

Andrew: This course is about software development for non-developers. You have a great idea, you want to have it built out, but you're not a developer, can't do it yourself, and maybe you're having trouble figuring out how to explain to developers what you want built or how to even find a developer. If that's you, this course is made for you, and to lead us in this process, we've got Sam Ovens. He is the founder of Snap Inspect, simple property inspection software. He did a killer interview on Mixergy where he talked about how he built this thing up, very scrappy, and people wanted to find out, alright, if he was able to build this business up, and he's not a developer, can you just break down for us how he did it, how he even found a developer to do it?

That's what this course is about. I'll help facilitate. My name is Andrew Warner. I'm the founder of Mixergy, where proven founders, like Sam, teach. And Sam, before we get into what you were able to do, just give me a quick snapshot of how much development you were able to do. Were you able to program in some language, like Ruby on Rails, or were you able to do WordPress? Where were you when you got started?

Sam: I honestly couldn't build a plain website that would say, 'Hi, my name is Sam' or install WordPress on a server, nothing.

Andrew: Not even build a website that said, your name is Sam, online?

Sam: Yeah, I don't even know a single HTML tag, even today.

Andrew: Okay, and despite all that, what were you able to do?

Sam: Well, I was able to hire a team of developers that were able to build Snap Inspect, and then build Snap Inspect up to what it is today, so I was able to work with developers. Despite not knowing code, I was still able to work with them. We were still able to produce good product that people could use.

Andrew: And how many customers do you have now using this software?

Sam: Around 1,500.

Andrew: 1,500 customers, and what kind of revenue are you doing with it?

Sam: Last time I checked, it was \$37,000 a month.

Andrew: \$37,000 a month, recurring. Right?

Sam: Yeah.

Andrew: Okay, and you know what? We, actually, have this. Let me just put it up like that on my second monitor. What is this?

Sam: Well, that is my old office and bedroom.

Andrew: This is where you lived. This is where you worked, and I'm seeing something green in the background. What is that?

Sam: It's a garage door.

Andrew: So you were living in the garage?

Sam: Yeah, that was my air con system. I'd just open up the door a little bit when it got hot.

Andrew: Alright, well, I don't want to embarrass you. I want to get into it, since we have this big list of tactics that we're going to go into and a mindset that goes along with that, but really quickly, what is this?

Sam: That's my new place.

Andrew: This is now where you live?

Sam: Yep.

Andrew: Beautiful loft, great place. You've come a long way, and you've done it using the ideas that you and I are about to discuss here today.

Sam: Yeah.

Andrew: Alright.

Sam: And that was one step. There was no intermediate going from that garage and that apartment, that was one step.

Andrew: Alright, well, let's see how you did it. The first that you suggest is, don't hire a company. Hire an individual, and you did at one point hire a company. I actually believe that the company that you hired was this one, right? And so, when you hired them, what was the advantage of going with this company, Hidden Brains, as opposed to just finding a single developer on a site like Elance or Odesk?

Sam: So, for me, I was very restricted by budget. I had a set amount of money, and with hourly rates, which is how most Elance people work, the budgets can blow out completely. They can be three times what they initially think they might be, but

when you're dealing with a company a lot of the time, they'll scope out the project. They'll go through every feature. They'll make sure that they understand everything, and then they'll give you a fixed price. When you've got a fixed price, it's not going to blow out over that. I don't know. It made me feel safe like that I might also witnessed a few trends that were paying developers hourly and it started to get out of control.

Andrew: They hired individual developers, they were paying them hourly, this is part of a launch group that you're a part of, The Foundation and others who didn't do what you did instead of hiring a company to build their software they hired individuals to do it. You heard some horror stories. Can you give me an example of one problem that was especially painful for one of the other entrepreneurs in the group?

Sam: Sure. So, again it was in The Foundation of that [?] and not only was her developer completely behind schedule but he was over budget and that he just constantly had excuses he'd just disappear for a wee and then he would say something like oh his mum was sick and we're like oh OK fair enough but then you know the next week he'd come up with another and then they got more and more serious because as you start lying about that you've got to keep going.

Yeah and you know eventually said he got hit by a car and was in hospital and it just sounded like, it was an actual horror story I mean she had to end up completely switching developers, she was thousands out of pocket and the main thing was she was, about three months got wasted.

Andrew: Yeah, all right and when you have a company if one person flakes out well they often have other people on staff ready to pick up the slack but also it sounds like what you experienced was there's management, someone to make sure that the person doesn't get so far behind that he can't keep up.

Sam: Yeah and someone's always there if you're panicking. If you want to get someone on the phone which happens a lot I've found when I was building the Vision One product. Just being able to get someone on the phone and know they're not going to disappear. They've got a physical office, they've got multiple employees, they're not just going to disappear. If one person gets injured or sick the whole project isn't going to collapse.

Andrew: Alright. Onto the big board for the next big idea we're going to be talking about which is to fake the first version of your software. And we have the first version of your software. I say software in quotes. But tell me just the mindset behind this. What's the purpose and how are you...what the purpose of creating this version that we're going to show?

Sam: Sure. So it has multiple purposes I've found. So the original reason why I did it was to understand the product myself. Why, I needed...when you're briefing developers or when you brief anyone on how they're going to view your product you've got to know every screen and you've got to know what happens when you click this, what happens when you click that and it's too much detail to have in your head and you start drawing it on paper and there's too many arrows so for me to understand my product fully and what it was going to look like and what the development would involve I mean, it was perfect, I just built every screen of my software in Keynote with Keynoteopia [?].

Andrew: Here's what that looks like. This is what, this is something that, it's just a PDF and if I click here I go to see your first screen. If I type in the password word supposedly and click that I get to see what people see when they log in. Click inspections, boom you're taken to a list of inspections, click properties you get a list of all your properties, add a new this is what this screen looks like for adding a new one. Add the address, see the address, etc. and it just keeps going through.

It feels like a totally working version of the software and people can actually see that I'm kind of clicking right there on properties and it goes to the list of properties, kind of clicking on inspections, it goes to inspections, if you load this PDF on an iPhone the person who's using it can actually use their finger, right, to click on inspections and they're taken over but if I zoom out this is just a set of screens here in a PDF format. People click...

Sam: So they're essentially invisible hyperlinks that link to slide numbers so when you put a box in there and it's transparent and the box contains a hyperlink that links to slide four, slide five.

Andrew: I see.

Sam: Pretty straight forward to do. I mean, would openly say anybody could build one of those.

Andrew: And the idea behind that is you wanted to make sure that you understood your product, every single screen of it. You wanted to make sure that when you communicated it, there was no question about what you were looking for each button to do, because the person who's using it, the developer, can actually click and see when someone clicks inspections, you want to see this next screen, and you want it to work in a certain way.

Sam: Yeah.

Andrew: And you're not a developer, so you can't develop it, but what you can use is this software, which allows you, using Keynote, or now even using Microsoft's

PowerPoint, to design what we just looked at.

Sam: Yeah.

Andrew: You told me, Sam, that people, who saw that PDF that I just showed you, always go to download your software, because they want to see it. What are they looking for, or what do they see when they go to download your software right now, after seeing this PDF?

Sam: Well, I mean, the first thing I notice is that it's exactly the same, the UI. I mean, there's a couple more features in there, but the UI, and the look, and the feel, the basic features of it, are exactly the same. What I actually did, because I was so cheap back in those days, is I gave that raw Keynote file to them, and I told the developers to not do any design and don't charge me for any design, just to grab those Keynote elements and use them as the UI design file.

Andrew: Exactly as it's there. They don't even have to add, because you can't afford for them to add more.

Sam: I swear, in terms of design, it is exactly the same as that. Every icon, the top menu bar, the bottom menu bar, it's like exactly the same.

Andrew: What about this? If I go to the top here. Well, let's scroll all the way to the top. Oh, there's so many screens in here. The images? Did you design this house, or I guess you just found clip art online?

Sam: So, the little magnifying glass and thinks like that?

Andrew: Yep.

Sam: I just Googled them.

Andrew: You did what?

Sam: I just Googled that magnifying glass.

Andrew: And found a magnifying glass? And these elements, like, at the very top. Oh wow, the magnifying glass at the top that I'm highlighting right now, that comes with Keynotopia, right?

Sam: Yeah. So the basic one's like a home button and a search button. Keynotopia's got quite a lot. You know, if you're going to put an icon or a design element that's not there, I mean, I just Googled it.

Andrew: This is unreal. Alright, so there it is. Create your fake first version, and that's what you want to send out to your developers, save yourself time, save confusion or avoid confusion.

Sam: Yeah.

Andrew: Alright, so, you're not a developer, so the next thing you say is, run your idea by a developer. You found this guy. Let me see if I can bring him up here on the screen, so you can tell me. I'll ask you in a moment what you guys are doing in that photo, but who is this guy, and how did you get him to run your idea by?

Sam: Sure. So, I knew him from a previous project. His name's Terry, and I knew him from a previous project. Where I had hired him to develop something for me, and I knew he was very good. He's very good at what he does, very skilled. I knew I was going to have to hire an off shore team.

A fear of mine, at that stage, was, are they good enough? Are they going to be able to build this? And so I talked to Terry and I showed him all the screens. I briefed him the whole project, and he goes, okay, well, it will be built like this, and the developers are going to have to be very skilled with this, this, and this.

Andrew: I see.

Sam: And he put together a basic coding test for me that I was able to give them and test them and then I'd bring the results back to Terry. Terry, essentially, helped me choose the original developers.

Andrew: I see. So he's not doing the, actual, original, code work himself. He's just telling you, this is what you should keep in mind when you're hiring developers. Here's the problems that you're likely to have, and then he gives you a test to hand to potential developers and helps you evaluate it. Well, how much time would you say it took for him to do that?

Sam: Maybe, five, six, hours tops.

Andrew: Okay. So if you can't afford a top developer to build out your product, maybe you can find one who's willing to either give you or you can hire for five or six hours, maybe get ten hours and have yourself a little cushion, but the idea is to help look at your plans give you some direction, tell you where the land mines are, help you find the right developer and look at their original work. Is that it?

Sam: Yeah. Essentially, you're getting an, expensive, highly skilled developer. When I mean expensive, I don't mean ridiculous. I mean \$80, \$90, \$100 an hour, someone that's very skilled to look at your project and give you an idea at the

beginning and then help you find an offshore team or a cheaper team to help build it. It's, kind of, mixing a highly skilled developer and cheap developers together.

Andrew: Yeah. Alright. And I said that there was something about this photo, and I want to bring it back up here on the screen, because I've got to ask you a question about it. You guys have drinks in front of you. I noticed that even though you have drinks in front of you, there's a notebook and a pen on it. You're obviously still taking notes even while you're celebrating here. What are you guys celebrating?

Sam: Well, we always said, we'd never had a beer together. We never did anything social together.

Andrew: Oh, you're saying this is the first time that you guys even met, in person?

Sam: No, this is the first time we ever had a beer together.

Andrew: I see. Okay.

Sam: Yeah, and we worked together for quite a long time before this happened, and we always said once we get to six figures, we'll go out and we'll have a beer.

Andrew: And this is your beer to celebrate the fact that you guys did six figures in sales? How many months did it take you to get to that?

Sam: I think it was seven months of actually selling.

Andrew: Okay.

Sam: Ignoring developing time, the time that we started selling, it was seven months.

Andrew: Alright. Now we got to go to the controversial point. When you did an interview this got people both excited, and it got them angry, and I'm glad that you're including this here and not saying I'm going to white wash all the things that I did, and I'm only going to present things that people are going to admire me for. I want to see the real process. Here it is, you say, get a proposal from a company you can't afford. What kind of company? I've got your proposal here. You removed their name. I want to understand. What are you looking for from this proposal?

Sam: Essentially, a basic feature list and overview of the technology. A big one was should this be built using native IOS or should it be built using HTML5. That decision kept me awake for at least a week.

Andrew: Really? Okay. Which one did you go for? Did you go for native or did you

go for HTML5?

Sam: Native.

Andrew: Native. Okay.

Sam: It was more expensive and took longer. We had to build two separate apps, one for Android and one for IOS, instead of just building one, much more expensive, much more time consuming, but it was the best decision I made, just because people live inside the app and HTML5 apps. I don't know about now, but back then they were still a little bit flaky.

Andrew: As of right now, it's still laggy. I want HTML5 to be the better solution, because I want universal apps. I want them to work well in Safari, not just when I download and install a new app. But I have to say, every time someone creates an HTML5 app, it's just so slow. It's so frustrating. There's no real offline support. Anyway, so it's the big decisions that they helped you think through, but you couldn't afford to hire them, because how much would they have charged you to do the work to build out your product?

Sam: Version one, which was very small compared to what Snap Inspect is now, even version one was in between \$100,000 and \$120,000.

Andrew: \$100,000 and \$120,000? It's on the expensive side, which tells me how expensive this company was, but even if you went for a cheaper firm, it's expensive to get a native app developed for you. It's in the tens of thousands of dollars which a bootstrapper can't easily afford. So what you got was a proposal from them.

This was one of the screen shots that you gave us. I'm not putting this up here because I expect people to read through it and really understand every part of this. It's not about that. It's just to show that it's a pretty detailed document that you got from them, 30 pages. See at the top, this is just the objective, scope, flow, diagram, etc. And then what did you do with this if you couldn't hire them?

Sam: One of the first things I did was rip the names and prices off of it. And then I emailed it out to three companies at the time that I'd short listed. And I said, 'I had a local company here put together a proposal. I'm wanting to see for this exact same thing, what the price and time frame would be.'

Andrew: You are basically saying here, 'This top development company, this is what they would create for me, they've thought it through. I'd like you to build it.' And then you picked from the companies that responded to that.

Sam: Yeah. If you go to one of those companies with no idea, if you haven't talked

to a developer, if you don't have all the screens built out, if you haven't even thought about it yourself, and you haven't got anyone else to look at it, you could wind yourself out in a lot of trouble.

Communication barriers is probably the biggest thing with off shore developers. As much stuff as you can arm yourself with to get your vision and exactly what you want created, to try and transfer that out of your mind and into the developers mind. As much stuff as you can get is good because, I've found with development anything can be done. As an entrepreneur you often see it all in your head and it looks crystal clear. And it's getting that vision out of your head and into the developers head. And that's the hard part. You just got to make sure the developer is seeing exactly what you're seeing. And once they understand that, you're pretty much good.

Andrew: And here now you've given them the visuals. And you've given them some direction on the development. And the visuals were created with Keynotopia, the direction on development was developed by a top-end firm, and now you're able to go out to someone who your developer gives you some feedback on and say, "This is what I want. I've given you a lot of specificity."

On to the next big point. You're suggesting that if you don't have a buddy who is a developer, if you don't have the money to hire a developer that's a top-end developer, use outsourcing sites. But don't get played for a fool on those sites. I want to show a visual here of one of your proposals up on Elance. This is from a section of your proposal. What are we looking at here that helps us avoid getting fooled, getting taken?

Sam: This is an ad that I posted on Elance. You want to write a very good ad. If you're writing an ad to hire a developer you should put at least an hour into it, and a lot of thought, because it's very important. You don't want to try and save a half hour here when it could affect you two months later down the track. What you're seeing here in the screen shot is the requirements, essentially hoops, I made them jump through to get considered for this contract. For the first one I put 'I am a human (?)'. That essentially filters out the robots or the scripts that people have written to automatically apply for every job.

Andrew: I get that all the time, and it's really well written pieces that say, "We can do this for you, we've done all this other work, etc." And of course it's well written, because someone put in hours of time to write it, and then they are spamming by sending it to every single person who puts up a proposal on Elance, and so by saying I am asking them to say I am 'human 63,' you know when someone doesn't have it that they are clearly a spammer or likely a spammer. Alright, what's the next one?

Sam: So, a big one for me, is I always try to get people to show me previous work that they've done that they believe closely matches this project in terms of like code type or something. I wanted to see mobile apps that synced. So it doesn't say this here, but up further in the job ad, it would have said that I wanted to see a track record of mobile apps that have synced with web apps. That was the crux.

That's what my developer, and that's what the end development shop told me was the crux of this project. The web services that connect the app to the web app. That was the hardest place, and that's where most developers would fall short, so I wanted to see if they had any previous work with anything that did that.

Andrew: I see. And previous work is better than a skill set.

Sam: Oh, absolutely.

Andrew: Alright, you want them to work fast. You want them to hit deadlines, update daily.

San: Update daily.

Andrew: We're going to talk about how you kept track of this and held them accountable throughout. Let me see, is there anything else, specifically, here in the notes that you wanted us to point out? No, but people can basically copy this. Anyone who's watching us can copy this and use it for themselves, starting with 'I am human' and working down the list to get as much in that makes sense for them.

One of the cool things is, you told me as we were setting this up that you heard about the top section. Let me bring it back up here, the 'I am human' part, from a past Mixergy course, and here you are now saying it worked for you, and you're sharing it with other people, and I'm really proud to see that people who are watching these courses end up building their own companies and come back and teach, and I'm hoping that the person who's watching us right now, at some point in the future, will not just use these ideas, but come back and teach them with whatever changes they've made, so that we can learn from them.

Alright, on to the next one. We've got so much more to cover, and we're going to fly, 'Test Your Developers.' Alright, so you want to make sure the person's good, not just that they pretend that they have past relevant work. The challenge is, we don't know as non-developers what's good. We don't know how to evaluate, and so you said that you went to a friend and you asked him for a test. What's the test that he gave you?

Sam: Well, I don't know the explicit details of it. I know that it was the specific test that we're going to put up on the screen.

Andrew: Here, let me bring it up on the screen. This is a screenshot from the test that he gave you.

Sam: Yes, so we had lots of different tests, and they were all many tests to, basically, test the different cruxes of this project. This one here is to see how schooled they are at rendering data into a Microsoft Word document, so taking data and photos and then rendering it in a report in Microsoft Word, because that was a big part of my app, because you use Snap Inspect to collect data with your mobile app and then create a report in Microsoft Word.

Andrew: And so you, actually, want to see, can they take data out and put it into Microsoft Word.

Sam: Yeah.

Andrew: Do you pay them to write that code that you're using as a test?

Sam: Back then I didn't, no.

Andrew: Okay.

Sam: You always lead them to believe that they're in the final leg of the race, which they were really. I kind of, made it seem like they were, really, really in the final leg.

Andrew: That they're really, what? I'm sorry?

Sam: In the final leg of the race, like it was just being won by the person.

Andrew: In the final leg, right. So, if they've done all this work, and you're really down to three super stars. They want, after gone through all this work, to get to work with you, they want to show you how good they are, and so the test is part of it.

Sam: Yeah. If they come through good on the test then there's a very high chance that they're going to get this job, get the money.

Andrew: And frankly, when companies like Google hire, they are not taking people through their tests and sets of questions to figure out who the right person is, and then saying thanks for coming to the job interview. Here's 50 bucks cash.

Alright, but I have seen some people who use outsourcing sites say that when they have people do tests that they pay them. In your case, you didn't even need to pay them, and you explained how you prized it and made it something that they wanted to do.

Sam: And recently, like when I've hired some other people on Elance, they've been upfront and they've said, we don't do work like this. If you'd created a mini project and funded it, we're happy to do it, and that's fine, because their individuals, especially if the tests going to take four hours or something. I'm happy to fund it. But when I was dealing with these big companies, the deal size, I think, was \$10,000. They're just willing to do it as part of the groundwork of winning the contract, so it never came up. They never asked.

Andrew: Let's go to the big board again. The next big step is to take time zone seriously. Did you make a mistake with this where you didn't pick the right time zone?

Sam: Yes, so I worked with someone. Well, I tried to work with someone once that was in London while I was in New Zealand, and they're pretty much at exact opposites. I mean, you wake up really early in the morning, it's real late at night. It's too early in the morning. It's almost impossible to find a piece of overlap in the day where both of you can get on a call and communicate. When you're dealing with people in different time zones, the overlap is what's really important, so at what point in the day do both of our days overlap, because that will eventually be the block of time that you schedule every single week or day to communicate with them.

Andrew: How many hours a day do you have, overlap, with your developer now?

Sam: So right now I've got a full time developer in New Zealand.

Andrew: And that's where you are right now, today?

Sam: Yeah, right now. I'm in New Zealand. I was traveling for three and a half months. I got back three days ago, and when I was overseas in the states, it would be the evening, so it's 6:00 p.m., I would talk with Terry, back in New Zealand, which would be about 9:00 a.m. for him.

Andrew: Okay. How many hours would you say you need to have overlap in order for the relationship to work well?

Sam: It really depends what stage you are on the project. I would say at least one hour a week at the very least. That's when you have a daily update sort of thing, sit with them, where they might type into a Google Doc Monday, and then just bullet point what they achieved or whether they were on track or behind schedule, and then at the end of the week, have a one hour call and go through all of that stuff. Every day while I was traveling I'd try to do one hour with Terry, every single day.

Andrew: One hour using Skype to talk to each other, or were you just chatting with each other?

Sam: Anything we could get, especially when I was in places the internet is bad, anything, phone, just as long as we could talk. I like talking much more than typing emails.

Andrew: Alright, and I've got this. This is a screenshot from your iPhone. Let me zoom out so we can actually see this properly. Are these all the different places where you have developers or where you have had it?

Sam: So, I change it. Right now, Wellington's in my local time right now. L.A. is on the Pacific. A lot of our customers our on the Pacific time.

Andrew: I see.

Sam: So I always like to know where in the day they are. New York is where my sales rep s. Well, he's not actually in New York. He's in Montreal, but they're on the same time as New York. We have a lot of customers on the east coast. It's where most of our customers are, and then Sydney, Australia. That's where a ton of our customers are.

I always like to know what time it is for the bulk of my market, because sometimes a whole bunch of calls or support requests might come through and you want to quickly look at what's going on, what's the time. Is it night? I find that is the simplest way just to have it on your iPhone. So, when you're dealing with developers, if they're in the [??], put their time in. If you're dealing with another person, put their time in. And you can pull it up anytime and see exactly what time everyone is on.

Andrew: Look for those overlaps. Alright. On to the big board. The next one is to set expectations properly and you want to watch people as they progress. Where do I have that? There it is. Here is what you use...There it is. This is just [??] and anyone who's watching this screen right now can see why Skype chat is on top and the reason my Skype chat is on top there is when you and I went over this session you said, "Oh, I just used [??]," and I said, "can you take a screen shot?"

Without making any changes at all, you quickly took a screen shot, even while leaving everything in there, including my Skype chat, which I like. You said, "I'm not even going to go through and see what I can hide from the audience. Let's just let them see the whole thing." So, now that we are seeing the whole thing, walk me through how you use this to set expectations properly.

Sam: Sure. I create a board for everyone that I work with. Right now we're looking...If you look at the top left, it says Snap-Inspect [??] development in [??] [??].

This is Terry's, what Terry's doing. Basically, I use three little columns, one that says to-do-, doing, and done. Then, I have like 50 columns out to the world of all different areas of my product in features and bugs that need to be fixed within most different areas, like billing, customer reports, and the automatic sign up process. Every palette [SP] of my software I have chunk-ed [SP] out and given it a name. There is always features and bugs in each one.

Andrew: Let me see if I can highlight this and show it. What you're saying is...Let's see if this works. There it is. This is the person right here, Terry. Everyone has a board like that. If I wipe that out, you see, this is what he needs to do, this is what he's working on right now, this is what he finished and all of the rest...and I'm going to let this circle go off the screen, because it just keeps going further and further to the right...all of these are different categories of projects that you guys need to do together. But, he hasn't started them and when he does, when you want him to, you might say, "Move this one over right into here, into his to-do." He does that and then he move it over to doing once he starts.

Then, when you guys are ready to celebrate, he moves it right to this column. Done. This is how he knows what's expected because he keeps seeing all this stuff that's coming up on the right side and you know what he's working on because at any moment you can look here and you get a sense of what is done when you finally move it here. This is what you mean by setting expectations.

Sam: Yes. When I've checked on it, when I've looked at the "done", and I'm like, "Good!" I just delete it from done. That's why done is always empty. I always make sure that to-do has enough staff in it for the week. When you work with different people and you're paying for them, you always want to know that they're doing some work, especially when they're remote or you're in a different country. You really want to know that the actual work is being done.

That's why I like that, because I stack up what would be considered a reasonable amount of work for a week. We both agree that this would be a solid amount for a week and that they believe they can get it done. I can see in real-time what's going on. If I check at any point in the day, I can see what they're currently working on, and done! At the end of the week, that to-do should be ended.

Andrew: The expectations are set properly because you know what needs to get done and you also understand that even though you have this big to-do list, there are only a couple of things that can go into the doing column, and the also know what's coming up.

Sam: We have development 'to-do' listers.' That probably is another 12 months' worth of work if you keep scrolling out to the right. I mean, there's a lot of stuff in there.

Andrew: Alright. Final point is, and then I want to tell people how they can connect with you. The final point is, you're suggesting that people pay per project instead of per hour. I see the logic of that. What was Snap Inspect priced at when you were trying to figure out how much money you needed to put together, to hire a developer and have the first version of your product put out. What did you think this was going to cost?

Sam: I didn't know, but I mean, I knew that a high end shop wanted 100,000 or 120,000, and I did know that. The cheaper company, or Hidden Brains, the one that we pulled up before this. That's the first time I've actually ever told anyone the name of that company.

Andrew: It's the first time that what, that you mentioned their name publicly?

Sam: Yeah. A lot of people emailed me, and I never told them, just because it was too soon after I'd finished working with them. I don't know. I had a lot of [?] beliefs that people were going to steal my ideas.

Andrew: I wouldn't go there.

Sam: So I never told anyone. That's the first time. The original price was \$6,000 US dollars, but then we decided to go native, which added a few more thousand. I think it ended up close to \$10,000.

Andrew: Okay. So even with a set price for the delivered product, there was still some extra expenses that you didn't anticipate?

Sam: Well, they didn't pop out of nowhere. It was my decision that I was on the fence for for a long time whether to go native, because they said they said they could do it cheaper and way faster, and speed for me, at that point, was a massive thing. The sooner I could get out and sell this thing the better.

Andrew: Yeah.

Sam: I thought to myself, you know, if it's going to nag and it's going to feel like peace, you know, no one's going to pay for it. That defeats the purpose of getting to sell it, really.

Andrew: We're not, necessarily recommending the company that you used. We're just being open and saying that's who you use. We're not saying, hey, go use them. Sam used them. He loves them, and you can't go wrong with them. You got to figure it out for yourself, but Sam's being open about his process. No part of this process should be copied exactly. Just understand how Sam did.

Sam: Do not think for a second that because I did that process to find that company that they're already on the white list. You can skip everything and go to them. You might get a different project manager. You might get different developers. The companies might have completely changed since I used them. I mean, so much stuff and so many variables. I would strongly recommend not doing that. I would go through the exact same process again.

Andrew: But the main idea is this. Hire a company, not an individual. See if you can get someone with some extra capacity and someone who can be accountable. Start by creating what you know you can create, which is fire up Keynotopia, or a tool like that, and create that first version, so that you can play with it and understand what the final product will look like and so you can communicate it clearly.

Run the idea by a developer, even if you can't hire a terrific developer to build your product out, you can get that feedback from them, and one of the cool things about the foundation is, there are some experienced developer on-hand to give feedback to anyone who's part of the foundation. Get a proposal. This is what you did. You got a proposal from a top company, so you can think through what you need.

I don't want to go through every single point here, but I'll just leave it at use outsourcing sites, but use them with intelligence, so you don't fall for big mistakes. So you don't fall for tricks like spam that looks real. The final point I want to make here is, pay per project, and then I'm going to add one more. Set expectations properly, because I really like the way that you are working with your developers. You know what's coming up. They know what's coming up. You what they're working on. They know what they're working on. That kind of clarity is, really, really tough. We struggle with it here at Mixergy still, and so I'm always curious about how other people do things.

By the way, I've been scrolling through here and I see all these different screen shots. These aren't screen shots that are part of your product right? These are just elements that come with Keynotopia [sp?] right, and you're just playing with them.

Sam: Yeah, those are the elements of Keynotopia that. . .

Andrew: That you used.

Sam: Yeah, those were the original elements and I created the new slide and started dragging the original elements up into my own ones and I just left them there at the bottom. I don't know why. Probably because I couldn't figure out who to get them out.'

Andrew: Sam, can we give this to people who are watching our session right now or is this proprietary? Don't feel obligated to say yes.

Sam: I'm happy to give that out to maybe install on their iPhone.

Andrew: No, not Keynotetopia because that we shouldn't give because I don't want to give, but this PDF-

Sam: To put on the iPhone because you can download the Keynotetopia app, load that PDF into your iPhone and you can see yourself exactly how you tap on it and everything. I mean I'm happy to give that away. The design is still obviously my own.

Andrew: Yeah, you don't want people to copy the design and thinking because you're generous here that it means 'hey, walk in the house. Take whatever you like. Use whatever I have.' All right, do you want me to put it as part of the course on our page, or do you want me to send people to your site. Would you feel more comfortable if people emailed you for it? What's the way that you prefer.

Sam: Just put a download link on the-

Andrew: Put it right down on the site. Alright. I will do that. It will be on the page that people are using to access this course and to finish this off, let me say this. If you want to see the product that we've been talking about here, just go to snapinspect.com, look through the website, they can download the app for themselves, Sam?

Sam: Yeah, I recommend watching the videos instead of signing up for a free trial because it's just going to create leads for the sales team but you're welcome to do it if you want to. You can see a lot about the app if you just got through all the different pages and watch the videos.

Andrew: I'll hit x. You also have a website that people can check out. It's samubins.com [sp?]. I was hoping we could say people can go and hire you for consulting. You are not accepting anymore consulting work. You're just doing fine with Snap Inspect and you're probably just too busy doing that. The other thing I would suggest is the foundation. This is where you learned a lot of what you learned and I think aren't you also a mentor at the foundation?

Sam: Yeah, I was in the very first version of it and that's where I actually learned how to, well, that's actually where Snap Inspect started. In the very first version of the foundation, it was very rough. Nothing was quite certain and it's sort of where it all got pulled together and it's much more refined now. It'll be doing its third year this year.

Andrew: There you go, and to our viewer, thank you so much for being a part of this, Sam. To the viewer again, thank you for watching. As always, I'm hoping you'll take this course, use at least one idea here and get some big results from that idea and a combination of everything else that you've learned, and when you do build your business, when you build your app, when you have that big one, I hope you'll consider coming back to Mixergy and teaching how you did it the way that Sam did.

Sam, it's an honor to have you on here. Thank you all for being a part of it. Bye, guys.