following and monetize your work.

Build brand awareness: Don't simply upload to a stock photo site and hope it sells. Work on your brand awareness by sharing photos on your Instagram with relevant hashtags, building a community of followers who might later purchase your work.

LEARN FROM THIS CREATOR

Victor Cheng

With an Instagram following of over 188k, this photographer is killing it. Aside from working as a freelance photographer and content creator for companies like Google and Airbnb, Victor relies heavily on licensing his images as a means of earning an income.

“As a photographer, licensing your images is like letting people borrow books from the library. Those licensing your images could be hotels, airlines, F&B outlets, etc. They’d buy an image of mine, and I get to license it to them for their usage either on digital, social, or print.”

12

Join affiliate programs

Affiliate marketing refers to affiliating yourself with a brand by promoting their product or service via your own platform. There are a million and one ways to go about affiliate marketing, but one thing rings true across the board: the most successful affiliate marketing is the most authentic.

How can I join an affiliate program?

Check out these networks!

- [FlexOffers](#)
- [CJ Affiliate](#)
- [Partner stack](#)
- [ShareASale](#)
- [Awin](#)
- [ClickBank](#)
- [Rakuten Marketing](#)
- [Amazon Associates](#)

How do you earn money from affiliate marketing?

Commission earned on:

- Sales
- Leads generated
- Clicks on a link
- Free-trial users
- App downloads

Do I need a website to become an affiliate marketer?

Absolutely not! Whatever platform you have an active audience on works. Be it social media, a podcast, a blog, or YouTube channel.

HOT TIPS

Don't jeopardize your integrity: It's not worth promoting a product that you don't like or that doesn't align with your brand's values. The extra few hundred dollars won't make a difference in the long run if you lose the trust of your audience.

Be compliant: The FTC requires that all affiliates disclose that there is a financial relationship with the brand they are promoting, calling attention to all links as affiliate links.

Select programs that best suit your niche: Do your research and be sure to choose affiliate programs that are relevant to your brand identity. It's not all about the money, it's about congruence.

LEARN FROM THIS CREATOR

Adam Enfroy

Adam is a blogger and software reviewer who makes over \$100,000 a month from affiliate revenue on his blog. To get started as an affiliate partner, Adam says you'll need these three things: a unique affiliate link, content, and understanding how to post the links on different platforms in order to optimize conversion. Psst — he also lets us in on the three current most lucrative affiliate industries: software, luxury handbags (like The RealReal, which pays up to 7% commission), camera gear and professional video equipment (such as the GoPro affiliate program).

Keep these tips top of mind 💡

Making money online might seem like a pipe dream, but it's entirely possible if you approach it strategically and with intention. Keep the following tips in mind:

Free first: Before monetizing your business, you need to take the time to build an audience and earn their trust by offering your expertise for free.

Market yourself: Don't be afraid to market yourself and bring your audience along for the ride of whatever it is you are creating, paid or not.

Get feedback: Your audience has the answers you need. Survey them often via polls and let their answers guide your creation choices.

Do what you love: When you do what you love, the content will always be superior than when you force yourself to work on something that doesn't interest you just for the sake of a dollar. Your audience craves authenticity, so be true to yourself!



Want more tips for earning your first dollars as a creator? Make sure to [subscribe to The Leap's weekly newsletter.](#)

