

On Your Terms Podcast Episode 12:

How to Find Clients for Your Online Business (without ads!)

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:10] Hey. Hey. Welcome back to On Your Terms. I'm your host, Sam Vander Wielen, an attorney turned entrepreneur who helps online coaches and service providers legally protect and grow their online businesses using my DIY legal templates and trainings.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:23] This week, I am so excited to bring you the first in a three part podcast series, helping you learn how to go from a startup business owner to sold out and scaling. So, in this episode today, we're starting at the basics, at the beginning, with how to find high quality paying customers.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:42] And I don't want this episode to just be for people who are just starting out. I'm very much speaking to you if you are already up and running in your business. But in today's episode, I talk to you all about doing some market research, finding out if the market really is there, not only for your business, but even if you're just creating a new product or program. I think this would be a great one to listen to, to learn does the demand even exist for what I want to create.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:01:06] So, I talk a little bit about implementing what big companies have done, finding a unique value proposition, because I really find that that's the key to standing out in a very crowded crowd, for lack of a better term. I talk about really, truly getting to know your client, especially your ideal client, especially beyond the kind of, like, fluffy nonsense that's been sold to you on Instagram about finding out where your ideal client shops and whether she takes her coffee with milk or soy milk and stuff. So, we're going to go way deeper than that in today's episode.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:01:38] We'll also talk about expert status and how you can use your expert status to find paying customers, but how I also don't want you to get stuck in getting a little too expert-y and racking up too many certifications, because that can happen too. Last but not least, I'm going to talk with you about content and how you can create content that is geared towards your ideal paying customer.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:02:02] I'm so excited for today's episode and for all three episodes that are to come over the next couple of weeks, and I hope to see you at my

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From Startup to Sold Out Masterclass Series coming up in early November, the link is in the description. But with that, I will get started with today's episode, Episode number 12, my lucky number 12.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:02:23] Before we get started, I hope that we can all just set the tone of today's episode that I don't say any of this from the perspective of somebody who's like, "I've never done this, but you guys are all doing it." I'm saying this as somebody who has done all the things that I'm going to accuse you of potentially doing today because I've done them too. So, I say this without judgment, without shame. And, honestly, there's no time to speed ourselves up for anything we might have done in the past. We just got to do better and move forward.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:02:55] So, I was thinking about that as I put this stuff together today. I was like, "This sounds really blamey." As if I'm coming from a place of like, "Well, I've never done this, but you do this," and that is definitely not the case. So, I've pretty much made every mistake that's humanly possible in online business, whether it was in this business or my first business, so I will share candidly with you today. But I just wanted to clear the air, so let's move on.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:03:17] So, here's the deal. I feel like people think that finding clients, finding customers, whatever you want to call them - I call them customers in my own business because I don't treat people as clients because I'm an attorney, but I don't create like an attorney-client relationship. It's a whole long story. Anyway, so just feel free to substitute client for any time I say customer if that feels better for you. But people think that clients and customers come from thin air, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:03:44] I remember - and you can tell me if this is the same for you - when I started my first business, my health coaching business back in 2015 and 2016, I hit live or whatever it is that you do on your website. And I was just like, "Okay. Now, people will just start rolling in." And then, days, weeks, months - I don't know - went by and it was like, "Why isn't anybody just contacting me? Like, I put this website up there. I don't understand. Don't they know that I've asked for customers?" And I really did believe it worked that way.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:04:18] I even remember a year or two later, I got really lucky and I got featured in Philadelphia Magazine and it went kind of viral, like Philly viral, it was really popular in Philadelphia. And I remember just being like, "Okay. As soon as this thing goes live, all of a sudden everyone's going to want to work with me. This is going to be amazing. Finally, I figured out the secret to getting paying customers." And that wasn't it either.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:04:44] So, what is it then? What is it, if it's not that? Why do we feel like we can post whatever on social media? Why do we feel like we can just put up a website, start blogging, create a YouTube channel, a podcast, and then people will flow in?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:04:58] Well, here's my two cents. People, in general, tend to create things that are kind of about themselves. When, in fact, it needs to be the complete opposite. So, we're human, as the entrepreneur, we're doing exactly what our customers are going to be doing. We're thinking about ourselves. Our customers are also going to be thinking about themselves. But you are the one that's trying to get them to reach out to you, to be attracted to you. And so, you're the one that actually has to flip that and shine the light on them, not on yourself.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:05:34] So, people in general in the online business, they create content for themselves or kind of documents. Their personal life kind of has no help or purpose for other people. They create products for themselves. I mean, hell, people have contacted me telling me, "I experienced this thing in my life, so therefore I went ahead and created a business and an entire program to help other people." And it's like, that's a why. That's a good motivation. It's a good why behind why you're doing what you're doing.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:06:08] But that alone, like having experienced something, having had some significant health challenge or something, is not in it of itself enough alone to just go off and Rambo style start a business. And then, think that that's just

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going to bring people in because you've experienced something. It's got to be so much more than that.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:06:26] Because people, yes, they will be attracted to you in the sense that they will find comfort and companionship in the fact that you have also walked in their shoes. But they are literally seeing you sharing your story about your hard time, or your illness, or the thing that you overcame in your life. They will see themselves in it. So, at the end of the day, everything is going to go back to being about them.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:06:50] So, this idea that we create products, we create businesses, we create content about ourselves, we create problems, even, that we think are big problems because they're problems to us or things that are like, "Oh, this is a problem. And, therefore, this is the way to solve it, because I've decided that that's the way to solve it. And we offer up programs and services and products for it." And we get really excited.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:07:12] I know that this comes from a good place. I'm not saying like people aren't out to be meanie heads. They get really excited and passionate. And I also know, as somebody who's been through a lot of hardship that when you go through something that's really hard, it inspires you to want to help other people to do it differently, or to overcome it too, or to know things are going to be okay, or whatever it is. And so, I think that there's a lot of care and compassion that comes from people when they want to create products like that. However, that is not the way to line your pocketbook, as we would say in Philadelphia. So, it is not the way that you're going to grow a really profitable business.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:07:57] And so, today's episode is really for those of you who are like, "I want to grow a profitable business. I want to do good. I want to help people. And I'm going to create great products. But I need to put food on the table," or whatever it is that you want to do. I always say electric in my electric car. So, you have to, I think, get it clear on really what it is that you want to do here. If you want to create a passion

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project and you don't care if anybody ever buys it, then like, "I'm probably not for you. Let alone this episode is not for you," and that's totally fine. It's super noble to do that.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:08:30] However, I'm speaking today to those of you who feel like what gives. I am trying. I'm putting myself out there. I'm creating all this content. Or I don't know what content to create. And I don't know where my customers are. And I've tried creating all these stupid avatars. And I don't understand. Like, she's shopping at Madewell and she's shopping at Nordstrom, but I don't understand what am I supposed to do. Like, hang out outside Nordstrom? So, I totally understand why you feel that way. I felt that way, too.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:08:55] And because we start out like solopreneurs or solo entrepreneurs, we think it's more about showing all these parts of ourselves, showing our personal social media, then business social media. And then, on the other hand, I have some people I know who I go to their social media pages and it's way too business-y. There's not one picture of a human, and I don't even know what their first name is.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:09:17] So, people are just all over about this stuff. And we don't know, I think in online business, for the most part, how to find paying customers that we actually want to work with. So, I'm hoping today's episode will break through a few of those barriers.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:09:32] And I'll share a bit more again at the end about my masterclass series I have coming up, From Startup to Sold Out Masterclass Series. It's the first time I'm ever doing something like this. It's going to be live only this time, so I highly recommend joining me. The link is in the description. But this episode is really kind of outlining the beginning part of what we will go over in that first masterclass class of that series. So, yes, I am so excited for it.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:09:58] Okay. So, I've talked about it a little bit on the podcast before, but I have had two businesses now. So, back in 2015 and 2016, I started my first business, which I call it a health coaching business. But really my goal was to help

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people learn how to slow down, especially who were kind of running this corporate lifestyle, really stressed out busy life. Like, eating lunch at their desk at work while super stressed out. Basically speaking to the people who were in my position like I was when I was an attorney. And I really wanted to teach people how to cook. That was so important to me because I loved cooking. So, see where this is going?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:10:37] So, I thought that if only people who worked in busy corporate environments could just learn how to slow down, and maybe one of the ways that they could do that was through the joy and art of cooking - which is by far and away my number one life passion - that they would finally find the key to happiness that they've been searching for. I hope you can hear the sarcasm in my voice, but also understand - I wish you could see me - I'm just laughing because it is so funny to me the differences between my two businesses have been like night and day. So, I want to use this as an example.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:11:13] So, I start up this business. I start screaming from the rooftops about the importance of home cooked meals, and bringing your food to work, and not sitting at your desk, and moving more, and, you know, yada yada yada, and how amazing cooking is and all the stuff. And when I say it fell flat, it fell fricking flat. People were like, "I don't have time to cook. I hate to cook. Getting away at lunch is my only respite. It's the only thing I can go do that's, like, half fun." Or they were just like, "I hate working out. Working out is stupid. Moving your body is stupid. Everything was stupid. Yoga is stupid."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:11:51] Now, here's the deal, I didn't do any market research. I went into this whole thing thinking that because this was what helped me and made me happy that, therefore, that would make everybody else happy. I never asked anybody else. I never took it as a clue that everybody I worked with at the firm, except for one to three people maybe, thought that what I did personally, like cooking constantly, taking walking lunch breaks, sitting in the sun to get more vitamin D, that they thought that was insane. And I never took that as a clue to like, "Oh, wait a minute. Now, these are the very people I'm going to go and try to sell this idea to."

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:12:28] So, I tried shoving it down their throats. I tried the kind of preachy like, "This is the way. This is what will help you." Not only did they not want what I was offering, they didn't want the outcome. So, it's not that people don't want to be happy, but they weren't willing or they didn't want to make changes because they didn't really see that as being the problem or this being the solution.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:12:55] In fact, I never got clear on exactly what their problems were and what solutions they really wanted, because I was so busy just telling them what the problem was and telling them what the solution was. So, even the coaching relationships that I had, the people who hired me as their coach, it was basically like me teaching. It was just be a very teach-y, preachy situation. It was not a lot of what coaching really should be, which is like holding space, reflecting things back, helping people self-actualize, guiding them through, maybe offering some tips and support. But not someone standing at the front of the classroom teaching.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:13:32] So, that's my first business. It falls flat on its face. I can't understand why. I'm frustrated. I've put up this website, no one's coming to it. I can't figure out why. I'm just like, "Why for the life of me isn't this business working?" I attend a huge wellness convention in the spring - like late winter - and I start introducing myself just to network to people who are there. It was in my hometown of Philly, it just so happened to be there.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:13:58] And I'm introducing myself. And I had, by the way, no social media following or anything like this. I had a good local network, though, and a lot of the people who were there were local. And they said, "Aren't you that girl who used to be a lawyer?" This is like the story of my life. "But now you're a health coach." And I was like, "Yeah. I am that girl." And they were like, "Okay. What's the deal with an LLC? How do I start one? Or do I really need business insurance? What do I do? Let me show you my logo, do you think I need to redo this? Or do you think I need to trademark this logo?" And I thought, "How interesting?"

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:14:37] And I really just turned myself that day into a little sponge. It was funny because I really didn't want to talk about anything having to do

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with legal stuff. But I turned myself into a sponge, and I just took these questions in, I answered them. And I kind of made a mental note as to what everybody was asking about.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:14:54] I remember that after this convention, I was like, that is so interesting to me that people had all those questions. Because as an attorney, too, people were asking - and this is still true to this day - about things that were a lot different than what I would have asked me or even what I think you should be concerned about. A lot of times legally is not at all what you are concerned about and what you are concerned about or, half the time, not things that I would be concerned about. So, they're very, very different.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:15:25] And considering I've only ever been an attorney, I have no idea how to function otherwise as a business person. So, this is just what I know. And so, I just started to realize it's really interesting that they are having these questions, that they're struggling with these issues, that they're looking for someone to answer this stuff for them.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:15:47] So, I went back to a lot of those very same people and I was like, "Why are you asking me? Like, other than the fact that you know I was an attorney, what else have you tried to do and what happened? - to answer this question? And it was so fascinating because a lot of them would say, "Oh, I tried to call a lawyer and he kind of, like, brushed me off. He thought I was a blogger." Or he thought, "Oh, if you just have a YouTube channel, there's nothing to protect." Or "What's a coach? I don't understand. What kind of sports team do you coach?"

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:16:19] So, I got a lot of the same responses which were, essentially, that people didn't take them seriously. They felt really intimidated. They didn't know how to kind of advocate for themselves and speak up and say, "No. This is what I do. This is how I work with people." Lawyers were very quick to tell them that what they were doing was illegal, which most of the time it was not. Some parts of it were a little hairy, but it's fine, we worked that out.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:16:42] So, it was super, super interesting to me. I was like, "Huh?" So, these people are really smart. They are really driven. They want to be entrepreneurs, but they feel intimidated. They feel super overwhelmed. They don't know exactly what questions to ask, but they do have a lot of good questions. And they think legal is cost prohibitive and they're intimidated by them. And they're dealing mostly with men. And they feel like people treat them like they're stupid when they have a business that's maybe more in the wellness space, or life coaching space, or - I don't know - something that traditional lawyers might consider to be out there.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:17:16] So, that's super interesting, and thus began my journey to what we're going to talk about today. Because I took the time to actually do this back in 2016 to build this business the right way. And I cannot believe that five years later, I'm sitting here on the business, I'm sitting today talking with you. My mind is completely blown.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:17:37] And I truly believe that this business's success was solely built on what we're going to talk about today, which is finding the right clients or who my ideal clients are the right way. Really taking the time to do this right and to continue to go back to doing this. So, this episode is not just for you if you're brand new. This is something that I'm always doing. I'm always going back and continuing to refresh in my own business. So, it's super important that you take the time.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:18:06] I haven't worked with a business coach in years, but when I first started my business, I did join group programs and things. And I remember we would spend so much time being like, "Where does she shop? Where does she eat? Does she love cats or dogs, coffee or tea?" And I'll just be like, "Oh, my God. What does this have to do with building your business?" I mean, it has a little bit to do. It's helpful to kind of get the general feel, but it is so much more than just this surface level. Like, she loves to shop in Nordstrom. There are a lot of people who love to shop at Nordstrom. We don't understand what their pain points are.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:18:50] This is always the way I think of it, if you stood at the door of Nordstrom - and this is the nonsense you're believing from business coaches

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like, "I need to know where she shops" - and as every single customer, however many hundreds or thousands of customers go into Nordstrom per day, ask each of them what are the top three problems in your life right now. And I bet you, you would get wildly different answers, everything from people's health, to other people's health, to money, to relationships, to jobs, to kids to future. I mean, just endless possibilities. And so, that is not always the best way or definitely not the only way to truly understand your who your ideal customer is.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:19:34] So, how then? People are like, "Don't do this. Don't do that." But how do you find your ideal paying customers online to fill up your online business roster?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:19:47] So, the first thing that I want you to do is really ask yourself, is the market there for what I want to create? Kind of go back to that first business story that I told you about, there was not really a market, or maybe there was a market maybe there was a group - actually, perfect example. I have a customer in the Ultimate Bundle, Sarah, who owns a company called the Former Lawyer. It's brilliant. And her company specifically targets lawyers who want to now be considered former lawyers. They want to leave the law.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:20:15] That was the way for me to have gone about the business. If I was to redo it, that is how I would have done it. So, I was trying to teach lawyers who just were kind of perfectly fine bumping along in their miserable lives how to be healthier when they didn't want any of that kind of stuff. I should have been looking for the people who were like, "I want out of here, but I don't know how to get out of here. Show me the way." So, that is a brilliant, brilliant strategy. I'll link to Sarah below in the episode notes.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:20:43] But that's just a brilliant example of actually looking for the market. Actually looking for the people who actually want what you're going to offer them and just don't know it exists yet.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:20:54] I want you to also go about thinking about this in the way that a larger company would if they were going to put a location, like a physical location, of their business in a community. You hear a lot about the statistics or the things that companies, like Starbucks, will look at. Or I recently looked into Barre3, it's a franchise owned in-person bar studio - the classes are very fun, by the way. And when they look to go into a community, they look for a certain number of other factors. They look at what their other businesses are in the area, because then that tells them a lot about the need or the demand for their business being in the area. So, there are a lot of factors like that that you can look at too.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:21:38] So, I always like to start out by just asking myself, is the market there? Can they afford to pay for what I need? Because if you need to have a profitable business, you need to live and it's okay to make money. You need to have people pay for it. And so, sometimes when people will tell me, "I'm starting this business. It's going to work with high school kids or college kids." I'm like, "Who's paying for this? Unless you're targeting their parents, because then their parents are kind of your ideal client, not the kid. But they're not going to be able to pay for this." Or if you design a business that's all about targeting people with money woes, instead of people who want to grow their money, for example, that might be a problem.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:22:15] So, it's really important to start off by thinking about these things that a big company would look at, as to whether there's actual demand for this. Look for statistics.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:22:26] I was just talking to somebody the other day about some of the statistics around online courses and the online course industry. How much it's grown? What kind of demand there is for it? How many other companies? How many billions of dollars and millions of dollars are flowing through this system now? Everything from checkout page companies, like SamCart, to ConvertKit, to Kajabi, to - I don't know - lead pages, whatever else. There's just a million businesses that are supporting this.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:22:51] So, really looking at this community, looking at how many people are in it, and what the community is like. What are the average salaries or incomes of people in that community? What's the gender breakdown? Where do they live? How do they operate? I mean, that's when I would personally then start to get into that. Like, if I was already looking at a community and then being like, "Okay. Now, where do they shop? What do they like? What are their thoughts and feelings and all of that kind of stuff?" That's when that part gets important.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:23:21] Are you really serious about growing and selling out the offers in your business to your dream customers? If you are, then I want to personally invite you to come to my first ever three day From Startup to Sold Out Live Masterclass Series. All about how to go from just starting up your online business, to being sold out, and automating processes that will earn you back your time while still having plenty of paying customers that are thrilled to work with you knocking on your digital door every single day.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:23:48] Over the course of three short and sweet 90-minute trainings on Wednesday, November 3rd; Thursday, November 4th; and Friday, November 5th, I'll teach you the crystalized, super actionable steps that you need to know to be able to do these three things.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:24:02] One, to find your paying customers because you need to stop creating so much free content and tools that nobody's paying you for and that nobody needs, and start using marketing techniques that attract only your ideal paying customer. So, I'm going to show you exactly how to do that and to stop spinning your wheels wondering if that ten-part Instagram carousel post is a waste of your time or not. In this first masterclass, I'll talk with you about actually finding your ideal customer, doing some market research, and we're going to go way beyond all the fluff and nonsense you hear online about just finding out where this person shops and eats. It is so much more than that.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:24:39] In Masterclass Number 2, I'm going to teach you how to create your streamlined solution. Because sometimes you already have a warm

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audience that's excited to buy something from you, but the offer that you create itself just kind of falls flat. So, you need to understand how to create a product with only the beautiful bare bones of what your customer actually needs. So, I'll show you how to stop overwhelming them with unnecessary bells and whistles so that they'll actually use your product or service. Which will then mean that they actually benefit from it and give you rave reviews to all their friends really growing that word of mouth network.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:25:13] And last but definitely not least, Masterclass number 3, I'm going to teach you all about getting found by your customers and amplifying your impact. And I'm going to do all of that while teaching you how to still have a life, and primarily have a life. Because my business doesn't run my life, even though it's gotten so much bigger than I ever could have imagined.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:25:32] So, now, that you've tailored your product to the exact people who will need it to solve their problem, you'll need to understand how to amplify your impact with advance PR and advertising and marketing techniques. That's where this third masterclass will come into play, and it will help you scale what's already working.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:25:49] All three of these classes are being held virtually, and this is the only time that they'll actually be happening live. That is a huge deal because I've only ever provided legal education in the past and legal products. But now that so many people have asked me how I grew a seven figure and climbing business in my first five years, it's time for me to finally spill the secrets of my sales and marketing machine. So, I'm offering these classes live because I know you'll have loads of questions that you want to ask during this live event, which is why we're having a Q&A at the end of each one.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:26:18] And if you can attend live, be sure to buy a ticket anyway, and we'll send you the recording of each masterclass video. And if you submit your questions before the class, I'll even answer it live during the Q&A so you can get your answer during the recording.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:26:32] So, instead of investing in a boujee price tag mastermind retreat or a year long coaching program with, let's be honest, a lot of fluff and filler, you're going to get my most important knowledge and experience growing my business online in this three part masterclass series for as little as \$197. It's really an awesome deal, especially when you think about the value of getting to ask me questions during the live chat and Q&A portion.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:26:54] You can either buy just one ticket to any three of the classes for \$97 or you can get the low bundle price of \$197 to grab a ticket to all three masterclasses and the recording. They're happening at 3:00 p.m. Eastern, 12:00 p.m. Pacific on Wednesday, November 3rd; Thursday, November 4th; and Friday, November 5th. But hurry, because you've got to buy your tickets before 5:00 p.m. Eastern on Tuesday, November 2nd, when we close up registration for good. Head to the link in the description of this episode or type in samvanderwielen.com/fsso-oyt into your browser and get tickets now to this special live event. I hope to see you there.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:27:32] The next part I want you to think about when you start looking at kind of what's already going on, what kind of community already exists, what other companies are out there already doing, what you would like to do, is, how would you like to offer it differently? So, if there are ten people you see online that are already doing something so similar to you, please don't let that keep you from wanting to start your own business.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:28:03] But what is not the right way to go about it and, unfortunately, what is the way that a lot of people go about it is, they see those ten people and if one or two of them are really successful, then they're like, "Oh. Well, I'll just create my business to look exactly like their business because then that means that I'll be successful."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:28:19] And what I would love for you to do instead is to look who else is in your space and to look at the surrounding spaces, not just the people who are doing exactly what you're doing. And think about what your unique value proposition would be. How do you do things differently? How will your business be different than

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theirs? How will you offer your products and services in a different way? And what kind of customers maybe even are different?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:28:46] For example, there are other people in my industry, but I could see that they work with certain types of people, certain niches, maybe certain groups of people. And I was like, "Okay. I kind of want to speak to these different people. Like, people over here who I feel don't have as much attention." Or I see that somebody is doing it this way, but I'm just like, "I'm just a really different person." It's not good, bad, no judgment, or anything like that. It's just I have a really different voice, and tone, and style, and I'm from a different place, and I come at it from a different angle with different experience.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:29:20] So, how am I going to take that unique experience, my unique voice - if I can even find my unique voice, which was hard in the beginning - and how can I bring that into the business so that I stand out in a different way, not just creating the same business that other people have. Because it's these differences. It's these unique value propositions that you have that are going to be the things that you've got to lean into in your marketing - that we'll talk about later - that are going to make you stand out amongst the crowd.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:29:49] So, whenever anybody says to me, "Oh, I'm so worried that there are so many other people in our industry, they're already doing the same things. I feel like I'm late to the game." I always say like, "There's no room for you to come in and do what everybody else is doing. There is room, though, for you to come in and do what is true to you." And that requires you to really put it out there and be different and have a spin.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:30:12] But have you ever watched an episode of Shark Tank? If you have, then you know that at the beginning of every single pitch, they'll always explain to you how they use some other product, or they did some other thing, or they ran into some problem, and they just couldn't find something that solved their unique problem. Or they'd be like - I'm just making up a really random example - "All the soap companies always had this traditionally masculine marketing, and that didn't really

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speak to me. So, I decided, like, what about creating a soap company that spoke more to this part of me?"

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:30:49] So, they always come up with this difference. It's like they see something, and it's either not working or it doesn't speak to them, and then they twist it. And that is what makes brilliant inventions. And I want you to think about how essentially you can invent a business or product that does that very same thing.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:31:07] So, as you go further along, I think it's really helpful to do ideal customer interviews. And this is really helpful to do without pitching a product or a service. You're literally just a sponge. You are soaking it all in. You're asking them questions. First of all, they should be people who are experiencing the problem that you want to help solve. And what you should be doing in that interview, whether you do it in-person or online, is really getting to know their problem better. How they're experiencing it? What's really bothering them? What's triggering them? What's keeping them up at night? What are they frustrated about? Where do they wish things were instead?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:31:45] So, I had somebody teach this to me years and years ago, I don't even remember who said this. But they were like, it's like your client is on Pain Island and they want to go to Pleasure Island, and you're kind of like the ferry that takes them from Pain Island to Pleasure Island across. And so, you're trying to figure out what's going on, on Pain Island? What's the deal? How does it feel to be there? What kind of problems are they experiencing? Why can't they get themselves to Pleasure Island? What do they wish was different? Why can't they get there themselves? What's getting in the way?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:32:14] Just like I was sharing with you earlier, when people were explaining to me that they had legal questions and concerns and they tried going to the attorney, but it was intimidating, expensive, blah, blah, blah, that kept them on Pain Island, on Confusion Island, whatever you want to call it in your case. It might be like lack of moving forward island, anything you want to call it.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:32:34] So, that is then the key to being like, "Oh, okay. So, they want to get over here." But I needed to get clear on what those problems were, what was keeping them. And then, really, what pleasure or what things they wanted to be different? What did they want to be better? Not just for the problem to be solved, that's too simplistic.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:32:55] But in my case, for example, when people were sharing with me that they were frustrated that the attorney wasn't taking them seriously and it was too expensive, and all of that, it wasn't just that they wanted to find an attorney. That wasn't the solution. Because then the solution is just like any other, like, there are nine million attorneys on every street corner, you can go higher. That's not the problem. I wanted to know what they wanted. Like, what experience did they want to have?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:33:18] They wanted to feel more confident. They wanted to feel reassured. They wanted to feel at ease. I heard the words and the terms like a sigh of relief, or so much better, or less anxiety, less frustration, less fear. I heard a lot about how if they were able to get from Point A to Point B, from that Pain Island to that Pleasure Island.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:33:40] These are the questions that you can ask them, What would it mean to you to resolve this problem? And people would say to me, "It would mean that I could finally stop worrying about this." So, if that's where they end, you want to then follow up by saying, "So that you could do what?" And I would say, "So, we solved your anxiety over this legal issue. What would that allow you to do so that what?" And they would be like, "So that I could finally promote my products." "Well, what would that do?" "Well, if I could promote my products, then I could finally sell my products." "Well, what would that do?" "Well, that would help me to actually grow my business and to support my family." "Well, what would that do?"

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:34:14] And we just kept going down, down, down the line, and that was so helpful in really getting to know what exactly it was that they were hoping to get out of this service or product they were looking for that, you know, at that time, I

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hadn't even created. So, those are the kinds of things that you want to be getting out of your ideal customer interviews.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:34:32] So, when you're also getting to know your client and you're getting really, really intimately familiar with what her problems or experiences are right now that are bugging her and that she wants to be different, not that you just want to be different for her, but that they actually want to be different. And then, you're also getting super clear on what their hopes, dreams, and desires are.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:34:55] I know I touched on it briefly, but I just want to reiterate that it's really important to get in touch with them, what these objections are. Like, why haven't they taken this action themselves? What things have they tried that haven't worked out? Why didn't it work out? Was it expensive? Did they try it in their group program and it was all in-person? Or, I don't know, because then those are the things that you can use to make different about your products and services.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:35:19] I always like to explain this as, if you could imagine that instead of like just focusing on all of these little things - like where she shops, and what she eats, and how she dresses, and all of that kind of stuff - if you would instead think about what her day-to-day is like. I always like to think this sounds creepier than it is, but if you had a camera that was set up and it followed this person around, they didn't know it, what were these little snippets of her day be where she runs into the problem that you're trying to solve? That's the way that I like to think of it.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:35:46] So, I always picture to myself someone sitting at their computer, Googling until the cows come home, and they're frustrated, and they can't figure this legal stuff out, and they slam their laptop shut, and they go off and they watch Netflix instead. And then, they sit there being like, "How am I ever going to run this business or grow this business if I don't have the legal pieces in place?"

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:36:08] Or I picture the person who tosses and turns at night and wakes up at 3:00 a.m. thinking, "Man, I hope that that fake contract that I sent that

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client isn't going to come back and bite me if this client doesn't pay me, or if she gets upset about something that I do. I really hope that I'm protected."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:36:24] Or the person who's nervous to post yet again about her business online because she's worried that if she does, then somebody is going to call her a fraud because they see that their business isn't set up properly. So, those are the moments, like the little blurbs of my ideal customer's life, her day-to-day that I think of in my mind when I'm creating content, products, and services.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:36:45] So, I want you to think of that of like, what would those moments look like? What would they be for them? And what, in fact, do they need at that moment? What's kind of the hand on the shoulder that you're going to offer to them in that moment?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:36:57] Now, another way to find paying customers is to make sure that you're kind of leaning into what your expert status really is. So, please keep in mind to that. When I say this, I don't mean that you need to know every single thing about every single thing that's out there in the world. You need to be an expert though at something.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:37:14] I feel a little torn on this issue because I see a lot of content online that's kind of like, "You don't need to be an expert. Just do it." And, yes, that's true, but you do need to know something. Because sometimes I see people kind of frighteningly on the front end of this where they don't really know much, I'm afraid. You see this a lot, I think, in the business coaching world where people, maybe, they've created a semi-successful business of their own or something on social media, and then they think that that makes them a business coach. That doesn't mean that you know anything about business.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:37:46] I tend to see that that's particularly alarming because those tend to be the people who are like, you don't need legal stuff or you don't need to pay taxes, just do this or just do that. It's a little frightening. So, just experiencing something doesn't make you an expert in it. I do think that there has to be a careful

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balance here. I do believe in getting educated, or certified, or upping your knowledge about something.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:38:09] And you don't want to stay in that too long, because I do see the opposite effect of that happening where I know people who are certainly experts in what they do, and they're constantly taking another certification, or another course, or another degree and something because they think that they need to be more and more and more certified before they can start working with people. So, that is not at all what I mean.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:38:34] But instead what I would encourage you to do is to think about what is the thing that, if I told you today that you were going to be five years from now talking about this very same topic, and you're going to be talking about it until the cows come home, and it's going to be what you become known for, do you feel confident today that you could continue to do that? I think that's a cool way to look at it, because five years later, I am literally talking about the exact same topics. Like, the same core - I don't know - five or six topics every single day.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:39:09] And of course, yes, I'm an attorney, so I feel confident talking about legal stuff. But attorneys don't know everything about legal. People ask me questions all the time and I'm like, "That's a great question. I'll look into that." It's okay to not know stuff, that is not the goal. The goal is not to be a narcissist like "I know everything. Don't question me," whatever. That's not the goal.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:39:28] The goal is for you to be an expert about your area, which I feel pretty confident about knowing a lot about legal for online business. I'm also confident that I don't know everything. I'm just confident that I could figure it out. And then, I am smart enough to tell you when I don't know, because that's what gets you into legal trouble. So, you're not expected to be an expert about everything. You need to be an expert about some area. And you need to be expert enough to know when you don't know.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:39:55] In fact, that's a lot of people's problem online, to be honest, is that they don't know what they don't know. And they go around talking about things like they know everything, when, in fact, I think what makes a really good expert is somebody who is able to say to you, "That's a great question. Let me get back to you." That was one of the best things I learned as an attorney was they were like, "When you are on the phone with a client or they email you or something like that and they ask you a question you don't know, do not try to answer it. Just say, I don't know. Let me get back to you." Or, "That's a great question, let me get back to you."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:40:25] So, we are really trying to lean into this expert status, but just take my feedback as to don't let it go too far, but also don't be too novice at something and then try to talk about it anyway.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:40:37] Last but definitely not least, is that we want to create content that then is geared towards that very client and that's actually helpful to them. So, not content that's necessarily about ourselves.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:40:48] I had this great conversation years and years ago with a client who ended up joining the Ultimate Bundle who said, "Would you mind giving me feedback on my latest Instagram post?" And at the time, that was something I would do, so I would be like, "Sure, I'll do that." I'll never forget it, she had a picture of Kerrygold, the butter. Which, if you haven't tried, it is unbelievable. I eat it every day. And she was like, "I had a picture of this Kerrygold because Kerrygold was on sale at Costco, and I wanted to let people know about it."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:41:19] So, I'm like, "Okay. Well, that very noble mission, everybody wants to know when Kerrygold's on sale at Costco." It's very important to know, I love Costco and I love Kerrygold, #notsponsored, but I wish it was. But we talked about it and I said, "Okay. Here's how I would rework this post." And I hope that this will be helpful to you. So, instead of just posting, it was literally a picture of Kerrygold in the refrigerator at Costco, and then just being like, "It's on sale."

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:41:46] Why don't we tell people what it is exactly? What is the deal? Why is Kerrygold better? And I had heard some explanations why, but she was the expert. So, I'm like, "Why is Kerrygold better than just using regular butter?" And she spouted off all these incredible facts and reasons and she had all these explanations about what it does in the body, and when it's paired with carbs, and - I don't know - all the stuff. And so, it was like, "Wow. That's fascinating. So, here's what I would have done, I would have said, like, 'Did you know why Kerrygold is better than regular butter?' or, 'Do you love butter too? Me too. Here are five reasons why Kerrygold does X, Y and Z.'"

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:42:24] And then, it would be an educational post where you would have like, "Here are the five reasons." And then, at the end of that very post, you would say, "And that's what I work with." I think she works with women at the time. She's like, "That's why I work with women to help them learn how to master, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And that's what we do in my 12 week online program called XYZ, which you can learn more about or apply to join at this link." That's exactly how a post should go, essentially.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:42:51] So, yes, it's a snippet of your day. Yes, it's interesting. But you're turning essentially every opportunity into a learning opportunity for other people. And it has to be with them in mind. So, you have to think your ideal customer would be the kind of person who likes to know the data or the science behind something. The why behind what you're telling them to do.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:43:14] I can think of so many people in the Ultimate Bundle who have these niches of people who don't want to know any of that stuff. And that kind of post would totally fall flat and not be helpful and definitely not convert. And then, I have all of these other customers that I can think of that have their own ideal customers that are the people who need to know the exact why and they love the the nerdier side behind what their exercises are, or what they're eating, or how they're moving their body, or whatever it is. It's not good or bad. It's just about whatever your clientele likes. And that's why it's so important to figure that out in the beginning.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:43:52] This content piece is really what I'm going to spend the bulk of Masterclass 1 in my From Startup to Sold Out Masterclass Series in November. I'm going to go into much more detail about what kind of content you should create, exactly how that content should be structured, how I'm personally showing up on Instagram, and what strategies have been working for me.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:44:14] But, today, I really wanted to get into the meat of finding your paying customers, and looking at the market, and getting to know your client, and getting in touch with this expert status, and things that you could talk about for years and years. And the content piece we could talk about all day. That'll probably be like an hour of the first masterclass series.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:44:33] So, if you found this helpful, you will definitely find Masterclass number 1 helpful, let alone all three in the series. You can grab that link in the show notes below. I hope that you'll join me for all three sessions of the masterclass series for that \$197 discounted price. I would love to see you there.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:44:51] If you found this episode helpful, it would be so amazing if you could follow and subscribe to the show wherever you listen to podcasts. If you could rate it and leave a review, if you listen on Apple Podcasts. And, of course, send me a DM @samvanderwielen on Instagram to let me know what you thought of the episode.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:45:08] With that, I would love to see you over at the Masterclass Series From Startup to Sold Out that I'm hosting on November 3rd, 4th, and 5th, live for the very first time. And, of course, yes, you will get those replays, so head to the link in the description of this episode or tap in samvanderwielen.com/fsso-oyt into your browser, and I will see you there. Thank you so much for listening. I'll see you next week.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:45:39] Thanks so much for listening to the On Your Terms podcast. Make sure to follow on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you like to listen to podcasts. You can also check out all of our podcast episodes, show notes, links, and

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