
FROM ZERO TO \$10 MILLION — MODULE 1

Starting From Nothing: Building Your First Revenue Engine

By Gonzalo

gonzalo10million.com

Module 1: Starting From Nothing — Building Your First Revenue Engine

The Starting Point: €5 in Your Pocket

Before the fleet of luxury vehicles. Before the multi-day itineraries. Before thousands of five-star reviews and millions in revenue — there was a collapse.

The 2008 financial crisis didn't merely weaken the real estate market. It crushed it. Deals died overnight. Phones stopped ringing. Buyers vanished.

What followed was immediate and brutal. Five euros in my pocket. Not a metaphor — literally five euros. Not enough to fill a fuel tank.

People romanticize rock bottom. There is nothing romantic about calculating which bills you can postpone and which ones will end in disaster.

But at my lowest point, I asked a simple question:

What can I do with what I still have?

I didn't have money. I didn't have a safety net. But I had skills — years of experience in sales, communication, and understanding people. I had a passion for my country's history. And I could build simple websites.

The €200 Decision

With everything collapsing, a new idea emerged — not from inspiration, but from necessity.

What if I could show people my country? What if I turned my passion into income?

I asked my mother for €200 — just enough for a basic guiding license. She gave it without hesitation. That small act of trust became the seed of a multi-million-dollar company.

Next, I needed a vehicle. I didn't have one. So I asked my wife to borrow her car. For every tour. For the beginning of the business.

She agreed.

With €200 and a borrowed car, I built my first website. Simple, clean, clear prices. Nothing fancy.

If people could find the website, they would book.

The €35 Strategy

I priced the first tours at €35. Not because that was their value — far from it — but because I needed three things:

Volume — I needed bookings flowing in

Reviews — I needed social proof

Proof — I needed to know this could work

€35 eliminated friction. It made the decision easy. It created value so strong that no traveler felt they were taking a risk.

The first booking came within days. I remember staring at the email confirmation — it was proof. It was hope.

The Prepaid Model: Cash Flow Is Oxygen

One critical early decision: I made all bookings prepaid.

I didn't have money to wait until the tour date. So I connected a payment gateway and charged at booking time.

This single decision — charging upfront — allowed the company to survive, flourish, and eventually scale. Without cash flow, businesses suffocate.

The Review Engine

The first guest arrived. I poured everything into that day — knowledge, attention, passion, stories. They left happy. They left a review.

Then the second review came. Then the third. Then the tenth.

Every review was a marketing asset I didn't have to pay for. Each review pushed me higher on TripAdvisor and Google. Each one built trust for the next customer.

I treated every guest as if they were the only guest I would ever have. That mentality became the culture of the company.

In tourism, social proof is not optional — it is oxygen.

Speed Converts

While big companies took days to answer inquiries, I responded within minutes — sometimes seconds.

People don't want to wait when planning a trip. Their excitement is temporary. Their willingness to book is fragile. Their attention span is short.

Speed converts. Speed builds trust. Speed eliminates competition.

The First Expansion

As bookings increased, I faced a new challenge: I could only accept one tour per day. Declining opportunities was something I couldn't afford.

So I invited a friend — someone who shared my love for history — to join as an independent guide.

This decision doubled capacity overnight. Revenue doubled. Reviews multiplied.

After months of saving, I bought my first vehicle: a used white minivan. It wasn't glamorous. But it was mine. It symbolized independence, credibility, and future potential.

Key Principles From This Stage

Start with what you have — skills are invisible assets, but assets nonetheless

Price for volume first, value later — reviews and reputation compound

Charge upfront — cash flow is survival

Respond faster than everyone — speed is your competitive advantage

Every review is an investment — treat each guest like your only guest

Action Steps

- Identify your invisible assets (skills, knowledge, passion)
- Build a simple, clear website optimized for one action: booking
- Price aggressively to generate initial volume and reviews
- Implement prepaid bookings from day one
- Set a response time goal: under 5 minutes for every inquiry

"Ideas don't require money. They require decisions."

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