

## **On Your Terms Podcast Episode 15:**

### **REVEALED: What Used to Work in Marketing Doesn't Work Anymore** **(+ what works now)**

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:00:09] Hey, there. And welcome to episode 15 of On Your Terms. I'm your host, Sam Vander Wielen. I am so excited to bring you this episode today all about - it was like a little bit of traveling back in time when I started my business. What was going on in the marketing landscape? What was going on in online business? I feel like things are so different.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:00:27] And, I shared today in this episode of, you know, where things I think were when I started my own online business, how people were marketing, how they were promoting themselves on social media versus what's going on now. What do I actually see working on the ground? Where do I think things are headed in terms of marketing your business? And more than anything, today I think we talked about authenticity and being your true self but what that really looks like. What does it look like to share different parts of yourself? Do you need to talk about all parts of your life? Do you have to show your face all the time? I get into all of that in this episode.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:01:04] So, in case we're new friends around here, I'm Sam Vander Wielen. I'm an attorney-turned entrepreneur, and I help online coaches and course creators legally protect and grow their online businesses with my DIY Legal Templates and my Ultimate Bundle program. So, here on On Your Terms each week, I, yes, of course, share fresh legal tips with you about how to legally protect your business in kind of my cozy style, my true self. But I also have episodes that teach you how to actually grow your business on your terms because that is super important to me. I want you to live your life. I want you to grow a business that you actually want to grow, not the one you see on Instagram. So, we're really going to get into so much of that today in this episode. I can't wait. So, let's get started.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:01:53] So, it makes me feel sort of old in the online space to even talk about this, and there are people who've been doing this way longer than me. But I feel like I've been doing this now but in the online business space for like five, six years, and I've been doing it just long enough that I feel like I've seen a lot change and I find myself thinking back to the beginning when I started and just realizing how different

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it is online and how many different people there are and different strategies and different platforms and like so much stuff.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:02:25] We are in a constantly changing landscape. And whether you've been doing this for six days, six months or six years, you've probably seen a lot of changes too, right? At the very least, you probably feel like every time you go onto social media or you open up your email or whatever, you're being hit with some new tip about like this isn't cool anymore. This isn't the way to do it or this doesn't work. This is an old method.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:02:49] Like, just yesterday, it was so funny. In the same day, I saw two different posts on Instagram, one telling people that it's really important that they're maximizing all 30 hashtags. And the other one was a post from a different person saying "Max two hashtags. And now it has to go in your caption because Instagram announced that now it's not going to show people this stuff from the comment but from the caption." And it was just like, "Oh, my god. It's so funny." Like, you would need. like I don't know, some sort of status meter every day to tell you like hashtags are in, hashtags are out. Captions are in, captions are out. Reels are in. TikTok's in. Like, it's exhausting. It's exhausting, honestly.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:03:29] But it's also just the way that this landscape works. Online business is constantly changing. And, yes, of course, the downside negative side is that it feels exhausting. The flipside to that that I think has been really fun is that it's always changing, and that's made things kind of exciting in a challenging way. I can understand why it wouldn't feel so exciting if you were on the front end of it and you're trying to build an audience and everything keeps changing.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:03:58] But that's why I feel like if you haven't listened to episode 14 yet, last week I talked about, you know, how I go about picking platforms, which ones I recommend, what kind of content you should be producing, and then how you should be sharing it there. So, I would definitely give that a listen. But it's also why you really do have to keep blinders on. Oh, my goodness. You really have to stay

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focused and keep doing what you want to do. Because if you went off and chase every single marketing strategy that was like of the moment, you would be exhausted, broke, and not have really a successful business because you wouldn't build a dedicated following.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:04:36] So, I mean, just in the last six years, I've seen changes to obviously the platforms themselves. I can't believe this. But when I started my first online business, a health coaching business, Instagram Stories weren't a thing. I mean, the industry itself has obviously changed because it's exploded. Like, I feel like not only is it so much bigger, but there are all these - it's like there's like a web or a network that's for online business now. There are tools and businesses and products and programs and everything that's like to support them.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:05:07] I remember in the beginning telling a friend who was a fitness coach like, "Hey, you should think about becoming a fitness coach for online business owners because, like, it's really hard to sit at your computer all day and, like, record all this content, and how do you fit in exercise and all of the stuff." And she was like, "Really? Do you think there's an audience for that?" And now, that's like a big thing, right? There are a lot of people who their niche is are entrepreneurs. Like, that's actually a thing.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:05:32] So, the industry has changed. You start to see business coaches for business coaches. I mean, there's a business coach for literally everything. There's a coach for everything. Everything has changed. How people consume information has definitely changed.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:05:46] I feel like Instagram used to be like a diary/blog post backup, I would call it. You know, it's funny because I feel like I've personally never really gotten off the blog train. There are a handful of blogs that I really enjoy reading on a weekly basis essentially. They tend to be more like lifestyle. I love Cup of Jo and Cupcakes & Cashmere, and I read a ton of food blogs like Pinch of Yum and Half Baked Harvest and all of these different food blogs that talk about food and this kind of stuff.

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So, I have those bookmarked. I checked them probably like once a week. I try to catch up and have something like cozy, and I still look forward to that. I don't know.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:06:27] Am I alone? Tell me if you like listening to blog posts, too. I'd be very - I mean, if you like reading blog posts too, I'd be so curious, because I don't know. I'm like, I know that probably the readership has gone down, but I still really like it. It's a nice quiet way I feel like to get to know a brand or a blog. But I know that a lot of the way that people have consumed information has changed with - it used to be, yes, so blog-focused. There was a time that YouTube was super popular. You know, obviously, podcasts have had their moments. But all of these things continue to be popular. I just think that they've all had their moment in the spotlight, you know.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:07:09] But definitely how people consume information now versus how they used to has changed. So, people used to be fine reading long-form content, maybe had a bit more of attention span, patience, and understanding for the way that you would present content or something like that. Now, you definitely see the trend of everything going towards short microform content, which will get into that in a second.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:07:34] And, I know that people have gotten used to and kind of fatigued by a lot of the things they see in marketing. So, you know, even with my own business, obviously, I only work with people who have their own businesses. So they're like in the biz, right? I'm B2B. I'm selling to other business owners, other businesses. And even within our own industry, people are savvy. They know that when you call something a workshop, it's a webinar. You can call it a masterclass, Zoom call, whatever you want. It's a webinar.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:08:05] They know that that means that at the end they're going to get pitched to. They know that they're going to receive emails. Like, people know how things work. And the savviness, the savvy factor has definitely gone up over the last five, six years. Because I think a lot of times because people are so often doing things exactly the same way, it becomes so formulaic that people know what to expect.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:08:29] The reason I wanted to talk with you about this today is not just to reminisce on old times, which would be fun, but it's really because I think it's a good lesson in seeing like if you keep doing things, you could see it as being really annoying. The things keep changing and we can sit around and kvetch about the algorithm all day long. It's so annoying, this dang algorithm. But I think that this teaches us a really valuable business lesson, which is that if we keep doing things the way that we were always doing them, you could run into a wall.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:09:02] And I talked with you in episode 6 all about staying nimble and seeing the need to stay nimble, the ability to stay nimble as a positive thing and not feeling so like, "Oh, I have to keep changing." But also, like I said, if you go back and listen to episode 14, where I talk about creating an organic marketing strategy, I also think you would maybe not feel like you do have to change all the time. Because like the solid three that I talk about, the solid three, the core three ways to market your business and your content have not and will not change. They're pretty massive. And so, you want to go back and catch those three in episode 14 if you haven't. But those haven't changed and then they won't change and you don't need them to change. You could keep doing that.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:09:47] And also, it's okay if there is - another thing, the reason I want to talk with you about this today. It's okay if there's a trend and you don't participate in it. I am officially giving you your permission slip to say like, "Cool. Clubhouse is a thing. It's not for me." That's okay. "Cool. TikTok's a thing. It's not my thing." That's okay. It's not going to make or break your business because you're not on TikTok, because you're not on Clubhouse, because you don't have a YouTube channel, or podcasts, or whatever else. It's okay. You have to do something, of course.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:10:19] But if we're up to me, you would choose something that would actually keep working for you and your business when you're not doing stuff. Not a TikTok video probably but something that is googleable, something that people can find, something that you can turn to multiple forms of content that is also

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searchable. That would be awesome. But it's also just okay if some of those things don't speak to you.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:10:43] I started a YouTube channel years ago, and I like video. I'm fine on video. I would still like to, and I'm considering, like, you know, restarting or nourishing my YouTube channel. But when I started, it was around when my dad got leukemia and I just so happened to not be in a place that I felt like getting all dolled up on video. And, I'm not somebody who tends to feel like so super confident that I'm like, "I'll just get on video anyway, and I don't care what I look like." Like, I get nervous because I get feedback, as I call it, quote-unquote. You know, people make comments and people take digs, and I don't know that I'm the type of person that can always handle that, or at least I'm not in the place that I can right now.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:11:25] So, like for me, at that moment, it just didn't work. That's okay. And I had to let all of these people's commentary just fall by the wayside of like, you have to be on YouTube. You have to have a presence here. You have to be doing this. You have to be doing that. You don't, really. So, again, I'm going to reference it like 12 times but go back to episode 14 because what you really have to do is just find your strategy and stick with it and be consistent and commit to that six months on that platform to see how it goes before you make any sort of drastic moves.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:11:57] So, I think that it would be awesome for us to talk about real quick what were some of the specifics, like the specific marketing strategies that people have been doing, used to do over the last couple of years that I just don't think work anymore or aren't going to work in the future. And then, I'm going to round out today's episode by sharing with you what is working good now, what's working well now, what do I think will continue to grow, where should you spend your time, money, and attention.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:12:28] So when I started, it was popular, for example, to structure all of your posts in the same way. I had taken this business coaches course. One time she had this magical formula, and then it was like all of this that she was kind

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of the hot business coach in the moment. She's no longer in business. But she was like - all of a sudden everybody was writing their post like her. And it was so funny because once you got this formula down at the time, you would then go and read all of these people's posts on Instagram, and everybody was writing it the same way. Everybody was also writing those kinds of like diary sub-blog post type posts on Instagram that was really the main way to market your business on Instagram.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:13:07] And then, what I started seeing happening, too, is that people were also structuring all their programs the same way and, obviously, I still see this today. But it's like, I've talked about this on the podcast before, but people tend to think of whatever they see in the online business landscape is like the full definition of what you can do instead of just thinking of it as an example. So, just because somebody runs a program the same way, or people tend to structure their group programs the same way, that is not the definition of how to run a group program. It's just an example of how someone is running a group program.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:13:40] And so, it shouldn't be the box that you try to fit your program into. It should just be like the entry point. So, you can think way different. You can think outside the box. You can turn the box into a circle, whatever you need to do. But people in the past have really focused on like, "I have a 12-week group program. It does this, this, and this." It's like all the same. And, I think that is by the wayside.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:14:05] I definitely came up in the era of PDFs and freebies. Freebies were obnoxiously available in 2016, 2007. It was like everyone had a PDF, and it almost seemed like it was like a race to see who could make it the longest, whose PDF was 30 pages and, you know, calling them juicy, for example. I remember that being a really big thing. That was huge.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:14:29] I also definitely came up in this - I feel like in this group of people who just constantly were talking about how much money they made and what I really saw back then, that I'll talk about in a few minutes, is different now is that they didn't provide any sort of context. It was a lot of just like blanket statements like "I made

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a million dollars. I'm a millionaire." Even though you made a million dollars in revenue, you know this kind of stuff. So, there were a lot more just like kind of blanket statements without any accountability. I definitely didn't see any sort of social responsibility or companies talking about what they stood for, what their values were, having mission statements, having diversity and inclusion statements that you actually follow, stuff like that.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:15:12] And I definitely saw back, you know, in the day and before a bit too much of worshipping people in this space. And, of course, unfortunately, that still goes on. We still have very much a celebrity culture. But I did think that one of the things that happened in the summer of 2020. Look, I am not a fan of straight-up cancel culture. I believe in accountability and treating people like humans. I believe in canceling behavior for sure and canceling the way people act and things that they say and supporting that any further. I don't believe in canceling people. So, a lot of people did get canceled in 2020. That's not what I'm talking about.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:15:52] But what I am talking about is, like, I saw a lot of calling up and calling out of things that weren't okay and that hadn't been okay for a long time. But for whatever reason, people just never said anything. And so, I thought that one thing we started to see in summer of 2020 was this kind of rising up of people being like, "You know what? I don't worship you in that way. Like, it's okay and it's safe for me to say something." So, that definitely has shifted.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:16:19] I know that in the past, we've looked a lot to like big, big audience sizes as a size of legitimacy. That was something that I think is of the past. I'll talk a little bit about where I think that's going now. Summits and big speaking gigs were huge from 2016 through 2020. I mean, obviously, the pandemic put a big squished all like in-person events and big speaking stuff, but summits were really, really big. Again, I think that's another example of something that people got used to. They got fatigued. They knew that that meant that they were going to be put on a million people's email list, and people don't always show up for these things. Like, it was just a lot.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:16:57] The other thing that used to be so popular was the launch, launch, launch mode. I remember going to conferences and being in business group coaching programs in the very, very beginning of my business and the whole thing was dedicated to mapping out your launch and 90-day launch and how do we plan for this launch. And everything was super launch-heavy. And, that perhaps is like the thing that's shifted the most. So, if that's all the stuff that was happening or stuff that I don't think is working well anymore, what kind of stuff is working better now?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:17:37] Have you ever felt lost about where to begin with the legal side of protecting your online business? Some people say you can just wing it at the beginning and get officially set up later. Not a good idea, by the way. Whether you're afraid to even start working with clients because you don't want to do something wrong legally and then get in trouble, or your business is growing and you sort of forgot to take care of the legal pieces, I've got you.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:17:59] I don't want you to live in fear of the internet police coming after you and your business, but you do have to do certain things and get certain things in place in order to legally and safely run your business online. As much as it just feels like an unregulated Wild Wild West online, that is very much not the case.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:18:16] As an attorney-turned entrepreneur and former corporate litigator, I can assure you that there are rules. There are real steps that everybody who runs or starts an online business needs to take. And you're not behind at all. We can get you set up in following the rules right away. In fact, we can even do it today.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:18:33] I want to teach you the five very simple steps to take to legally protect and grow your online business. You don't need an MBA to be a successful entrepreneur and stay out of legal hot water, but you do need to dot your legal i's and cross your t's in a few key areas that can't be skipped. That's exactly what I'll teach you in my free one-hour legal workshop called Five Steps to Legally Protect and Grow Your Online Business. Just head to [mylegalworkshop.com](https://mylegalworkshop.com), drop in your email

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address, pick the time, and I'll send you a link to watch the workshop video whenever you have time.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:19:03] This is the best place to begin if you're just getting started legally legitimizing your business. So head on over to [mylegalworkshop.com](https://mylegalworkshop.com) and sign up to watch, Five Steps to Legally Protect and Grow Your Online Business now.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:19:19] So, the very first thing that I think is absolutely crucial to success nowadays is genuine authenticity. Authentic authenticity. Can I say that? Authentic authenticity. So, not produced authenticity, not performative authenticity. Not like, "Guys, I'm sharing. This is like a really vulnerable share for me." And, like, it's all waterworks and drama for the gram. But actual authenticity which is like being your goofy self. It's not just crying. It's not just like sharing the hard things. It's being your goofy self. It's sharing what you're actually going through. Sharing not all of it but maybe parts of it. Sharing how things are shifting for you, something that you've learned, right?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:20:02] And I tend to like to share this after I've learned them or maybe well after when I'm a little less emotional about it and more like I can just share this now as an experience, not necessarily as a journal like as I'm going through it, but being authentic as to your true experience. And when you have an online business, even if it's not named after you or whatever, this does require showing certain parts of yourself and your life that allow you to show up more fully.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:20:32] So, for example, I have chosen to talk about - and by the way, I only talk about 1% of what is actually happening, but I've chosen to share the fact that my dad has leukemia and some of the stuff that's come up as he's been sick. Or, sometimes I've shared when I've been in chemo with him and sitting with him and I'm doing work or sharing about how I've gone through bouts of serious depression over him being sick, how dark it was for me after I found out that he was sick. all of this stuff.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:21:02] So, I've chosen to share that not because I thought that that's the cool thing to do or because I wanted attention or anything like that. But

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what happened for me, and this is just the way that I am, this might not be the way that you are, but what happened for me is that I felt like I couldn't be my true self if I couldn't tell you at least part of what was going on. So, it would, to me, be the equivalent of meeting up with a friend for coffee and them asking me like, "How are things going?" I mean, just being like, "Good. Everything's great. I run a business. Everything's amazing." Like, "Nothing bad to report," you know. But, really, I have this giant thing happening in the background. I would feel so tense and awkward and stilted and, I don't know, just not myself.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:21:48] That's how I am. I wear my heart on my sleeve. I am a verbal processor. Like, I have to get things out. And so, once I understood that my dad was going to have cancer, I only thought he would be here for - he was only given 11 months to live. He's still here, two and a half years later. Once I realized he was going to be around, I was like, I have to be able to share when, you know, I'm having a hard day or he's going through another round of chemo. Or, like, last October, I found out that it had spread to his lymph nodes, in his chest and stuff, and I just didn't know what else to do. I don't know how to handle it well or I don't know if I handle it well or anything like that. But I just knew that it was the thing to allow me to be able to talk about other stuff.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:22:35] Because, like, I couldn't tell you the three website policies that you need to have on your website if I couldn't tell you, like, "Hey, by the way, my dad has cancer and it's, like, really hard for me, obviously, and I'm very sad about it." And so like, okay, now I can teach you the three things you need on your website. That's just how I am. So, whatever it allows you to open up and to share those other parts of you or to be present and be the leader, be the teacher for your audience, I would suggest considering sharing parts of it.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:23:08] Now, my friend Naomi of the Lifestyle Edit, who's a genius and just one of my best friends, she always says that not everyone is entitled to all parts of you, though. So, a lot of times people get fussy about this when I start talking about sharing about different parts of your life, sharing your face, sharing your struggles, sharing where you live, all this kind of stuff. People will be like, "Oh, I don't

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want." It's not all of it, right? Just like if you knew the full story of what was going on with my dad, if you knew the full story of what's going on with me as he's been sick, if you knew what it's really been like if you were behind closed doors, if you were a fly on the wall, you'd be shocked. Trust me. But I don't want to share all of that nor is it my story to tell.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:23:48] So, everyone's not entitled to all parts of that. Just like I don't share all the other parts in my life and I'll share certain aspects of family stuff or friend stuff, or I don't know whatever else comes up. So, you don't need to share everything. But I think whatever will allow you to show up more fully and authentically would be helpful. And that is working - I don't like to call it very well because it sounds like it's intentional but in the sense of just being your true self.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:24:15] And I think that what used to happen that doesn't so much anymore is that it used to be, it used to feel like on social media it was a bit more of a popularity contest where it was like everybody was trying to be the cool girl. Whereas, now it feels like you can be more of yourself and you can find your crew. If you're super into Harry Potter, you can share that and everybody - you're going to find a bunch of other people who are super pumped about it or people who aren't but they like other parts of you, you know, and they're not going to be fussed about it.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:24:44] There are people who are sharing really sexy, racy content. That's their thing. And they find people who love that stuff. There are people sharing about world travel and just being their selves. I don't know. I don't even know how else to say other than because it seems like such a simple concept to just be yourself.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:25:04] Something that I've found, just as a little sidebar here, is something that I found as an online entrepreneur over the last five or six years is that part of the issue that I ran into with this was that coming out of corporate and coming out of just having been in a rat race to get to be a lawyer and to graduate from law school and then take the bar and start working at a firm, was that I hadn't really spent

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the time figuring out kind of who I was and I didn't have the kind of childhood or home situation that really allowed that to flourish at all. So, this experience with having this business has really given me this beautiful opportunity to learn more about myself, to develop hobbies, to make better friends than I've had in my whole life. And so, I just wanted to mention that so that you understand that this is part of the process as well, developing in this way.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:25:52] Another thing that I think is so much different now than it used to be is focusing on the depth and quality of your connections, relationships, audience, all of that, versus audience size. So, we used to be so purely based on numbers. But even now, you know, companies are super savvy. People that you try to hire are super savvy where they'll be like, "Yeah. That's great. Do you have like 80,000 followers?" But no one's commenting on their stuff or no one seems to be sharing about their content online or no one's engaging. No one's commenting on these things.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:26:26] Like, sometimes I look at people's posts and videos and these things, and there's nothing there. So, I'm more - personally, if I was looking to hire someone, I'm not, and I don't care what they do, I'm not so interested in how many followers. That's not the end of the story anymore because we know now that there are tactics people use. There's buying followers. There's all kinds of nonsense that people do. But what they can't manufacture genuine depth, like in-depth relationships that they've established with people. And a lot of times you can see that. So personally, I would focus on the depth and quality of your connections and relationships versus any sort of vanity metrics for sure.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:27:08] So, I mentioned earlier that launches used to be huge, and pretty much everyone I know got really, really burnt out quickly on the launch strategy even if they ran a group program. They launched it a certain number of times in a year. And then, what do you know, one after another, everybody was just like, "Man, this is exhausting." So, definitely a consistent evergreen strategy has become really, really popular.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:27:32] I feel like over the years, it's only, you know, I've only gotten more and more messages from people being like, "I want a business like yours." I just want to sell something. I'm going to create something and sell it. And my main job is just to sell it, but not to, like, relaunch and reinvent the wheel and get so many more clients and, you know, all of this stuff.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:27:47] So, I think that evergreen stuff has just become more popular because what I hope is the reason is because people value the lifestyle more than all this other stuff that, you know, people used to focus on. So people, I think, are more concerned about having freedom and flexibility and actually making an impact, maybe building generational wealth. But, you know, you're probably not going to do that on a smaller scale or one-to-one scale. So, I think that that has become the more popular strategy, honestly.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:28:18] Another big shift that I've seen is that now it really matters whether your product or program actually delivers results. So, this is something I talked about a ton in episode 13, where I talked about creating a product that got people great results and wins so that they could become your little foot soldiers and talk about your product and program. And that's how you build true word of mouth but word of mouth that spreads like wildfire.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:28:43] So, I think that the quality of people's products like I think you hear about it a lot more now when somebody says, "Oh, I took that course. It didn't help." Whereas, before people just used to be like, "Well, it's so and so. She's like, super popular. She's huge. Her course must be amazing." And, I think that now you just have too many people in the space. There are too many other options. If your product is not good, it's not going to last and it's not going to be talked about in that way, in that way that you need it to in terms of spreading like wildfire.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:29:17] Something else that works really well now is having a face to the brand name. So, a lot of people who will buy my Ultimate Bundle program or buy one of my legal templates, they'll reach out to me on social media and I'll check out

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their social pages or something and sometimes I don't even know who the people are. There's no sign of a name, let alone a face, right? And I think there's this desire to or maybe intention to start a business that we think is more legitimate. It's like, "No. I'm starting a legit business. It's not like a social - it's not like a social media business. It's not a personal business. I'm not an influencer." Like, somebody's always trying to flow stuff downhill. So, I feel like there's this kind of thought that if you want to appear serious or like a real business, then you make sure that you don't ever show your face.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:30:06] But I was actually thinking about this the other day when I purchased Olive & June - like, I purchased an Olive & June nail kit. So if you don't know already, Olive & June is this really cool, natural nail company where you can get nail polishes, but you can also get these nail kits where you can do your nails at home. It actually works. It lasts a long time, yada yada.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:30:26] So, Olive & June was actually started by a woman named Sarah Gibson Tuttle, and Sarah does a really interesting job, I think, of marketing Olive & June, which is now this like, really, really huge company, but she does it as the face of the brand. And I think that's a really cool way for somebody like her, for that kind of business to connect with their audience. There are a lot of nail companies out there. There are a lot of nail polish brands out there. And why should somebody pay them perhaps more, I don't know, compared to other companies if they're more expensive or something like that? But there's a lot of competition. There's a lot of demand for people's attention.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:31:02] And the way to create and cultivate a more genuine and significant connection is through the use of, not only they do a great job also of sharing consumer-generated content so people sharing how they're using the product and showing you examples, I think that's a really great way too, but also through Sarah and through her own social media strategy. And I just kind of watch from afar and I'm always amazed at how she's like a little champion for her business.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:31:30] You can tell she's still so involved and so passionate even though this business is so huge. They're in Target and everything. They have all these big collaborations with celebrities and stuff. But you can tell that she's so passionate about the brand, and seeing her enthusiasm for it, let alone literally just watching her content, which is always educational, like showing you how to do your own manicure.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:31:53] Like, the other day, I saw her do like a French tip one or she was teaching people how to protect the tips of their nails because they break all the time. And seeing her and watching her not only as a business owner but just like a passionate consumer of her own brand made me feel really dedicated and excited to hop on board and try it.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:32:12] So, I think that for any of you who think that you can run this kind of business, if you want to run an online business, it's all going to be off of social media and social media is visual and you need to be present and visual. It doesn't mean again that you need to share every - you don't need to tell people when you and your partner got into a fight. You don't need to be crying on screen. All of that stuff is not - that's not what I'm talking about.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:32:38] But there have to be a few things. So, if you have a couple of hobbies, share one of them. If, gardening, for example, is like one of your hobbies, talk about that. Show people that you are human, show people what you look like. Let them know your name. Let them get to know you. People want to do business with other people, not robots, not little squares on a screen, you know. So, let people get to know you.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:32:59] I feel like the big elephant in the room of what's, you know, working better now, what's really popular right now is video and we could have like a whole episode dedicated to video. But overall video is hot, hot, hot, hot, and it's been hot for a long time. But I think it's only going to continue going in that direction.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:33:18] What's working right now, though, are these like micro pieces of content through video that are educational, and that could lead to the next step. So, let's say, for example, you had a podcast, maybe you would create a reel on that podcast episode, and then the call to action at the end of that reel would be for somebody to go listen to the full episode. You always have to remember that whenever we're dealing with these social platforms, it's very difficult to get people off of these platforms to go somewhere else. So, it's asking a lot of somebody on Instagram to click out of Instagram, go over to Apple Podcasts or wherever they listen to podcasts, or go over to YouTube and watch your YouTube episode.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:33:57] Like, it's very hard to get people to leave where they are and go somewhere else. There's a reason they're on Instagram. They're probably scrolling or they enjoy video content or they like micro pieces of content. That's why they're watching your stories, why they're watching reels. It's very hard. So, you're probably going to have to not only grab their attention but really give them a reason why they would want to leave that platform to go listen to something or watch something or read something that's more in-depth than wherever they are now. So, you can have fun with it.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:34:28] There are also other ways that you can use that microcontent, that micro video content to connect with people, to teach them something, to boost engagement, to let them know about your offers, copy where we sell but letting people know about your offers and what you have going on in your business. So, video content is not going anywhere. I definitely think that having fun with educational content, especially microcontent, is only going to get more and more popular.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:34:46] Okay. So, there are two more things I think are working really well right now or not working anymore. The ones working right now is being a bit more honest and transparent about whatever the promotion or sale or whatever the thing is that you've got going on in your business. So, I don't think it's working anymore and I would love to just see people stop doing it. But these fakeout sales or coupons, that's like, "This is ending now. It's never coming back." But you know

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that it is. Or, when people are like "there are only six spots left," but you know that they're hosting a webinar that's open to an unlimited number of people. I don't think that that's working anymore. So, I think just cutting it out. You know, you don't need to tell people, "There are an unlimited amount of seats." Like, I think, just cut that part out and just don't - you just don't need to talk about that. People don't need to know that.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:35:44] And there are other ways to create urgency. But also at the end of the day, whatever you're talking about, your product, your freebie, your thing has to be interesting in and of itself to attract people and to hold people's attention. I think what is not cool anymore and what's not working anymore is it's like fake scares, scarcity, like fake tactics that people are using. So, I would focus more on actually highlighting what someone's going to get out of it, what's someone's going to get out of going to listen to your podcasts, what's someone going to get out of joining your program. Not like, "There are only two spots left." I think that stuff's just kind of gone by the wayside.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:36:20] Okay. And last but not least, something that I think is working very well now, and I guess kind of goes hand-in-hand with the authenticity piece that we talked about is doing things your own way or on your terms. See how I did that? I swear I didn't put that on purpose. But, in general, I think it's popular. But it actually works to just do things your own way, whether that's designing your products to the unique spin that you might have on your craft, on the thing that you offer, to the way that you run your business, to your content, to your branding, everything.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:37:00] People want to see you living your fullest expression of yourself and your truth. I feel like that phrase gets kind of overused and misused. But people really just want to see you being yourself and that's what's going to attract the people that you truly want to work with. And when you're being your fullest self, you're going to attract people who also want to do the same, and that's going to create these beautiful client relationships.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:37:28] And I think people, at the end of the day, probably want to be like you. They want to be a little bit closer to where you're at. And that means you need to share where you're at and where you've been and how much you understand where they're at and where they've been and where they want to go. But it's not like it used to be. It used to be that people would do this by a lot of aspirational marketing strategies. Unfortunately, there still are a number of people who do this. But it used to be that sharing the picture of your Lambo or sharing the picture of the big house in Bali that you rented out with all your other entrepreneur friends or whatever it was, like this kind of fake life that they were promoting, almost like influencer style life, was the thing that they use to attract people.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:37:28] And I think maybe in summary of everything that we've talked about today is just that that doesn't work anymore because it's not telling people how your product actually delivers results. It's not authentic. It's not the truest expression of yourself. They're the fullest expression of yourself and your truth. People can see through it. People can see that it's fake. And also, it makes you seem like you're just doing things everybody else's way. Not your own way. I think people really appreciate somebody who stands up and is like, "Yeah. I know that's popular. Like, This is the way I'm going to do it." Or, "This is me. Like, that just like doesn't work for me."

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:38:52] So, you know, I always joke that this would be like me showing up on social media with a full face of makeup and coiffed hair and it would just be weird, and it would make me feel weird and probably look weird to other people. And I'm not going to show up the same way. I wouldn't deliver the content the same way and it wouldn't land the same way. People have written to me and said, "I appreciate you've built this business like wearing a hoodie half the time and have your hair up and just, like, don't care so much about being, like, perfectly coiffed all the time."

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:39:22] So, I think in general, people just want to see us being ourselves because other people want to be themselves. And so, you doing that, you're giving them permission to do it for themselves, which is really like a beautiful gift that you can give other people.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:39:35] So, I hope that this episode was helpful in talking a little bit about where I think marketing is and where it's headed and all that good stuff. I'm so curious to hear your thoughts on today's episode. I'd love for you to send me a DM on Instagram, @samvanderwielen, to let me know what you think. And I really appreciate you listening to this episode and every episode of On Your Terms next week. I'm so excited. I've got a guest interview coming up for you next week with someone who I just love, and I think she's so cool and she is somebody who's going to teach us a lot about self-talk and confidence and so many other things. I just can't wait to share next week's episode with you. So, make sure you stay tuned for next week's episode with that special guest interview. I can't wait to tell you who it is.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:40:26] 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 more at [samvanderwielen.com/podcast](https://samvanderwielen.com/podcast). You can learn more about legally protecting your business and take my free legal workshop, Five Steps to Legally Protect and Grow Your Online Business, at [samvanderwielen.com](https://samvanderwielen.com). And to stay connected and follow along, follow me on Instagram, @samvanderwielen, and send me a DM to say hi.

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