

HOW TO OPEN A TRAINING CENTRE AND TURN IT INTO A SUCCESS



It might have been challenging to become an L&D freelancer: to learn new skills and be your own boss. By now, you may already have some loyal clients, and you've grown as an L&D professional. And now you're thinking of taking the next step—opening and growing your own training centre.

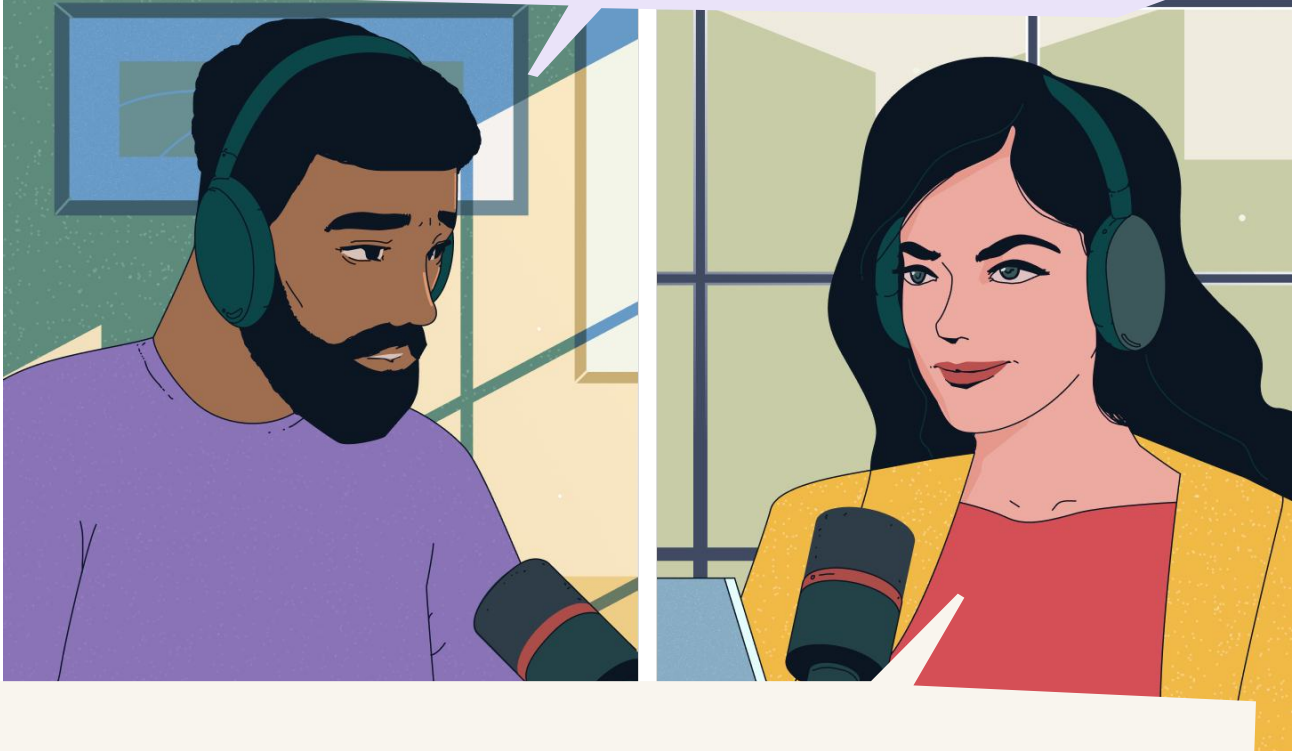
Here at iSpring Solutions, we see people being passionate about their work and enthusiastic about the opportunities to grow and develop. A path to success is never a straight line, and we want to show you the most common scenarios that our customers face when opening their training centres.

To accumulate this knowledge, we have created a persona, Alex, who represents so many cases of the freelancer-to-training-centre-owner journey. By following her story, you'll get a step-by-step guide to opening your own training centre. In an interview format, Alex will tell you all about the process of opening and running a training centre, as well as the common challenges that new business owners face.

The following dialogue takes place in a sun-filled office in the centre of London. Alex is taking a sip of her coffee and smiles at the host, John.



John: Hi Alex! Thank you for agreeing to tell us how you became the owner of the training centre. Please tell us more about your work. Where did you start? What was your first step?

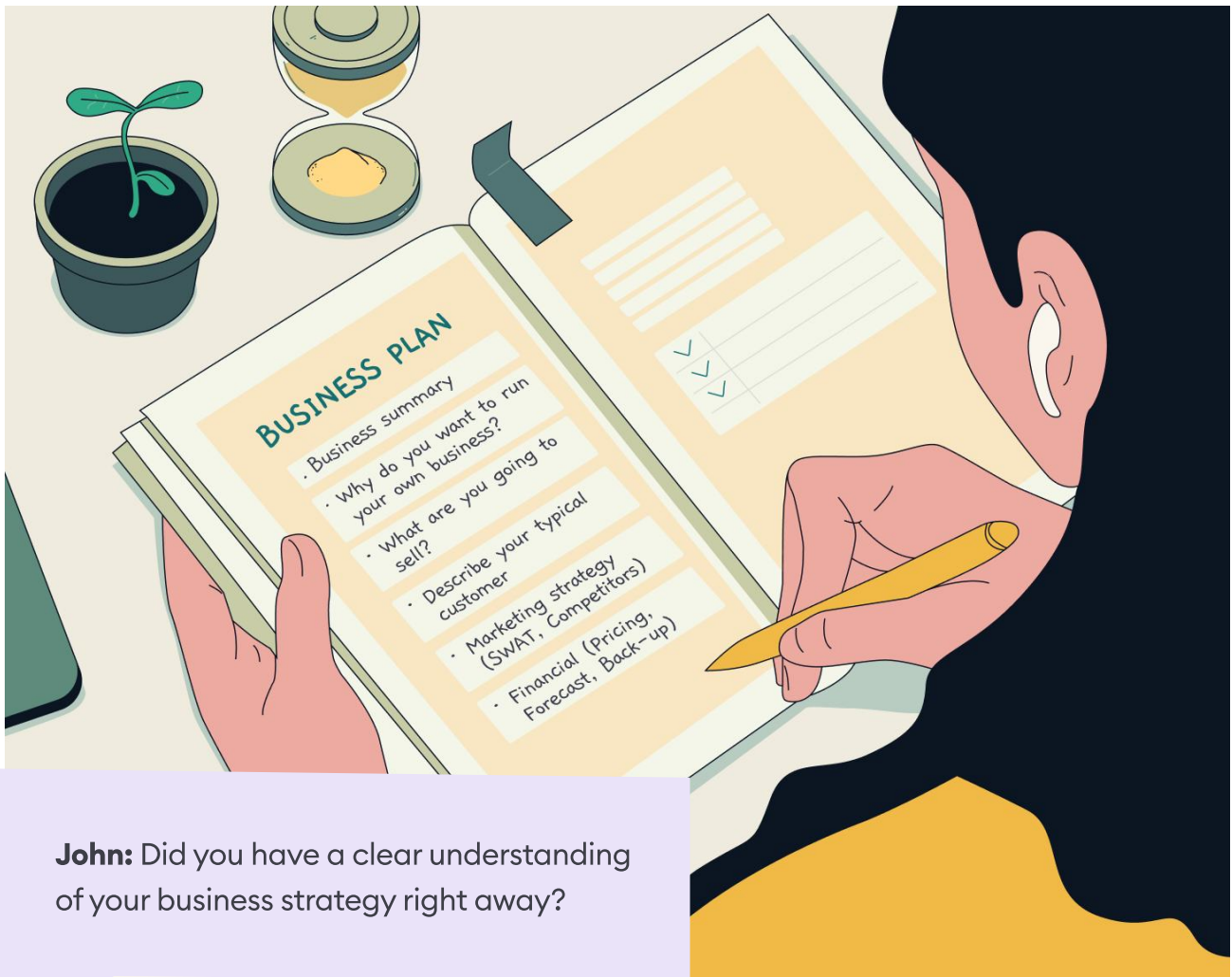


Alex: Hi John! I'm happy to answer your questions. I've been working as a freelancer, so I've had different clients and have been working together with a colleague, Betty. She was also a freelancer, and we were helping each other out by having her handle a portion of the clientele for a percentage.

Since we were already working in L&D, I started conducting market research. I had to understand the demand levels in my area of work. I also researched my competitors to see how they position themselves. This way, I found my niche and could differentiate myself from other training centres.

Steps:

- **Identify your niche:** Determine the specific market you want to target (e.g., corporate training, skills development, or certification courses).
- **Analyse competitors:** Examine other online training centres to understand what they offer and how you can differentiate your services.




John: Did you have a clear understanding of your business strategy right away?

Alex: No, you determine your strategy while creating a business plan. I had to make many important decisions about my business model and pricing. Also, I was thinking about a marketing strategy: how can I communicate my values to my potential customers? As time went by, we needed to adjust our business and marketing strategies.

Steps:

- **Business model:** Decide whether you'll offer live courses, recorded courses, or a combination of both.
- **Revenue streams:** Plan your pricing strategy, including subscription models, one time payments, or tiered pricing.
- **Marketing strategy:** Outline how you will attract and retain customers through digital marketing, partnerships, and content marketing.
- **Write down your business plan:** www.gov.uk/write-business-plan



John: Was it difficult to register your business? We all know how bureaucracy can be.

Alex: Since I am living in London, I have first applied to Companies House. I was expecting the delays and planned my deadlines with those delays in mind. But I must say, everything was more or less on time, and everyone at the office was very helpful and nice. Also, most resources and applications are available online, so I didn't have to go back and forth with documents. Consulting with an accountant was also important: they can advise on the company structure as a function of revenue projections.

Steps:

- **Choose a business structure:** Most small businesses start as a sole proprietorship, limited company, or partnership. A limited company is often preferred for liability protection.
- **Register with Companies House:** If you choose to be a limited company, you need to register with Companies House.
- **HMRC registration:** Register with HM Revenue and Customs for tax purposes.
- **Official tool for business plan creation:** www.gov.uk

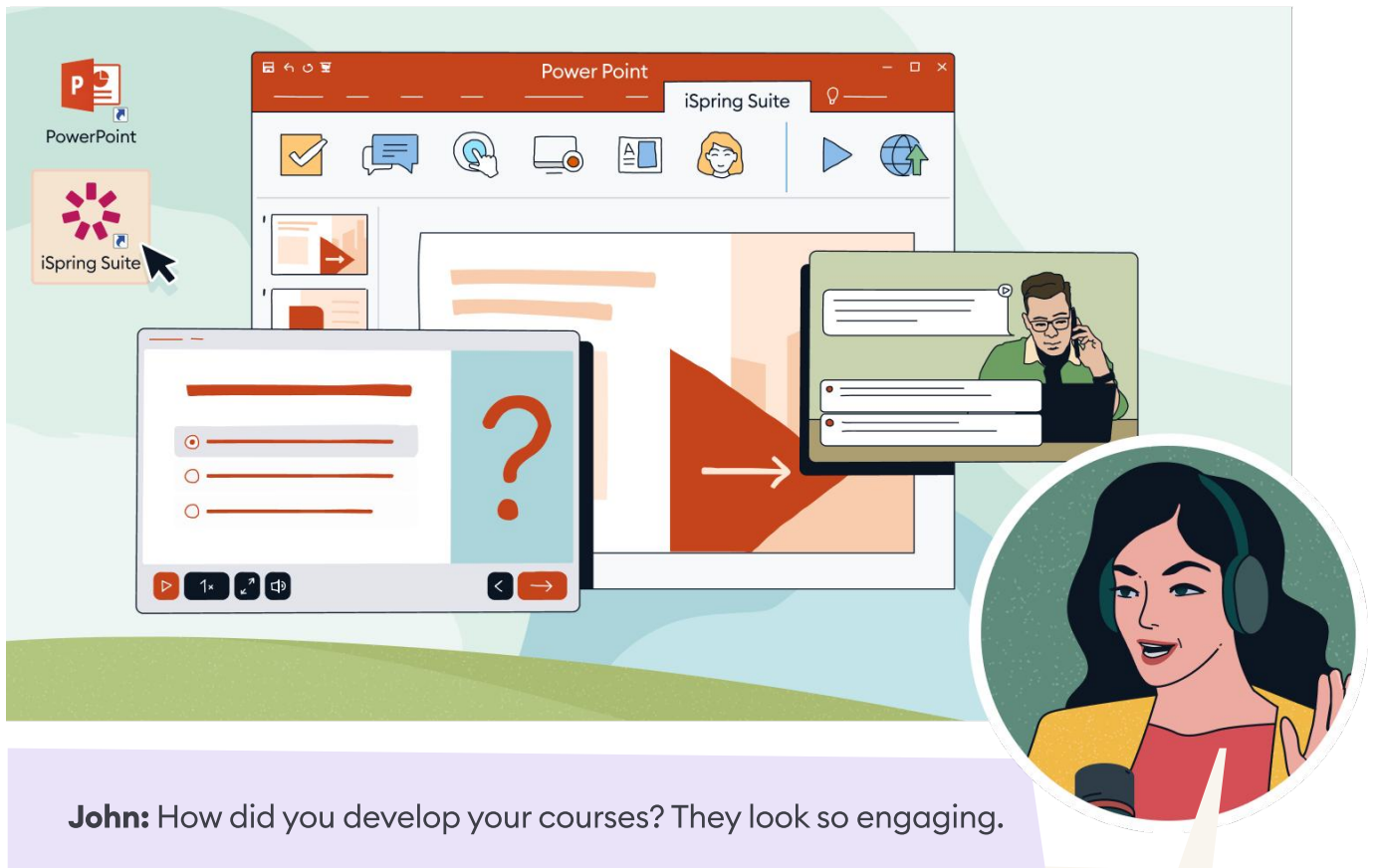
John: What legal and compliance requirements did you face? Have you consulted with a lawyer?

Alex: I have asked the lawyer to go through my establishing documents and standard agreement. I also made sure my training centre would handle user data correctly. My training centre has a trademark, so I'm not worried about someone using my courses so much. When it came to paperwork, Betty handled some of the administrative work upon herself. During the first year she was with the training centre, we didn't have many new customers, so Betty earned her share by taking care of administrative work and networking.



Steps:

- **Data protection:** Ensure compliance with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). This includes how you collect, store, and use customer data.
- **Insurance:** Consider professional indemnity insurance and possibly public liability insurance.
- **Intellectual property:** Protect your content through copyrights and trademarks.



John: How did you develop your courses? They look so engaging.

Alex: Thank you. I made them in iSpring Suite. When I was starting my freelance career, I heard about iSpring Solutions offering discounts to self-employed professionals, but I was making very few courses back then. I needed more functions after I decided to scale. I started with the free trial, but understood the potential of this tool and how my courses would come together so quickly with added functions.

Now, I make all of my courses in iSpring Suite Max. My customers say they're engaging, always showing the spark of my instructional design talent. The same year, I sold one of my courses to a small company in Indonesia after putting it on iSpring Market.

Steps:

- **Course creation tools:** Invest in tools for creating high-quality content, such as video recording and editing software, screen capture tools, and interactive content creation tools.
- **Certification and accreditation:** Decide if you want to offer certificates. Look into accreditation from relevant bodies to add credibility.



John: What tools do you use?

Alex: Let me show you my desktop.

John: What was your next step? Did you set up the online infrastructure by yourself?



Alex: I was able to make a basic site for my business by myself. But for the most important part — the learning process — I went with iSpring Learn. To set up the LMS, they assigned a CSM (customer success manager) who was very helpful. In just a few days, I was fluent with the iSpring Learn LMS, and the learning curve was very smooth. iSpring Learn allowed us to grow the number of our learners and accept more clients. Now, we can manage all the learners on a single platform that comes bundled with iSpring Suite Max.

Steps:

- **Website and Learning Management System (LMS):** Choose an LMS that suits your needs.
- **Domain and hosting:** Purchase a domain name and select a reliable hosting provider.



John: What did you do about marketing and promotion? Did you run any ads?

Alex: I had a very small budget and decided to start slow using organic search. Even if I could attract many learners at once, it would be quite difficult to accommodate them right away. So, after filling my training centre site with some relevant content, I created social media accounts and tried to share my updates and offers regularly. I was getting some good leads from Instagram Reels, where I was sharing my story of opening the training centre.

Steps:

- **Build an online presence:** Create a professional website and use social media platforms to reach your target audience.
- **Content marketing:** Start a blog, create videos, and use other content marketing strategies to attract traffic.
- **Email marketing:** Build an email list and send regular updates and promotions.



John: Did you do a soft launch? How did you manage your business in the beginning?

Alex: Of course, I had to make sure everything was working perfectly before the official launch. So, I asked my family, friends, and LinkedIn connections to help. This is how we were able to identify a few glitches. As for management, I use a project management tool with built-in AI. It frees me from many organisational tasks, so I have more time to spend on course creation.



John: Thank you for your story! Here you go, guys –a guide to opening your own training centre, from market research to the official launch.

Steps:

- **Soft launch:** Start with a beta version to get feedback and make necessary adjustments.
- **Official launch:** Use your marketing strategy to promote your launch.
- **Continuous improvement:** Gather feedback, analyse performance, and improve your courses and services continually.

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We know beginnings are challenging. That's why iSpring Solutions has a special offer for those who are starting their independent L&D journey – everything you need to create and share stunning courses in a bundle. Create your courses with iSpring Suite Max and manage them in iSpring Learn LMS with the flexibility to launch them up to a year later. With this bundle and a dedicated CSM, you can build your training centre, step-by-step, minimizing risk.

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