

AI Agents: Your First \$10,000

The complete course, in print. Free at starvard.org/learnagents

Starvard University · The Money Course

Eighteen lessons. Zero fluff. One goal: your first ten grand with AI agents, as fast as humanly possible. Money first, mechanics later.

Professor Finn introduces the course. Forty-six seconds, feet on the desk.

The executive summary

Five people printing money with AI agents

Read this, then decide if you want the full eighteen lessons.

- \$10K voice agents. A 21-year-old sells AI voice agents for \$10,000 a pop to local businesses. Lesson 3
- \$24,387 in six days. Zero sales experience. One offer, one niche, relentless outreach. Lesson 6
- \$1,800 a month from one client. Landed in four weeks by a beginner with a single demo. Lesson 8
- Five clients to twenty-three, no new hires. A marketing agency scaled on agents alone. Lesson 18
- Twenty services businesses pay for right now. With real 2026 prices attached. Lesson 2

These are real stories from the videos featured in this course. The pattern behind all five is the same, and it is teachable. That is what the next eighteen lessons do.

The eighteen lessons

Lesson 1

Your First \$10,000: The Whole Playbook on One Page

Here is the entire game, before we get into any of it. Pick one type of business with a painful, repetitive problem. Build one agent that solves it. Sell the outcome for a setup fee plus a monthly retainer. Get ten clients paying you every month and you have a real business. That is the whole mountain.

You do not need to be technical. The people making this money are not engineers. They are closers who learned just enough no-code tooling to deliver what they sold. The selling is the skill. The agent is the product.

This course is ordered like a bank heist: money first, mechanics later. Lessons 1 through 8 get you paid. Lessons 9 through 15 make you dangerous. Lessons 16 through 18 scale it.

Watch this

Lesson 2

What Businesses Actually Pay For (With Real Prices)

Businesses do not buy "AI agents." They buy missed calls answered, leads followed up in five minutes instead of five days, appointments booked while they sleep, and support tickets resolved without hiring.

Sell the outcome, price the outcome.

Here is what the market pays right now, per month, per client. An AI receptionist that answers every call: \$500 to \$1,500. Lead follow-up that texts every new lead in under a minute: \$1,000 to \$3,000. An appointment setter: \$750 to \$2,000. A support agent that resolves tickets: \$1,000 to \$2,500. A review responder: \$300 to \$800. These are real numbers from the video below.

Notice what is missing from that list: anything about the technology. The client never needs to hear the words "large language model." They need to hear "no more missed calls."

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Lesson 3

The 21-Year-Old Selling \$10,000 Voice Agents

A 21-year-old with no agency, no team, and no reputation sells AI voice agents to local businesses for \$10,000 a pop. Not \$10,000 a year. Per deal. He does it with one niche, one demo, and a simple promise: your phones get answered like you hired three receptionists, for less than one.

His secret is not the tech. It is the demo. He calls the business owner, plays a recording of the agent handling a real customer call for their industry, and asks one question: "How many calls like this did you miss last month?" The owner's own math closes the deal.

In plain English: the voice calling services

- Vapi. The most popular toolkit for building voice agents. About five cents a minute. The one most agencies start with.
- Bland AI. Built for blasting out tons of outbound calls. The cold-calling machine.
- Retell AI. Sounds the most human, easy to set up, about seven cents a minute. Great at answering inbound calls.
- Synthflow. Point and click, no code, made for agencies that resell voice agents to clients.
- Goodcall. Flat \$79 a month, answers calls for local businesses. The simplest option, period.

You will build your version of his demo in Lesson 7. It takes an afternoon, not a computer science degree.

Watch this

Lesson 4

Pick a Niche or Starve

Generalists starve. Specialists get rich. Pick one industry, one painful problem, one offer. Plumbers who miss calls after hours. Realtors whose leads go cold. Med spas losing bookings to voicemail. Law firms drowning in intake. Auto shops with a ringing phone and nobody free to answer.

Why one niche changes everything: your demo converts because it speaks their language, your outreach writes itself because every prospect has the same pain, and your delivery gets repeatable because you solve the same problem the tenth time in an afternoon.

Pick the niche you can reach. If your uncle owns a plumbing company, congratulations, you sell to plumbers now. Warm beats clever.

Watch this

Lesson 5

Sell the Outcome, Not the Tech

Never say "AI agent" on a sales call. Say "we answer every call in thirty seconds and book the job straight into your calendar." The client is buying sleep, not software.

The standard deal: a setup fee of \$2,000 to \$5,000, plus a monthly retainer of \$800 to \$2,500. The setup covers building and training the agent on their business. The retainer covers the fact that it works for them 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and you keep it sharp.

Retainers are the whole game. One-time projects make you a freelancer. Retainers make you a business owner. Every lesson from here is about earning that monthly check.

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Lesson 6

\$24,387 in Six Days: The Outreach Playbook

No sales experience. No audience. No warm network. One person, one offer, one niche, six days, \$24,387 in signed deals. The playbook was not magic. It was volume plus specificity.

Here is the shape of it: 100 targeted outreaches a day, each with a personalized 60-second demo video for that exact business. Not "I do AI." Instead: "Here is your competitor's phone ringing at 9pm with nobody answering, and here is what I built for you." Follow up five times. Most deals close on follow-up three or later, right where everyone else quits.

Your turn comes in Lesson 18, where this becomes a day-by-day checklist. For now, absorb the lesson: the money is in the follow-up.

Watch this

Lesson 7

Build One Demo That Sells

You need exactly one demo, built for exactly one niche. Not a platform. Not a portfolio. One demo that does the one thing your niche loses money on. For plumbers: it answers at midnight, qualifies the caller, and books the job. That is the whole demo.

Build it with no-code tools, with clicks instead of code. The video below walks through the most popular one step by step. Budget one focused afternoon. It will be ugly. Ugly demos that solve the pain outsell beautiful demos that do not.

In plain English: the demo building tools

- n8n. Connect apps and AI with drag and drop. The free way to build your first demo.
- Voiceflow. Design the conversation like a flowchart, then it runs as an agent.
- Vapi. Same voice toolkit from above, doubles as your demo builder for phone agents.

Resist the urge to add features. Every extra feature is a week of delay and zero extra dollars. One pain, one demo, one niche.

Watch this

Lesson 8

\$1,800 a Month From One Client in Four Weeks

A beginner. No clients, no case studies, no reputation. Four weeks later: a client paying \$1,800 a month. His edge was not talent. It was sequence: week one, he picked a niche and built the demo. Week two, he did outreach every day. Weeks three and four, he took calls and closed.

Notice what he did not do: build a website, design a logo, take a course on sales psychology, or wait until he felt ready. Readiness is a rumor. The demo plus outreach is the job.

One client changes your psychology forever. You stop being someone who wants to make money with AI and become someone who does.

Watch this

Lesson 9

What an AI Agent Actually Is (No Jargon)

Forget the textbooks. An AI agent is software that does a job start to finish without you watching: it reads the situation, decides what to do, does it, and reports back. Think of it as a tireless employee who lives inside the computer, never sleeps, and costs pennies per task.

A chatbot answers questions. An agent takes action: it checks the calendar, books the appointment, texts the confirmation, and updates the records. That difference, answering versus doing, is the entire reason businesses pay thousands a month for agents and nothing for chatbots.

You now know enough theory to be dangerous. Everything from here is about making the agent worth more per month.

Watch this

Lesson 10

Why Businesses Pay for Agents, Not Chatbots

Here is the pitch that wins deals, and it takes ten seconds: "A chatbot talks to your customers. An agent does the work." Then show the demo booking the appointment. The owner gets it instantly, because they have been burned by useless chatbots before.

Chatbots failed businesses because they could not finish anything. They answered questions and stopped. Agents finish the job: the call gets answered, the lead gets qualified, the appointment lands on the calendar, the invoice goes out. Done is worth money. Talk is cheap.

When a prospect says "we tried a chatbot once," smile. That is not an objection. That is an opening.

Watch this

Lesson 11

Give Your Agent Hands (The Plain-English Version)

An agent without connections is just a brain in a jar. The magic happens when you connect it to the business's real tools: the calendar, the texting, the customer records, the invoicing. Then it can actually do the job instead of just talking about it.

You connect these with clicks, not code. Pick the calendar connection, log in, done. Pick the texting connection, done. Each connection is like giving the agent another hand. Calendar plus texts plus customer records turns a novelty into a \$1,500-a-month employee that never sleeps.

Start with two hands: the calendar and texting. That covers eighty percent of what local businesses will

pay for.

Watch this

Lesson 12

How to Talk to It So It Does What You Want

The instructions you give the agent are its training manual. Write them like you are training a sharp new hire: tell it exactly what to do, show it examples of good and bad, and tell it what to do when it is unsure. Vague instructions get vague work.

The five-minute version: say who it is ("you are the receptionist for Mike's Plumbing"), say what good looks like ("always offer the earliest available slot"), give two examples of tricky calls and how to handle them, and give it an escape hatch ("if the caller is upset, take a message and promise a callback within the hour").

Test every instruction by playing the worst caller you can imagine. If it survives you, it survives the public.

Watch this

Lesson 13

Teach It Your Business in an Afternoon

A generic agent is worth nothing. An agent trained on the client's actual business is worth \$1,500 a month. The difference is one afternoon of uploading documents: the price list, the service menu, the FAQ, the policies, the "how we handle this" notes.

Once it has the documents, it answers like an insider instead of guessing like a stranger. "Do you service tankless water heaters?" gets a real answer with real prices, not a confident hallucination. Clients feel the difference on the first call.

This is also your moat. Anyone can buy the same tools. Nobody else has your client's documents and your testing notes.

Watch this

Lesson 14

Deliver Like a Pro (Without Working More)

Here is the part nobody talks about: the agent business gets easier every month, because delivery gets systematized. The tenth plumber takes you an afternoon. The first took you a week. Build checklists, reuse everything, and let the agents do the heavy lifting on your own operations too.

Use agents on your own business first: an agent that drafts your outreach, one that follows up, one that preps you for sales calls. The video below shows workflows that save ten-plus hours a week. That is ten hours you spend getting clients instead of doing chores.

Document everything you do for client one as if you will sell the process. You will.

Watch this

Lesson 15

Do Not Let It Embarrass You in Front of a Client

One bad answer in front of a client costs more than the retainer. An agent that quotes the wrong price, books the wrong day, or argues with a customer will get you fired faster than any competitor. So you build guardrails: boundaries on what it may do, a human review step at the start, and tests before every launch.

The practical version: for the first two weeks, every appointment it books gets a quick glance from you before confirmation. Every price it quotes comes from the uploaded price list, never from memory. And it always has an escape hatch: "Let me have the owner call you right back."

Clients do not expect perfection. They expect you to care. Show them the guardrails and they trust you more, not less.

Watch this

Lesson 16

From Service to Product: The \$100K Leap

Services get you to \$10,000. Products get you to \$100,000. The leap: stop selling custom builds and start selling one agent, productized, to many businesses in the same niche. Same demo, same setup checklist, same monthly price. The tenth sale costs you almost nothing.

This is how agencies become software companies without becoming software companies. You are still selling outcomes, but now the outcome ships in a box. Onboarding goes from weeks to days. Your margins go from good to obscene.

Do not start here. Start with services, learn what the niche actually needs, then productize what keeps repeating.

Watch this

Lesson 17

Under the Hood (Optional: Skip If You Like Money)

Everything in this course works without writing a single line of code, and that will stay true. This lesson exists for one reason: the curious. If you have ever wondered what is actually happening inside the agent, the video below builds one from scratch, in code, with no frameworks.

Watch it or skip it. It will not make you an extra dollar. But some people sleep better knowing how the engine works, and if that is you, enjoy. The rest of us will be selling.

And that is the point. The tools won. The builders who sell beat the builders who tinker.

Watch this

Lesson 18

Your First \$10K in 30 Days: The Checklist

Everything converges here. Thirty days, four weeks, one goal: your first paying client and the system that gets you the next nine.

Week 1: pick your niche (Lesson 4) and build the one demo (Lesson 7). Ugly is fine. Done is the standard. Week 2: one hundred targeted outreaches with personalized demo clips (Lesson 6). Follow up like your rent depends on it. Week 3: take every call. Sell the outcome (Lesson 5). Send the proposal the same day. Week 4: close one client, deliver obsessively, and ask for the testimonial and two referrals.

How the \$10,000 business is structured

- Sends 100 personalized outreaches a day
- Follows up 5 times, automatically
- Posts content that pulls inbound leads
- Qualifies every reply in minutes
- Books calls straight into your calendar
- Sends proposals and reminders
- Builds each client's voice agent from your template
- Trains it on the client's documents
- Tests it before it ever touches a customer
- Answers client questions day and night
- Flags anything odd for your eyes
- Collects testimonials and referrals

Then comes the scale story in the video below: five clients to twenty-three, no new hires. That is month six, not month one. Month one is one client. Go get them.

Watch this

Graduation

Now Go Get the First One

You know the playbook, the prices, the niche, the offer, the outreach, and the delivery. There is nothing left to learn before the first outreach. The course is over. The business starts now.

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