

**Book 7:**

**On the launchpad**

**(\$8,000/month,  
early 2022)**

**Alex West**

## **Not Business Advice**

How I made \$1M from my personal projects

## **Book 7**

On the launchpad

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## **Introduction**

At last, it's happening.

After many years of trying and failing, I'm about to incorporate my business and set out to complete my initial goal.

Run my own tech business while traveling the world.

Took many more years than I expected. And at times it felt like it might never happen for me. But it is.

Dreams do come true after all.

## **Part 1: New chapter**

I'm in Cyprus. Signing papers. It's January.

To my left, a lawyer. To my right, an accountant.

Outside the window, skyscrapers. I'm incorporating my company.

The name of the company on the paper, a name that I have been dreaming of naming my company since I started building "The Next Facebook" 6 years ago.

This is surreal.

## **I've come a long way**

I can't help but think of how far I've come.

Feels like yesterday when I was building cute little projects, trying to make my first dollar online.

And now I'm the owner of an actual business.

For the first time in my life, I feel successful.

I'm proud of my journey.

Here is a recap and a bird's eye view:

- In 2016, I started building City Vibes and learned how to code. Success.
- In 2017, I was fixated on perfecting City Vibes before getting my first user. Eventually, it made \$0. Failure.
- In 2018, I built and launched 15 products. I spent a week building each, made my first dollar and then reached \$100/month with 3

profitable products. Success.

- In 2019, I spent a full year trying to grow my favorite of those 3 profitable products and tried everything. Eventually I had to give up, accept a full time job and start again from scratch. Failure.
- In 2020, I started launching products fast again and found CyberLeads. Launched it with a landing page I built over the weekend and reached \$300/month. Reached \$2k/month and quit my job. Success.
- In 2021, I tried to grow CyberLeads with SEO and failed. Would have been a failure, but just before the end of the year, I launched a new offer with a single email to my email list and instantly got to \$100k/year. Almost failure, but success.
- In 2022, my plan is to run this new productized service and maybe even reach \$250k/year with CyberLeads. A quarter of a million... Just saying the words "million" and "CyberLeads" in the same sentence is crazy. If I can pull this off, it will be a crazy success.

Looking back, it feels like one year I am stuck. The next year I experience crazy growth. Kinda like 2 year blocks.

But my speed has been increasing:

- 2016: Built a product for 2 years and made \$0.
- 2018: Built a product in 1 week and made my first dollar.
- 2020: Launched with a landing page and reached \$300/month.
- 2022: Launched a new offer with an email and hit \$100k/year.

And my prices have been increasing too:

- 2016: With my free product, getting 4 new customers meant an extra \$0/yr.
- 2018: With my \$5/mo product, getting 4 new customers meant an extra \$240/year.

- 2020: With my \$100/mo product, getting 4 new customers meant an extra \$5k/year.
- 2022: With my \$2k/mo product, getting 4 new customers means an extra \$100k/year.

I think I might be getting better at this game.

## **Part 2: Finding patterns**

Looking back, I cannot help but notice a few patterns.

### **Shotgun to Sniper**

If I strip it down and zoom out, this is all I did:

- Shotgun many experiments until I find a successful product.
- Sniper on that product until I hit a plateau.
- Shotgun many experiments to find the next lever of growth.
- Sniper on that lever until I hit a plateau.
- Shotgun more experiments to find the next lever again.
- And so on and so forth.

For levers of growth, I look in the following places:

- Get more customers (marketing experiments)
- Make them stay longer (product experiments)
- Make them pay more (pricing/offer/business experiments)

And I assume that my hit rate will be around 5%:

- It took me 20 products launches to find CyberLeads.
- It took me 20 experiments within CyberLeads to Twitter.
- It took me 20 experiments within CyberLeads to find the service.

Finally, for CyberLeads, when I was looking for ideas I tried to go channel and market first. And I tried to pick an idea that already existed and was validated.

Again, there are no recipes. Don't get all excited, this might not work for you. But it's what worked for me.

You have to find your own way.

### **Part 3: Home run**

Whether my success was through process, pure luck, persistence or a mix of all, I don't know.

But I finally have something that works. And something that has the potential to change my life.

I just have to make sure I don't fuck this up.

### **One trick pony**

This is something I've been thinking a lot about lately.

That I actually don't care if it was pure luck or if I could do it all over again.

I'm ok with being a one trick pony. Running the same business for decades. I don't feel the need to prove to others or even to myself that I could do it again.

I didn't always think this way though.

Two years ago, when I finally launched CyberLeads and found success, I had a grand vision.

I was going to be building, launching and running multiple products similar to CyberLeads at the same time.

After all, they are so similar to CyberLeads, for sure it will work out the same way for all of them!

Well, after getting smacked in the face by reality with a few failed launches, I decided to dedicate my full attention to CyberLeads.

### **Baseball analogy**

This is what it felt like.

I'm playing baseball.

I've taken 19 swings and all of them were a miss. Then my 20th swing was a massive success, CyberLeads.

The ball is so high in the air you can barely see it. It's the perfect opportunity for a home run.

But instead of running, I suddenly got cocky and thought that I could hit the ball perfectly again.

And decided to just sit there and wait so I can try to do it again. Maybe even better this time.

Thankfully I snapped out of it fast.

And now I'm running.

### **Defining a home run**

I don't think that hitting a home run means achieving the best possible outcome.

CyberLeads isn't the best product I could have ever built.

It's a business that works. That keeps working. And that keeps growing slowly. Hopefully for years, or even decades.

It lets me work for myself. Work on myself. Take risks when I want to. And step back when I don't.

Make a lot of money. Save a lot of money. Have time. And live well.

That's it.

## **Part 4: On the launchpad**

Everything seems to be falling perfectly into place.

I've setup my new base. Incorporated my company. Determined my investment strategy. And even signed my first clients.

All that's left is to start.

### **Deciding to leave**

Italy looked perfect on paper. Until it wasn't.

I had a 90% tax exemption. I lived on a beautiful island. And I was enjoying my life. Yes.

But the language barrier, bureaucracy and taxes were making it very difficult for me to justify living there.

My accountant throwing Italian documents my way, asking me to sign them and pay thousands of euros by Monday.

Going to the municipality and not having a single person to speak English to.

Realizing that I would be paying almost half of my money to taxes if I continued to stay there.

And being tied down, as I'm legally required to stay in Italy for 6 months of the year.

Maybe I should leave.

### **Comparing setups**

I did what everyone does.

I read books, spoke to accountants and paid consultants.

Most recommended multi-country structures. Holding companies. Flying in and out of countries.



But I had already been tricked once with the 90% tax exemption. So I decided to be cautious.

I don't care about individual tax rates or benefits. The only thing I care about is how much money I put in my pocket at the end of the year if I make \$100k in profit, \$250k in profit, \$500k in profit, etc.

And check all the ways you could do that. Being self employed. Having a company. Taking everything out as dividends. Etc.

They were recommending their expensive services to me.

But all I needed was a simple business, in a low tax country.

The complicated setups that promised zero percent tax were ended up being far more expensive. And way more risky.

## **Cyprus**

Cyprus didn't sound clever, cool or sophisticated.

But it won in every category. And that's what matters.

First of all, they speak English and Greek. I wanted to be able to speak the native language fluently and understand the culture.

I wanted to be able to look at my accountant, lawyer or landlord in the eye and say.

*"No, this is what I want. I know how things are done here."*

Secondly, it's in the EU so I don't have to deal with visas. And it's close to my families in the UK and Greece.

Thirdly, it's low tax. If I make \$100,000 in profit, I get to keep \$85,000. Way better than the \$50,000 I would keep in Italy.

And finally, I wanna travel. I only have to stay on the island for 2 months per year. The rest I can be wherever I want.

Once the company was set up, I turned to investing.

And once again, I almost overdid it.

I decided to keep things super simple.

One year of cash in the bank. And all the rest in index funds and a little bit of crypto.

## **Appendix**

Wait, so all this book just to tell me that:

- You decided to go all in on CyberLeads
- You registered a simple company in a low tax country
- And that you keep some cash, invest the rest of your money into the S&P 500 and a little bit of it in crypto

Yes. Sorry if it's too simple.

So this is my final setup:

- My business and tax residence is in Cyprus.
- My customers are mostly in the US, EU and UK.
- My banks are in Italy, Greece, Lithuania and Belgium.
- My broker is in The Netherlands.
- My investments are in US market.
- And I live all over the world.

Feeling like a global citizen.

I actually wrote a 10,000 word essay with all of my research, but this is not the place for that.

## **What's next?**

That's it.

I've setup my life and business in Cyprus.

And opening a new chapter in my life.

Traveling the world.

And building the new version of CyberLeads, the one that will take me from the \$1,000s per month, to the \$10,000s per month.

Let's see if I can do it.

I'm afraid it won't be easy.

### **Time travel**

Hey. This is Alex from the future writing this.

I decided to clean up and re-post my blog posts as free books.

Nothing changed. Even if I disagree with things I said back then.

Regardless of marketing or algorithms, the greatest books have always ended up in my hands through recommendations.

So if you enjoyed them, you can do the following:

- Share them on X or LinkedIn
- Message me so we can have a chat

Or don't. It's ok.

Thank you for reading.

### **Credits**

Finally, special thanks to everyone that inspired and supported me, whether they know it or not.

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Constantly updating this list.