

This transcript was exported on Dec 14, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

Mark: Hey everybody, this is Mark Spermon from Upward Online Learning. Thanks for watching my YouTube channel, where I teach you how to build better [inaudible 00:00:14], and today I'm talking with Carlos Burgess, the owner of FasterCourse, about e-learning templates. Now, Carlos will share his expertise about working with either [inaudible 00:00:25].

Hi Carlos. Thanks for joining me, and-

Carlos: Hi Mark.

Mark: Yeah. For people who won't know you and won't know FasterCourse, can you tell us a bit more about yourself and about FasterCourse, what you're doing?

Carlos: Sure. So, I started working in e-learning back in 2007, so it's been a bit more than 14 years.

We started a company called [inaudible 00:00:53]. We were doing e-learning development, custom development for large clients, corporate clients mainly, and around 2013, 2014, we launched another. Together with my colleagues, we launched a new project, a new company, called FasterCourse, and that was something totally new and very exciting.

So, we moved from custom development projects where you basically sell your hours and, you know, "Okay, so if I will move this project from point A to point B, I will get this amount of money." Or something like that, "And I need to do this in a fixed timeframe."

We moved to a whole new game, which was creating something that we liked ourselves and where we just hoped that somebody will like it too and will purchase it, so it was really exciting.

So, we launched the FasterCourse, which is doing e-learning templates, and currently we have more than 2000 templates for Articulate Storyline, Adobe Captivate, and Trivantis Lectora, and also, about two years ago, three years ago, we started doing a new thing, so not only regular e-learning templates but also course templates, which means we're selling courses with source files, so you can download the course which is fully ready and you can edit it.

So, you have a business [inaudible 00:02:24] course available today. You can upload it to your LMS, but if you want, you can also edit it. That's really fun.

We also did a project for Adobe Captivate training, so if you're learning Captivate, it's quite difficult to find good training materials, unlike for Storyline, as we have Mark here who is helping with that but yeah, so basically working in e-learning for 14 years, big fan of technology and good design, and we have a really good team here in Riga, Latvia. And also we're based in Latvia and currently focusing on making better and better e-learning templates.

This transcript was exported on Dec 14, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

Mark: So what was the opportunity to get yourself to start with e-learning templates, comparing where the e-learning templates that were on the market right then?

Carlos: Oh, it's a silly story actually. We noticed working with a few Scandinavian clients that this, it was then called rapid e-learning development.

So, around 2013 it was very popular to start building something from template, and we built a template, a landing page for Lectora Templates, and believe it or not, Coca-Cola UK filled our contact form and sent us a message that they are interested, so our first client was Coca-Cola, and we built Lectora templates for them and later also Storyline and Captivate, and they used to train... I don't know. I don't remember; 11 or 13,000 people in Europe, Middle East and Africa. So, that was the beginning.

Mark: And it's a great starting client.

Carlos: It's very good. Yeah. Usually people know Coca-Cola so-

Mark: Yeah.

Carlos: ... it's a good name to drop and yeah, so that was the beginning because then we understood, "Okay, seems like there's a demand." And then we continued with Lectora Templates, and I remember it took us only two years of very hard work until our first sale, so patience really pays off in the long run. And I still remember when we saw our first template for \$19. I was so happy.

Mark: Yeah, I can imagine.

So-

Carlos: [inaudible 00:04:56]

Mark: Yeah. What do you think that your templates... What's the, yeah, big benefit of your templates in comparing, for instance, to the templates that are with Articulate Storyline 360?

Carlos: Yeah. Well, the reason why we started templates, there were other providers, of course there are still are, of templates.

What we saw was that, at least in our opinion, there was a demand and the necessity to build modern design templates, because some of the templates out there, if you look at them, are okay or even good, and some are really like, as our clients like to say sometimes, dated, so they look a bit like 1995 and that's also a problem of e-learning in general that quite a few courses look they're have been built 20 years ago, and if you're working with millennials or people who know good design, you can build a very, very good script and your content can be very, very good, and we have seen it, the cases like this, but if it looks like shit then people will not engage with it. They will just assume that if the design is bad, that the content is bad too.

This transcript was exported on Dec 14, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

So, it's kind of an easy fix. Use a modern design template or a modern design, or just build a modern design course, and then your content will have much better chance of surviving the user test.

Mark: Yeah. The content is, yeah, the first impression that the user will see when he starts doing the e-learning, so if the content is outdated, yeah, it's hard to gain attention for the rest also if the quality of the rest of the e-learning is but the design is not.

Carlos: Yeah, because it sometimes just looks dated, and if you're an employee, you receive that, okay, you have this requirement to fill this, I don't know, AML or business ethics or data protection course. Imagine having data protection course that looks like from 1995. You would assume, "Okay, they're probably not going to teach me anything new anyway." But it might be a very good course.

Mark: Yeah. Yeah, so the combination of your well designed courses, I think they're, yeah, really good looking with the content that you create yourself. That can make a large difference when launching a course for e-learners.

Carlos: Yeah. That was our main target. We were really focusing on making it a modern design, and I have to say, I have amazing team. We have several designers who have worked on these templates, so yeah, we do our best and we try to find good examples elsewhere. And to be honest, Articulate 360, the ones which are included, they're not bad. They're quite good, but sometimes you lack some extra feature or they're a bit limited sometimes, and then-

Mark: [inaudible 00:08:20]-

Carlos: And then it's-

Mark: But maybe a bit more like a PowerPoint

Carlos: PowerPoint. Yeah.

Mark: Yeah. And not there for interactions. They're, yeah. They're [inaudible 00:08:33], and I think that your templates have more choices and opportunities to incorporate interactions in your e-learning courses.

Carlos: Oh thanks. Yeah. That's what we have been doing because you can't really make 2000 templates if they all look like PowerPoint. It's just boring, so we have been asking back and forth our users, like, "What do you want? What do you want?" And then we try to incorporate it. So, either with some games or with some tests or interactions, and we are not a big company so we have to spend our money wisely, and so user feedback has been very, very useful and very valuable, and so this is what we have been focusing on.

In the beginning we were just building whatever we feel like is great, or that we like, and once we got some user base, we started also adjusting and asking and testing the

This transcript was exported on Dec 14, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

market, and it has been proven we have gotten a lot of ideas about new interactions, which we wouldn't have thought of if we wouldn't have asked users. So, that's how you-

Mark: Yeah.

Carlos: ... [inaudible 00:09:46] that.

Mark: User feedback is really important to improve your templates, so, yeah. And where do you get the inspiration, for instance, for the design of your e-learning templates or for new subjects for the course templates?

Carlos: Anywhere. Like, if you look from the graphic design, then I know that the team designers, they usually look on also anywhere but they are all checking Behance and Dribbble, all of these design pages, but actually-

Mark: [inaudible 00:10:24] people, if the people know the sites, but there are a portfolio sites for designers, so I will add a link to Behance and Dribbble in the description of this video, and I think it's a good a place to do some inspiration for e-learning or other design.

Carlos: Yeah. Well, it's really can be anywhere. Like, we have team colleagues who are going to the, we call it brain games, where you go and compete in a team where you're being asked-

Mark: Yeah.

Carlos: ... sometimes silly questions, and sometimes not so silly but, you know, like you have to guess right. So, you make an interaction out of it, right, and then you make a template.

Or, I remember I was watching a basketball match and it was NBA, and I was talking with our designer, "Can we do a bit more like the design they have in this TV show? Very colorful. Very in your face. Very American." And I remember the designer said, "No Carlos, go to hell. We stick to this Scandinavian Nordic clean design." So I have to talk with another designer.

So it's really, you can get the inspiration anywhere.

Mark: Yeah. Yeah. Great. So, and yeah, for working with templates in an e-learning course, what do you think are the benefits of working with e-learning templates when developing an e-learning courses?

Carlos: Well, we think when you look at the templates like we have, and there are two main things, one is that you have the graphic design done, so there has been someone who is professional designer, a graphic designer I mean, not instructional designer but graphic designer, have thought about it. They have used the grid system or any other system they have, and the button is there not because of some random idea but because it looks best there, so things are thought through.

This transcript was exported on Dec 14, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

So, in the end-

Mark: And it's an idea to share the screen so we can look at an example of one of the templates of your website.

Carlos: Yes. Yeah, sure.

Mark: [inaudible 00:12:47] templates for now.

Carlos: Yeah. Informational templates, test templates, quiz templates, game templates. Also illustrated characters. For example, I like this first one, this medical template set.

Mark: Yeah.

Carlos: Yeah, so the beginning is a little bit, how would you say it, basic, but you can just click continue a few times and then the more fun stuff starts later.

Mark: What will designs, yeah. For title text and a graphic.

Carlos: Yeah. So, the idea I started to telling is that you get graphic design when you buy a template or you use a template. You have, as someone who has thought about this, how this layout will work and colors, et cetera, and second thing, you see what's under the hood because you can play around interactions and you can understand, "Oh, they have built this drag and drop page this way." So if you're learning, it can be really useful, and this is something that we also see from our users is that, yeah, you can go to the slider layout or click to reveal. Yeah.

So, two things really, graphic design and the development is there, so it's easier for a person who's building courses, but I wanted to add one more thing which is also important is that I believe everyone is using templates. You don't need to use FasterCourse or any other provider's templates, but if you have been working in e-learning for several years, when building a new course, you rarely start from a blank page. You usually reuse some of your old projects anyway, so in that case, your old projects become your templates.

Mark: I think that's a good way to seeing in how you can use templates for new people, for instance, Articulate Storyline, but also [inaudible 00:15:02], it can be a little bit daunting if you open it for the first time and you have a blank screen and yeah, you have all the opportunities.

So, templates can also help you that you have smaller opportunities of less opportunities with design, so it's easier to make choices. You know what you're going to use in your e-learning course.

Carlos: Yeah, and you don't have to think so much. You have already a variety of the pages and you can just choose, "Okay, I'm going to use this, this and this." And you save a lot of time. So, the biggest advantage is time saver because you don't have to build it from

This transcript was exported on Dec 14, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

scratch or you don't have to learn it from zero. You have something that's in front of you, and that's usually easier to learn when it's already built.

So there's-

Mark: Yeah, and then you can focus on creating the content if you're not a designer yourself, for instance, and you have the template in front of you.

Carlos: Yes, absolutely.

Mark: But do you think that every e-learning project then is stupid for using e-learning templates?

Carlos: Probably not, but many are. I would say most are in some way. They don't have to be, you know, like as I said, purchased templates, but most projects are somewhat similar to previous projects and then you can reuse stuff.

I'm all about time saving and being efficient, and reusing stuff is efficient, but of course you have projects where you don't know how the end result will look like and you have these completely creative projects, or something that's cannot be really template-ized, something that has not been built before, then of course you don't need a template. You just build stuff. But unfortunately, or fortunately, depends how you look at it, many projects are quite similar and it means you are better off and you actually, our competitive market wise, also business wise, if you are efficient and using templates and reusing stuff, is efficient, so if you want to beat your competition, you need to be efficient. That's simple.

Mark: Yeah. It's efficient. You can, yeah, speed up your development process and also you have fewer errors in the end because all the functionality, yeah, will work.

So, for instance, if we pick the medical template we have now in front of us, from you, yeah, you have to adjust the titles, the text and the images for your own topic, but the functionality is there, so yeah, I think that's a great way to go with your project.

Carlos: Yeah, and all the images are included as well, and all the icons, so you can adjust them as well if you want to.

Mark: Okay. So yeah. Yeah. That's a great advantage that there are already icons and images. That was my second question.

So, what do people get when they, for instance, purchase an e-learning template set from FasterCourse? What is included?

Carlos: Happiness. No, I'm joking, but in reality you get access to all our templates on day one. You can download them on day one, use them as long as you wish, and you can cancel your subscription anytime, but what you get is basically a list of opportunities or

This transcript was exported on Dec 14, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

options, how to build your courses. So, you just choose the ones, the templates you like, and use them as much as you like, and you get...

Typically we have several pricing plans, but typically you get e-learning templates, let's say, for Storyline, and then you have also e-learning games for Storyline, and then we also have illustrated characters, which are like...

Some people like to use characters like heroes that live in your courses. Some don't. It's really... You know. Some like cutout images of real people and some use drawn characters. We have these drawn or illustrated characters and inside the template set, what you have is you have a full Storyline file or a Storyline template file, and you have also all the icons in a format that allows you to update it or change it or...

So, for example, the icons we see right now, if you want to change that blue or green color, you can do that.

Mark: Okay. So it's easy also to adjust the templates to your company [inaudible 00:20:05] guidelines, and also adjust the icons to that guidelines, if you purchase the templates from-

Carlos: Yeah, the image, the icons are in SVG format typically, and there are several ways how you can work with SVG, so yeah, it's possible.

Mark: Yeah. So they're, yeah, fully customal. So you see here, it's a blue and green but if your company has a different [inaudible 00:20:32], you can-

Carlos: Yeah, of course, and we have the FasterCourse logo here and you can change that. And we sometimes get these questions. We have this on our frequently asked questions page but these are templates. You can change anything you like; colors, texts, images, logos, whatever you like, and that's what people do.

Mark: Okay, great. Great. So this, yeah, word, normal templates. And you already created some course templates, and there is also, yeah, content in it, right?

Carlos: Yes.

This is also something that actually comes from talking to people, and I'm not going to say the name because he's very well known but one of the people from, actually, Articulate, told me a story that when he was working as a freelancer, he was using what he called 80% ready courses, and I just took this idea. I bought him a beer later for this idea.

So, he knows about this, but yeah, so the course template idea is that you have the whole instructional design is done there and it's a huge time saver. So for example, if you look at the courses we have right now, one course typically takes around 200 hours to build. We build them both in Storyline and Captivate, and probably like 80 hours of it is instructional design, so we cover the field.

This transcript was exported on Dec 14, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

So, for example you have this fire safety, so you take a look at what's typically included in the fire safety e-learning course. We write the script. It's going to load. You write the script and you work professional instructional designer thinks about the course flow, how the images will come, how the tests, everything will come, and it's a course that you can use already today, and it's unbelievable time saver. Even bigger than the regular e-learning templates.

And the use cases are multiple. For example, we have one course about workplace harassment, and then we had a client in Australia, he had to build a course about sexual harassment at workplace, so he took out everything that's not related sexual harassment, added a bit of Australian legislation, and bam, he got a course super fast and super cheap.

Mark: Yeah. Yeah. That's the same, for instance, also for fire safety. If you are at specified regulations for your own country or for the warehouse or company and you added you're really have really quick, a good course that is specific for your company, for general information and the information that is relevant for your company.

Carlos: Yeah, exactly. We actually were thinking about launching these courses as a regular training courses, but in the end, we changed our mind because of the specifics because countries have different legislation and companies also, and then we thought the best ideas is to give them like this.

So, if you were want to use them, and we have clients who use them out of the box, just use the scoring package, upload it to your LMS. So, you buy it today and you have 25 courses today in your LMS, so that's really cool, and if you want to update, cool, you can do that.

If you are familiar with Storyline or Captivate, or you have someone who can work with this altering tools, you can update the courses, change the colors, logos, delete the chapter, add your own company or organization chapter specifics. So, as we say, add your own magic and make these courses truly yours.

So-

Mark: Yeah, cool.

Carlos: ... this is, yeah, I think...

I'm a big believer in this product because I see there is a huge potential, and the funny thing is we're still figuring out how to sell it correctly, but the funny thing is we send out these surveys after people have purchased and you know what's the biggest, most popular comment is people are saying, "These are too cheap because the value is too big."

Mark: Yeah. When you get all the course templates for-

This transcript was exported on Dec 14, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

Carlos: 1,400.

Mark: ... vast amounts.

Carlos: \$1,499.

Mark: Yeah.

Carlos: One-and-a-half-thousand dollars, yeah.

Mark: And then you have 25 course templates and you can start using them today. Yeah. Then I can imagine that the feedback is that it is too cheap.

Carlos: Yeah, exactly.

Mark: And also another thing, but I have a page on my website about e-learning and course templates is e-learning templates, everybody knows what you mean with that, and course templates might be, yeah. The name is, yeah. What is course templates? If you say it's a 80% built course that you can adjust, maybe it's better. I don't know if the terminology is [inaudible 00:26:09]-

Carlos: Yeah. We have started with this.

Mark: ... for the descriptive fourth.

Carlos: I know. You're right.

In the beginning we were calling them courses with source files, and we tried different names. In the end we stucked with this one, but it may change. We are, you know, like this is something I also say, we're a small company, so the only real advantage we have is speed, so we can just be quick.

So, if Mark persuades me that course templates is not a good name and we need to change it to 80% ready courses, we can probably get it done today and adjust the website and so on.

Mark: Something we can talk about after this, after [inaudible 00:27:00].

Carlos: Yeah.

Mark: Our course templates for now is it's a good name and how people can, yeah, will find it more often, and we will start using it. It's a good starting point for your courses, so yeah.

You said you have now 25 subjects. What is the subject that you're most proud of for the course templates?

Carlos: I don't know.

This transcript was exported on Dec 14, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

Mark: Or is it hard to choose one specific?

Carlos: That's really difficult. I like presentation skills and data protection and negotiation skills, and there are lots of cool courses. And for me, it's I sometimes just enjoy a few pages from a course because there is some really cool interaction.

Something that we have never built before and something that we have discussed internally in our team, how to do this or show this, and then if the interaction works out, then we are happy, but I can't name one, but yeah, we're building new ones as we speak.

Mark: So, there are new topics will come later this year or maybe starting next year.

Carlos: Yeah, there should be one this year and early next year should be one more, and then there's number three in the plans.

Mark: Okay. It's a good reason for people to, yeah, keep an eye on the FasterCourse website for new topics.

Carlos: Yeah. We see basically two types of most common use cases for these ones. One is if you're an agency or a freelancer and you need to build something that you haven't built before. So for example, you have been working with sales skills and customers service, for example, and you need to build a course, your client asks, "Can you build a course about business ethics or data protection or whatever?" And it's not your area of expertise, so you can just purchase a course from us and adjust it, and it's going to save you probably...

As I said, we spend about 200 hours on the course development and 80 hours is instructional design, so it's a huge time saver.

So, freelancers use it. Small agencies use it to scale their business because suddenly you have 25 topics that you can offer to your clients. So this is like what we saw in the very beginning. These were like early adopters, as we say, and now we see one more target audience, which is like companies that have just gotten their LMS.

So, you have a new LMS and you have no content, and then it's quite simple a fix, you know; \$1,500 and you have 25 courses inside.

Mark: Yeah, it's a good starter to fill your library in your learning management [inaudible 00:30:25] this topics.

Carlos: Yes. And it's good quality courses. And of course, some of them are specific. Like, we have several courses about food safety and not all companies need it, but data protection or conflict resolution or things like that, everyone needs it, almost basically any company, so it's widely used.

This transcript was exported on Dec 14, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

Mark: Maybe you can give some advice for people who want to pursue a career as an e-learning developer. You see now that these days with COVID, teachers are making a transition to [inaudible 00:31:07] developer. We have some good tips, yeah, for them starting out.

Carlos: I think of one thing which is important is don't focus so much on technology and focus on the learning outcome, because not always you need a course. Sometimes your client will come to you and say, "Hey, can you build a course?" And you need to really challenge your client and see maybe actually they need a poster or something, you know. Like, something completely simple.

Mark: Yeah. Or job that you can hold next to your keyboards, if you have [crosstalk 00:31:55].

Carlos: Yeah, you don't need always like a 30 minute learning, and second thing, I...

Well, that's one thing. Other one is, always listen to your customers. Or, you know, you don't need many if you're beginning but rather than just build something that nobody needs, really try to work with your customers and understand what is needed and what works and what not. Yeah.

I don't know. There is lots of advice I can give. I can probably talk about this for a month or so. I've have burnt myself a few times in these 14 years, but yeah, follow good people. That's another one because there are lots of quite a good content on LinkedIn and I'm following a few, and you can really learn from others. They are sharing a lot of good stuff, like Mark is, for example, sharing a lot of good stuff, but I'm not talking only about Mark but others too, so let's learn from others. Yeah.

Mark: Yeah. If you're working with Articulate Storyline, I think that Articulate Storyline, the e-learning challenges are also good thing to do some inspiration and yeah, the tip that you gave that not everything has to be an e-learning course is really valuable and yeah, try to challenge your customer in that; that you don't have to create a course just for creating a course but maybe there is a better solution that is quicker. So yeah.

Where can viewers find more information about you and on FasterCourse?

Carlos: Yeah. FasterCourse.com, our website, and then what else is...

You're welcome to connect on LinkedIn, and FasterCourse has a Facebook and LinkedIn and Twitter accounts, but FasterCourse.com, most simple one.

Mark: Okay, great. Now I'll add the link to your LinkedIn profile and also to the FasterCourse website in the description of this video. So yeah, with that last question, that's brings us to the end of the episode about e-learning templates. Thank Carlos for joining me on this topic and then sharing all your expertise with us.

This transcript was exported on Dec 14, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

I hope you have found the knowledge that Carlos and I share, that it was really useful to you. If so, feel free to hit the subscribe button and don't forget to hit the bell notification icon so you won't miss any of my upcoming videos. Thanks for watching.

Carlos: Thank you man for having me here. My pleasure.

Mark: Great.