

On Your Terms Podcast Episode 24:
Why You Should Treat Your Clients the Way Olive Garden Does

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:10] Hey there, and welcome to a brand new episode of 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 DIY Legal Templates and my Ultimate Bundle training.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:25] So in this episode, I'm going to talk to all about the Olive Garden approach to taking care of your customers, treating them like they're family, and the two major ways that you're going to want to do because this is going to seriously benefit your business and your bottom line.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:40] So, I'm getting into it today and teaching you all my best tips and tricks for how I really, truly take care of all of my customers to create little word of mouth, foot soldiers for my business and to increase their lifetime customer value, all without struggling that I am trying to make everybody happy or trying to get it perfect or never have somebody disappointed because that is impossible to do. But it is possible for sure to make sure that we treat our customers really, really well so that we get the maximum juice for our squeeze out of what we're doing in our business. So, you know, I'm all about that. So, I'm so excited to get into it in this week's episode.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:01:20] Before we get into this week's episode, I'm trying a new little segment here on On Your Terms. I'm creatively calling coffee talk because if you know anything about me, you know I'm obsessed with coffee. And I was just thinking that before we dive into each week's episode, it would be kind of fun to chat with you like I would if we were grabbing coffee.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:01:37] So if we were grabbing coffee today, I would tell you that we just got done with the holiday break and I took some time off, which was really nice. But, really, for me, it just means taking time off of social media because, you know, my business is very evergreen, very autopilot-y. But, the marketing side of it is not. So, I'm very present and recording a ton of content and being on social media a lot and I write all the copy for my business and all that kind of stuff.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:02:03] So, really, when I say I take time off, it's like I've pre-done everything and then I'm like just not active day-to-day on social media, on Slack, checking email, oh, my goodness, so that kind of stuff. Like, I just really needed a break.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:02:18] It's honestly been so long since I've taken a vacation, mostly because of the pandemic, obviously. And I definitely have been feeling lately like I just need to get back to traveling and really missing traveling and feeling like I need time off and all that kind of stuff. So, I'm hoping to do some of that in 2022. I don't know about you, but I'm feeling the itch to go back to conferences and things too.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:02:41] Before the pandemic, I was doing a lot. I was starting to speak a lot at conferences. But then before that, I was just going all the time and, like, that's how I met so many people and I felt like, you know, it can be really lonely, just running your own online business and you're just sitting on your computer. And I have 8 million meetings now. Mostly on Mondays and Tuesdays are like meeting days. But it's not the same, right? Like, I want to go and travel and I want to go get dinner with people and sit at conferences and hang out. And I don't know. Just like be - I love being in the energy of other people who are in this space, who are really creative, who are really ambitious. So, I know that I feed a lot off of that too.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:03:19] If you're going to any conferences or something this year or if you're eyeing something up, let me know. I'm planning to go to social media marketing world in March. I think it is in San Diego. But if you're going to something, you let me know. If you're going to that conference, you let me know. I would love to see you and say hi.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:03:34] But, yeah, that's - I'm basically just like getting back into the swing of things now after taking time off. I tend to film the podcast episodes about a month in advance because one thing that I've learned since kind of getting to this point in business is that I'm like the domino that makes all the other dominoes fall. And so, or maybe like the major baton, you know, that gets handed off. So, I have to record the podcast episode so that it gets sent over to my podcast people. And then, the

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podcast people can edit it and they can do all the audio stuff and then create the art and then the show notes, and then people can start creating the graphics and posting and copy, blah, blah, blah. It's just like so much. It's wild how many steps take place afterwards.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:04:15] So, I'm kind of getting into the rhythm of recording these, you know, in bigger batches and getting like further and further ahead. So, I am definitely trying. If you're not somebody who ever batches, I totally understand because I never batched either, but now I am. And I can tell you - I can tell you that the hype is real.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:04:33] Yeah. So, that's what I'm doing. That's what I'm up to. I'm probably just getting back into the swing of things when you're listening to this. I'm so glad that we stayed home for the holidays this year and just hung around home and saw friends and family. And, I just love taking breaks in business because I think that taking time off in business actually helps your business. And also, you just need to because you're human and you need to stay sane.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:04:55] So, with that, let's learn about how to take better care of our clients to increase their lifetime customer value to create a spiderweb network of people who love the work that you do so that they tell other people about it.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:05:10] Before we get into this week's episode, I'm doing something new here on On Your Terms where each week I'll be featuring one guest listener who's left a review for us on Apple, iTunes, podcasts, whatever, about On Your Terms. So, if you listen to On Your Terms on Apple, please leave us a review. Let me know what your name is. Send me a screenshot on Instagram of your review so that I can give you a shout-out.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:05:33] Because last week, Alex wrote on Apple, "I've been following Sam for a while since April of 2020, actually. I was excited when Sam started this podcast. She has such great information on her Instagram, and I'm so happy she started this podcast to have all this great info in one place. It's so hard to choose one great episode because all of her episodes are amazing."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:05:52] Well, thank you, Alex. I really appreciate you leaving that review for On Your Terms. And, I hope to see your review on On Your Terms on Apple soon, so I can give you a shout-out here on the podcast and on social media. With that, let's get into this week's episode.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:06:10] So, sometimes in our industry, people are so focused on getting more clients and finding new clients, and even just like in building their audience, making their audience bigger, that they don't always think about nourishing the people that they've already got. And so, today we are going to talk about how do you build an Olive Garden-like client base? How do you treat people like they're family once they're in your community? It's kind of like the mafia. The way that I look at it. It's like once you're in, you're in, and like every - you'll do anything to protect them and welcome them, but, you know, without all the murder and the bad stuff.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:06:42] So, we're going to talk all about how to treat people today in your community and your client and customer community like they're family for the purposes of, obviously, providing incredible customer service and just taking really good care of the people who have extended their wallets, time, and money to you, but also because this is a great way to build your business.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:07:05] On the other hand, we're also going to talk a lot today about how to make sure that you don't go too far with this whole thing because I think I used to do this. I was definitely guilty of this, where you start feeling like you have to give and give and give to the customers that you have already because maybe you're, you know, wrestling a little bit with feeling guilty about how much you've charged them

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or wanting to prove your worth, you know, making sure that they know how valuable you are, how helpful you are.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:07:31] Maybe it's just me, but that's something that I used to struggle with. And so, this idea of treating our customers like family, like the Olive Garden approach that I like to take, is that, you know, is a careful balance between making sure that we're treating them really well and providing great customer service and making people really happy with our products while not going so far that we're, you know, diving into like people pleaser self-worth land, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:07:58] So, we're going to talk all about this today. I'm really excited because, you know, really, if we take care of our customers like they're family and we treat them like this mafia-like situation. Maybe this is a bad analogy, I don't know. But if we do, then, you know, we create a group of people who are not only really happy and all that good stuff in there and they're getting a lot out of your product, but we're also creating people who want to buy from you again. So, we want to constantly think about customer lifetime value. It's really important. But we also create a community of people who are ready to tell others about you.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:08:35] So, I really see this as like a two-pronged approach where we're creating the spiderweb-like effect, where for not going out and searching for all these new customers, which cost your business a lot more money and time and energy and attention. We focus a lot of our energy on the people that we already have. And in doing so, we naturally bring in those new people for much lower cost than if we went out and tried to find them on our own.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:09:01] So, I felt like I really went through this when I first created the Ultimate Bundle. That's my signature program. You get 10 legal templates and 35 on-demand video trainings, and then people get access to a private Facebook community where they get to ask me questions and they're always getting bonuses and I'm always adding things.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:09:18] And so, when I first created the bundle, I felt like, you know, this was the premium product that I offered, and it was going to be the end of the road in terms of my product suite. And so, I felt like I just had to keep adding and adding and adding and adding. And when I created the Ultimate Bundle, honestly, I didn't think - I mean, I've been very honest about this and I've shared about this openly before. Like, I didn't think anyone would buy it, not because I didn't think the product was good or anything like that. I just didn't have any faith really in myself. I didn't have a lot of faith in what I was doing. I just didn't know. I just didn't know. I'm not the poster child for, like, believing in yourself. So, maybe a bit more now.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:10:01] But back then I really just didn't know. And so, I really struggled with feeling like, if somebody did buy it, I needed to make them feel like they would never regret it for a moment in their life. And, you know, five years later, I'm here. I'm telling you, like, you can't control what people think when they buy your product. Like, if you want to make sure that nobody ever has a bad experience or nobody ever has a bad thought or is disappointed in any way, you're pretty much setting yourself up for failure because you could do everything in your power and somebody could still be disappointed.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:10:33] So, that's really not what we're talking about today. We're not talking about making sure that everything's perfect or making sure everybody is super happy because we can't control that. But what we can control is making it fun and like sprinkling in surprises and little things here and there to make people feel like they're really a part of something. Like, they didn't just come in and buy a product and leave.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:10:55] And I think this is especially important when it comes to online business because we don't have a storefront, right? It's harder for us to create a vibe, for lack of a better term. Like, you know, you get a feeling like when you go to Starbucks and stuff, there's consistency and branding and, like, you know, some of them tried to make it look kind of cozy, like, you know, cool coffee shop vibes. Like, you can relax there and work there, and it seems nice and upscale, you know.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:11:20] And Target makes it like fun, and Costco. I watched this whole segment on YouTube one time about how actually - what is it? CMBS - CNBC has a really interesting YouTube channel where they do these little mini dives on different businesses and kind of like talking about some of their strategies and approaches to their business.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:11:40] And so, CNBC had this one segment that was about Costco, which I love. I don't know about you, but I love Costco. And so, shout-out to Costco. And, I remember watching the segment and learning about how Costco does this thing, where they essentially create a scavenger hunt-like effect throughout the store. So they, you know, they come out with these new products and they've trained us as the customer, as the member I think they call us, to know that, you know - let's say Costco gets a new product. It is not necessarily true that that new product is like in your face on display. It can technically just be like mid-aisle, down aisle, 27 in the middle of olive oil and peanuts. That's what they do, right? And it creates this like sense of wonder, I would say, where, you know, if you're anything like me, I get really excited of what am I going to find? Like, this is so exciting, you know.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:12:35] So, there are little ways that we can create, I don't know, a sense of belonging to something that's larger than just the product or the membership or the community. It really makes us feel like we are part of that community. We're something, right. We're bigger than that.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:12:49] So, I find that - I find this whole thing fascinating and this is something that I have worked really hard on in my own business, and it was something that came up in the masterclass series that I hosted back in November called from Startup to Sold Out. And, I talked about this Olive Garden effect and everybody was like, "What's the Olive Garden? What are you talking about?" And, I started talking about it and they were like, "I've never heard about, you know, heard someone talk about it this way."

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:13:13] So, that's why I wanted to record this podcast episode for you today because I really just want to dive in to at least some of the, you know, trials and tribulations that I've gone through in trying to take really good care of people while also balancing, you know, the fact that I can't make everybody happy and while also being a businesswoman and saying, you know, I do have to think about lifetime customer value. You know, I have to think about how do you get more sales from the same people who are already ready to buy and already like what you have to offer not because I'm like robbing them because I'm giving them something that's helpful to them.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:13:48] So, I'm hoping that you're going to take something away from today and that maybe I shift your mindset on something or just spark an idea of some way that you can do this in your own business. And if you do come up with that, I hope you'll send me a DM on Instagram, @samvanderwielen.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:14:02] But, yeah, I've had to - you know, over the years, I've had to find a balance. I've, you know, of course, I've always included updates for free, and that's something that I will continue to do because of what the nature of what I do with writing, you know, legal templates and recording these legal video trainings, like stuff changes or new things come up. And so, I record new stuff. I update my legal templates as much as needed and everybody gets those updates for free. That's something that's really important to me.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:14:28] You know, it's funny because people contact me and say, like, "Oh, I'm just like so grateful that these are free." Or, like, "I can't believe these are free, you know, with these updates." And I'm like, "Of course. Like, is someone charging for this?" I don't know. But that's just me, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:14:41] And, I also do things. Like, I add in surprise bonuses, and I like layering in surprise live elements. I like grandfathering my Ultimate Bundle members into stuff. So, like, if I come out with something new or I'm going to add a new bonus, I like gifting it to them for free. I like letting them know about stuff first. I like giving them exclusive content.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:15:02] So, there are little things that you can do and I'm sure as I'm saying this, you might be thinking of your own stuff that you could do for your clients, and I'll give some more examples later.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:15:11] But some things that you could do for your clients to really make them feel more like, "Wow. Like, once I bought from her, like, I'm in. I'm in." And so, I think the thing that I hear the most from people is like, I kind of assumed - like, people will email me this all the time. They'll say, like, I kind of assumed that once I bought something for you, like that was it. Like, you got what you wanted from me. And, little did I know that I was going to get so much more. Like, I thought I was just buying this, or I thought I was just joining the Ultimate Bundle. And for some reason, you've just like kept giving to me.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:15:42] And so, they feel really well taken care of, I would say for the most part. If you're an Ultimate Bundle member and you feel that way, let me know. If you don't, well, I don't know what to say. So, I definitely try really hard to, you know, just to make them feel like the relationship, the conversation is not over once their credit card is processed. I think that's like the really important part.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:16:09] 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.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:16:20] 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. 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.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:16:42] As much as it just feels like an unregulated Wild Wild West online, that is very much not the case. 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.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:16:58] 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. 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.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:17:26] Just head to mylegalworkshop.com, drop in your email address, pick the time, and I'll send you a link to watch the workshop video whenever you have time. This is the best place to begin if you're just getting started legally legitimizing your business. So, head on over to mylegalworkshop.com and sign up to watch Five Steps To Legally Protect And Grow Your Online Business now.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:17:49] So, how do we then make people feel like the relationship's not over once their credit card is processed and why is that even important? Where do you see benefits in your business?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:17:58] Well, I think the first thing to do is that, you know, we want to build in some customer service into our offer. Some level of support. And, this is going to change for you, depending on what you do. If you sell products, you know, this might mean having a Facebook community where people can ask questions or a dedicated email support line. And, it doesn't always mean that you have to, you know, offer this kind of support.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:18:21] I think, you know, if you do anything, like me, or you have like an area of expertise, then the way that I think about it is that you have to

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answer the questions that are more of the substantive kind of go to the substance of what you teach about. So, you might be answering the questions about legal, financial, nutritional, wellness, fitness stuff.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:18:40] But then you can also, as your business grows, have somebody who's available to people and maybe is a bit quicker because as your business is going to be growing, it's going to be hard for you to be really fast with getting back about customer support. So, you could have somebody who's there to help them log in and get access and change their payment information and figure out how to download something, and, you know, yada, yada. So, I think just having somebody like that who's available, it makes people feel so well taken care of.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:19:10] So, I set out, from the start, to say customer service from my perspective - I never imagined I would even ever have to hire anybody in my business. But in the beginning, when it was just me, I was like, customer service is a huge priority. So, people - when I check my inbox, the first people that I'm looking for in my inbox are customers.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:19:31] And, I heard Sunny Lenarduzzi say this one time. She's a YouTube entrepreneur. But she was saying one time that in the morning, I don't know if she still does this, but she was saying that in the morning the first thing that she does when she wakes up is tackle anything that has to do with current customers. So, she's in her Facebook group answering questions or answering emails, DMs, these kinds of things.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:19:49] And that's really the way that I've approached it as well. It's like this is my priority every day, is making sure that I'm getting back to the people who have already shown up and need what I have to offer.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:20:00] As my business grew, it was a lot for me to handle those customer service-type support situations, plus they're like, "Hey, I can't log in," or "I got kicked out," or "my credit card got stolen." That was too difficult. So, I couldn't

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keep up with the volume. And so, now I have somebody who answers those kinds of questions, but I'm still answering all of the legal stuff on my own. That is just a core business value of mine.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:20:23] And so, I really do think it's as simple as you deciding. Like, this is something that means a lot to me and just because I have an online business doesn't mean I can't provide concierge-type service. And what does that look like for my kind of business? Right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:20:36] So, you might think about what does that mean. You know, does it mean a certain response time - by the way, legally speaking, you just want to be clear on this, like in your contract or your terms, you want to say this is how you get support, right? Like, by Slack, by email, by phone, whatever, Monday through Friday, between the hours of - with an average response time of or, you know, we will do our best to get back to you within 48 business hours or something like that. But it's really good to spell this out because then legally speaking you don't want to disappoint on that end.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:21:07] So, I think it's about getting clear on what kind of support you could offer. And as your business grows, just thinking like how else you could support people, especially because it's a good - I mean, it's just a good idea for you, as the CEO and as the founder of your business, that you're not, you know, doing all of those like admin tasks plus all the other stuff. So, just think about that and what that looks like in your business, and then make sure it's reflected in your policies.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:21:33] You can also, you know if you're a coach or something, you can also provide some sort of scalable support where you have co-coaches in your program, or like my friend, Christina Gabalto, she has an influence or bootcamp and a blogger bootcamp and then she has a mastermind. And in her mastermind, she has co-coaches that are specialized, like a mindset coach and people who do different things than her or maybe really focus on an area of business. And so, that's another way that you can offer support.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:22:02] Another tip I wanted to give you on how you can offer support sometimes to your clients, because I see this a lot with business coaches who try to offer legal support themselves and financial support and tax support where they're like, "Here are my contracts and here's my tax stuff," and blah, blah, blah. I think sometimes the best way that you can actually support somebody is by bringing in other experts and offering your customers that expert's knowledge.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:22:27] So, like a year ago when I brought in Lattice Hudson to the Ultimate Bundle to teach everybody in the bundle how to write a diversity and inclusion statement, that was because that's not in my expertise. It's something I was really interested in for myself. It was something that I told them and they were really interested in for themselves. And so, I brought in the expert and I paid for it and I paid the license to be able to continue to use her training. And that was really important to me.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:22:50] But that's also customer service, right? That's also a way of nourishing them. And it's going to be something that nourishes my customers for a long time because when people log in to the bundle and they didn't know that training was there, now it's there. Now, this is like another little, I think, element of that wonder and that surprise that sprinkled that we were talking about from Costco. It was like, once you come in, you're like, "Oh, this is like even better than I thought," which is the thing that I hear the most about the bundle. "It's like this, actually - I was like buying it for X, but I didn't realize it had like X, Y, and Z until I got in there."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:23:23] So, that's really cool. You want that more than you want the emails being like I was kind of hoping that this was going to be this, you know. We don't want that. We want people who are telling us, like, this is way better. So, think about how you can do that.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:23:36] It really, though, as I mentioned earlier, it really does go beyond just answering people's questions, like the typical standard level of support

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of, you know, I'll Slack you back in 48 hours. You can text me. You can email me, like that. That is a form of support.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:23:52] But like I mentioned earlier, I'm really talking about doing that and making people really and truly feeling like they are part of a community, and not in a cheesy way and not in like a sorority way, or something like this. But what are the ways that you can truly create a community? And, I don't just mean Facebook community either. That is one way.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:24:13] But even if you create a Facebook community, for example, for your business or for one of your programs or for like all your clients, that still doesn't mean that you have a community. Like, sometimes what I think happens is that people think like, "Oh. Well, I created a Facebook community," but, you know, I hear people say this all the time, "But, like, no one's posting in it." I have my clients in there, but they're not very active and it's like, "You are the leader." What are you doing in there to facilitate conversation, to create an inviting environment? Are you telling people at any point in your onboarding sequence when they become a customer - which, by the way, do you have an onboarding sequence? I hope so. That's just a series of emails that people would receive once they purchase from you.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:24:52] You could set the stage for this. Like, let them know. You know, this is what my community. Here's the community. Have you joined yet? You know, pressure them a little bit more, and then saying, like, "Here are some examples of some things that have gone on in my community." Like, recently, you know, Naomi posted about this and sent me posted about that, and Page posted about this and this is a place where I want you to go to share wins and ask questions.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:25:13] Let them know that, if it's true, they don't just have to ask you questions, you know, in this community. Are they allowed to ask each other? Can they post there when they're having a bad day? Can they post there and ask for support, for resources from other people other than just yourself, right? That's truly how

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you can create a community, right, where all of the people in your community start to actually interact with one another.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:25:38] It kind of reminds me of when Ryan and I got married. It was really cool. We rented out this pizza-wine bar, which was like a - it was like a nice pizza-wine bar, but it was a pizza-wine bar. And, we rented this whole part of, the basically the entire restaurant out, and had this beautiful open, like the door slid open and had this like all glass and you could go out into this stone patio and grass area and stuff. It was great. But it was really cool. Like, I remember kind of standing back on that day and - May 16 - and looking out at everybody from all these areas of our lives, his family from Wisconsin, my family from primarily Philadelphia but all over the country. You know, having friends there from the law, friends there from volleyball, his friends from childhood. All these friends from different, and family from all these different areas of our lives sitting and chatting at the same table.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:26:32] I remember looking over and seeing my uncle Joe, who's, like, super cool, and looking over and seeing him chat with a guy that I went to law school with who was at our wedding and me being like, I always thought that they would be friends, you know. But it was like that cool moment where you see all your worlds colliding, and I loved that.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:26:50] And I feel like, sometimes, when I log into my Facebook community for the Ultimate Bundle, that's kind of how I feel because somebody will post something and say, like, "I'm struggling with this. I'm having a bad day. I'm having trouble growing on Instagram. I'm, like, so frustrated with the tech side of stuff. I'm trying to set things up." And it's like all these people pile in and like, "I got you. Don't worry about it." Like, "Oh, yeah. That happened to me too. Here are some resources. Here's this person." Or, "What's your Instagram handle? Let me connect with you over there. I love what you're doing. I want to learn more."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:27:19] It's so cool for me to see that, and I have to be honest. I have my life proud mama moments sometimes where I sit back and I'm like, "That's it."

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That's why I did this because I wanted it. This is not supposed to be about me. I'm here to answer questions. I'm here every single day to answer whatever questions that they have Monday through Friday."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:27:36] But I also wanted it to be a community. I wanted this to be a place where people could come and get all kinds of questions answered because the point was like the vibe of what I'm trying to do here is make people feel less intimidated, make them feel less anxious, make them feel more confident and sure of what they're doing, and like they can put themselves out there. And then, that's exactly what I see people sharing about. So, that makes me really happy.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:27:58] So, you want to think about like, what is this community really for? What kind of vibes do I want to put out there? And what can I do to facilitate that? Not just like hoping that other people are going to do that for you or, like, hoping that you call in the right clients. If you call in the right clients, that's great. But people are really busy and they might still not be doing these kinds of things, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:28:18] So, whether this is in a Facebook community or maybe, like, on a call or some other sort of membership or something like that, I want you to get creative. I want you to think of something about how you can create the kind of connection that you want to create. And then, I want you to DM me and tell me whatever it is that you thought of, maybe after you listen to this episode. That would be really cool. But just let me know whatever you come up with.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:28:39] Okay. Another way that you can create a sense of community amongst your already clients is by giving them access to exclusive content. So, I do this through a monthly newsletter and then also through adding in, you know, little sprinkles of different content, bonuses, trainings, things like that. It's definitely live elements here and there as needed. And I find that really, really effective. And, you know, I really like it too. Because I kind of consider this, you know, several thousands of people now, but I kind of consider that group of people like my nearest and dearest in the business. And so, I will sometimes share more like behind-the-scenes stuff with

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them. I'll share more personal stuff with them. More news, you know exclusive content, exclusive discounts, or something. I've had experts come in and give trainings for them, you know all that kind of stuff. I let them know what I'm using in my own business and what's been helpful to me.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:29:29] So, I think you can do that in different ways. You know, if you were like a health and wellness pro, I could see a monthly newsletter being really awesome, letting people know, you know, what products you've been loving, giving them an exclusive recipe or something. Like, there are just all different kinds of things that you could do with that, I think for sure.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:29:47] So, another thing that you can do is to get them to interact with one another, even within your group or your membership itself, right? So, creating content and kind of going back to this idea of creating community, but even creating content that gets them to interact with one another, like getting them to follow each other on social media, or if everybody owns their own small businesses, you know, getting them to shop from one another for the holidays, or on-calls or something, like getting them to do breakouts.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:30:13] Like, one of my customers is actually using breakout rooms on virtual calls to get clients to kind of volley back and forth with one another and then they come back to the group, kind of like in high school when you used to do group projects or like work with a partner and then come back to the class and report what you learned, something like that. So, I think you can really give them, you know, this feel.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:30:34] So, why does all of this stuff matter? Why do you have to make people feel like they're part of an Olive Garden family? Or, you know, you might be wondering, you can tell me if you are, but you might be like, "Why am I wasting my time on people who, like, already bought from me? Should I like be on to the next one kind of thing?" And first and foremost, there are a lot of statistics, which I won't bore you with here, but I actually was just looking them up and researching them for the book that

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I'm working on writing that, you know, the cost, the acquisition costs of a new client is much higher than the acquisition costs or re-acquisition costs of a current client.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:31:12] So, whether you're doing this because you have the kind of business where you can get repeat business from a customer, you know like somebody buys a three-month package from you and they can resign or you have like an X level program or other programs, or you're just trying to cultivate an environment where your customers are really happy and they experience really great results because of what you do. And people who experience great results and are happy naturally tell other people that they're happy and that they experience great results, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:31:42] Think about if you've ever gone to a massage therapist that you love, or like, I have a vacuum that I love that I'd tell everybody about, or I just got this new coffee grinder from Fellow that I'm obsessed with and I've been sending all my friends who love coffee pictures of this grinder, being like, "This is the coolest thing ever." So, when you really like something, you tell other people about it.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:32:02] So, I think it is worth cultivating this community not only because - I think like the prerequisite, by the way, is like because you should always do a good job and offer good things. And I think that customer service is very undervalued and ignored in our industry, especially in an industry that focuses a lot on the goals and benefits of the entrepreneur. Like, "How much money am I going to make? How much revenue am I going to generate?"

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:32:28] We sometimes forget about the people that we're generating the revenue from, and customer service is an old-school classic value that will never go out of style. And if somebody is not talking about it who you're paying to teach you about business, you need to do this work on your own or consider working with somebody else and telling you this is a magical, magical ingredient in your business, and it looks different to everyone. And, you know, I don't care whether you have a coaching business, a service-based business, a digital products business, like

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mine, it doesn't matter. You can integrate these tips and make them your own and you will see a difference, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:33:05] So, the prereq is that we just want to do this. We want to do a good job because we should, and we should take pride in what we do. We should care about the fact that people are getting a derived benefit from the thing that we're selling and not - we're not selling snake oil. And so, it's really - it should be, I hope, very important to you that you do. But, again, little asterisk here, we can't make everybody happy, so I'm not expecting for you to make everyone happy. The point is just to provide good customer service. Even Nordstrom who lets people return things whenever and is the most incredible with customer service, I'm sure they get cursed out every day, all day by people, even though they have great customer service.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:33:44] But the other reason - the other two main reasons, is to make the customer lifetime value increase in the person who's already purchased from you. Meaning that, if they paid you \$500 now over the lifetime, you might be able to generate \$2000 in revenue from them instead of going after a bunch of people for an additional \$100 or \$200 in sales. We can generate more money from the same person, and not in a weird way. These people are getting something. They have autonomy. They can choose to work with you and not choose to work with you. Like, let them decide, right? But if people like you and they like what you're offering and they're really getting a benefit, then that's awesome, and you should continue to get paid for that.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:34:22] The other thing is that you're going to make them little foot soldiers. You're going to make them go out there and tell other people about you and they're going to be happy. And then, those people are going to come in and they're going to be happy. And, I see this in my own business every single day. So, I see all of these people buying who some so-and-so told them about it. And then, I look at that and I'm like, "Oh, wait," but so-and-so found me from so-and-so, and it just keeps going and going and going.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:34:47] So at this point, the spider web is very long and complex, and the more that I do that, the more that sales are generated organically, automatically without me putting out additional effort, necessarily, so without me having to generate new content, without me having to be on social media 24/7, all of those things.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:35:06] And so if you're somebody like me who doesn't want to be on social media 24/7, doesn't want to be doing all that stuff, wants to get the maximum juice for the squeeze, then I think that the Olive Garden approach to business, treating people like their family, getting increased lifetime customer value and creating little foot soldiers who are going to go and tell other people about you, is a huge key to your success.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:35:30] So, I hope that after listening to this episode you came up with at least a couple of ideas. I hope you'll DM on Instagram and tell me what you thought about this episode. Tell me what you're thinking. What ideas do you have about how to create a community? What's coming up for you? I'm so curious.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:35:43] And with that, thank you for listening to another episode of On Your Terms.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:35:51] 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. 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. And to stay connected and follow along, Follow me on Instagram, @samvanderwielen, and send me a DM to say hi.