

## **On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:**

### **If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)**

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:00:00] Holy cannoli, I've got big news to share with you today. Listen closely if you're way past due for legally legitimizing your online business, because this is for you. I'm hosting my very first live workshop of the year on Tuesday, February 15th, and Wednesday, February 16th at 1:00 PM Eastern, 10:00 AM Pacific, to teach you how to get legally legit and make this your best business year yet. And I want you to sign up and join me there.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:00:25] The workshop is called Five Steps to Legally Protect and Grow Your Online Business, and I'll also answer your questions during the live legal Q&A at the end of the workshop. During the one hour workshop, you'll learn how to form your business properly to be personally protected, what your website needs to be legally legit, how to properly work with people online, how to keep copycats away from your content, and the number one mindset shift that you've got to make to legitimize and grow your business this year.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:00:50] I'll teach you all that, plus you'll get access to my legal knowledge during the Q&A at the end of my free one hour live legal workshop. Just head to [samvanderwielen.com/oyt-live-workshop](https://samvanderwielen.com/oyt-live-workshop), drop your email address and name, and I'll send you the link to join us live on February 15th or 16th at 1:00 PM Eastern, 10:00 AM Pacific for the live workshop and legal Q&A with me. If you can't make it live, sign up anyway, because I'll make sure you get the replay.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:01:17] I'll even be giving away some exciting prizes during the workshop, things like mics, cameras, Starbucks gift cards, and so much more for those who show up live, so make sure that you mark it on your calendar and clear your appointments after you sign up just so you can join us live. This is the best live event for you if you're ready to legally legitimize your business, so head to [samvanderwielen.com/oyt-live-workshop](https://samvanderwielen.com/oyt-live-workshop) and sign up to attend the live Five Steps to Legally Protect and Grow Your Online Business workshop and Q&A on February 15th or 16th now.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:01:54] So, over five years ago, when I set out to start my online legal business, I had no idea that it would end up being what it is today. And I am so glad that it is, but I had no clue what I was doing. And I am always like thinking back about when I started, and things that I did, and things I would never do again, but also,

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

what I learned from that and what I would pass on to other people. And that sparked an idea to create today's episode, teaching you all about what I would do differently if I started my business today.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:02:22] And I'm hoping to pass on a lot of the nuggets and the experiences that I've gone through over the last five or six years in helping you to maybe be a little bit kinder to yourself to do things more on your terms, and to pay attention and put more of your time and energy into the things in your business that are going to pay dividends over time. And I'm definitely going to share with you those things that I don't think are helping you at all, so I can't wait to get into this week's episode. I thought that this was a really fun one to record, and I hope that you'll like it too.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:02:53] But before we get into today's episode, I want to share the review of the week with you. So, Britt Stocks left a review of On Your Terms on Apple podcast, saying, "Not sure how I started following Sam, but I'm so glad that I did. I love how her podcasts are bite-size, easily digestible lessons, not only helping with the legal aspects of business, but also the day-to-day planning, as well as mindset advice. I just set my intentions for 2022 today and included her freebie business planning for 2022 worksheet, and I now feel so clear on my intentions and actionable items to make this the best year yet for my business. Thanks, Sam."

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:03:28] Well, thank you, Britt. Thanks so much for leaving a review of On Your Terms. And if you leave a review in Apple Podcasts of my show, On Your Terms, you'll be entered to win a 25-dollar Starbucks gift card. All you have to do is leave a review on Apple, take a screenshot of it, DM me that screenshot on Instagram, so I know who you are or who left the review, and we'll pick a new winner every single month. So, be sure to submit your review on Apple Podcasts now. You might even get a future shoutout on an episode. With that, let's get into this week's episode.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:02:53] I always feel sort of funny filming any content related to like what mistakes I made, what I would do differently, like all that kind of stuff, because I do so wholeheartedly believe that all of these things are so necessary that we go through, whether it's in our business, in our life, whatever. I had some of the darkest

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

days that I can remember as an attorney. Like when I was an attorney, I was so miserable.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:04:28] I felt so trapped and like I was never going to get out. And I had no Plan B, because like being a lawyer was Plan A, and there was only Plan A, and it started, and it ended there. And I never thought about what I would do next. And so, I found myself in this situation where I was super miserable. I realized I had made a huge mistake in the sense that it wasn't the right fit for me, right?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:04:52] Like being a lawyer, going through that education, going to law school, it's turned out to be a huge blessing and like it was an incredible education. I was so fortunate to get to go and I learned so much. And obviously, I'm using those skills and that knowledge now. But like in general, being a lawyer, corporate lawyer no less, was like not the right fit for me. And I've talked about this many times, I was like very much in victim mode and all that kind of stuff.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:05:19] And my mom, who is like the kind of mom that's not going to like sit there and rub your back as you cry, I think a lot of us have those kinds of moms, but hopefully, I'm not alone. But I remember, at the time, I would come home, or I would meet her for dinner, or something, and I would be like crying, and I'd be so upset about, "I hate being a lawyer. I hate being a lawyer. I hate the law firm. I hate everything that I do. I hate all of this. I hate that. I hate suits."

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:05:42] I ended up throwing the suits. And she would look at me, and she would just say, "Good, this is good for you. You need this. This is going to be the fuel that you need." And I was like, "What? Like what a-", I was like, "I just want you to tell me how awful this is". Usually, when you're in like a really bad place, you just want somebody to be like, "That sucks". And at the time, I was really mad. I remember I was really upset that like she didn't get it, and she didn't see how victimy I was, and how like much of a victim I was in this situation, and all that, but then as time went on, and especially once I left, I was like, "I totally see what she means".

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:06:17] Like this was all a part of the experience that I needed. I needed to go through that and I needed to be miserable in order to be hungry enough to do it differently, right? And it really built me up. And I don't think we have to go

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

through like horrible experiences or abusive experiences in order to like make positive change, but I didn't intend to go, like I didn't know that it was going to be like that, it just ended up being like that, and it was really bad, and it is what it is. And that experience, I think, really helped shape who I am as a person, who I am as a business person, what kind of business I ended up building, just so many things, right?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:06:57] And so, I think so many times in life and in business, we go through things because they're a necessary step to going wherever we want to go, even when we don't know it at the time. So, I just wanted to share that with you because I don't ever want someone to feel like they're silly or stupid for having gone through these periods, some of these periods that we're going to talk about today about some of the things that people do when they're starting their businesses and some of the things that are kind of silly or a waste of time.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:07:25] It's like you don't know that when you're in it. And I really, truly believe that like you have to do that, sometimes, to learn, like, "Oh, that didn't work". I am just a huge believer in life and in business in general of the Goldilocks approach. Like if anything else, I feel like that's the thing I think about every day, is like Goldilocks to me is experimental. It means like whittling down, figuring out what works for you, maybe something's too big, too hot, too cold for somebody else, but it's perfect for you.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:07:52] And so, I just think it's like such a great analogy. But in order to do that, like in the Goldilocks example, she had to try all the different kinds of porridge in order to understand which one was right, right? So, I do believe that we make these "mistakes" in business, and they are part of something. However, when we can collapse time, when we can learn things, sometimes, that can help to push us in a different direction to pivot, right?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:08:18] And I remember listening to other people when I was starting out my online business, and I would hear other people share some tidbit of advice, and I'd be like, "Oh, that's why that thing's not working for me". So, I'm glad that you've tried whatever you've tried, but maybe something in this episode will just illuminate like an idea for you to do something a little bit different.

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:08:37] So, with that being said, I think we've all been there. We've all done the like downloading all the things, right? How many of us have 9,000 freebies, and PDFs, and videos, webinars, and all kinds of things in our inbox that we either never used, or just weren't that helpful, or we signed up for and never followed through on? We might have even like signed up for courses that we didn't really need or weren't that helpful, or signing up for courses almost out of a place of desperation, or like searching for something.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:09:08] Like maybe I need Pinterest, but I also have to learn about YouTube, but this person's teaching me about Instagram, but this one's a Canva course, and this one's an Asada course, like I remember being in that place, where we were like going all over the place. Some people do this with certifications, right? Like keep layering on education as a means of not only delaying some things, but feeling maybe like they won't be taken seriously enough, or people will judge them, or find them out for not knowing every single thing in the whole universe, so they keep gathering all these certifications or something.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:09:40] And some people spend their time consuming a bit too much of social media, me included. So, I have a couple of tips today that I put together for you on things I would do differently if I were doing it all over again, or if I was building my business, if I was more in the beginning stages of business now, this is what I personally would spend my time focusing on.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:10:04] I'm really hoping that this episode just helps you cut through the noise a little bit, and also gives you some inspiration and ideas of like maybe some things that you've been trying, and trying to figure out how to make it work, but it's not the right fit for you. Hopefully, today, you will figure out what is the right fit for you and what you should do instead.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:10:21] So, the very first thing that I would do differently if I started my business now versus in 2016 is that I would follow and consume way less, and I would create and lead more. I wish I would have seen creating my own stuff as a means of practice, right? So, I think that a lot of times, people will think like if you start an Instagram account and you don't have 80 million followers like off the bat, they think like—I don't know what they think, they think they have to keep engaging more, like I

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

have to keep following people or write on people's—like I have to comment on people's posts, or I have to do this or that, the other thing.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:11:00] And I don't think that they see that that's like a beautiful opportunity and a time to actually just create as a means of practicing, practicing creating, practicing Reels, or writing captions, or shooting videos, shooting photos, whatever it is, and just like getting used to it, right? I think like anybody who's built a pretty successful online business will typically say that if you go back and look at their early content, it's not very good, right? And they might be just saying that, but I think what they're really saying is like it's not the same level of maybe professionalism or like high tech, high production value as what they would do now, right?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:11:39] But the point is that they did it at some point, and then they got to the high production, high whatever when you see them, right? When you see famous online business people putting out content, you're seeing stuff that's taken years and probably tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars over time of building up a business that can afford to do those kinds of things, but they're often the first ones to tell you like if you would go back and look at their other content, it's not great, or it's like funny-looking graphics or cheesy stuff, or it's kind of blurry, or it's not bright enough, or they were using Canva and doing it for free.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:12:15] So, I think that it's important for you to see posting on social media and wherever else, whether it's like writing emails to your list, or posting in your blog, or creating YouTube videos, as practice. And it's an opportunity to get really comfortable with creating, and with learning how to become a leader, learning how to basically like grow and strengthen your own voice, as opposed to just consuming and relying on everybody else's, right?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:12:41] So, we tend to, in the beginning, just follow a bunch of other people, engage with their content, and all you're doing is giving your energy to their content, and not putting your energy into learning how to create your own, and learning how to become a leader in your own space. And I don't care. Don't even tell me for one second, "Oh, but there are so many other people doing what I'm doing", and yadda, yadda, yadda.

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:13:02] If that's true and it probably is true, but like if that's true, then is going around to a bunch of other people's Instagram accounts and commenting on there going to help you, or is it time for you to just jump into the pool, right? It doesn't matter that you're a few years behind somebody else. I have seen all kinds of wacky stuff happen in this industry over the last five, six years, it does not matter.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:13:24] You have to jump in the pool at some point, and it is better for you to jump in the pool, and start swimming and learning your own than like standing on the sidelines and watching everybody else. So, I want you to get in there. I want you to create more than you consume. I want you to learn to become a leader, and see this all as a means of practice, and see it as like kind of getting your "bad content" out of the way.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:13:47] With every single post, with every single email, you're going to learn, you're going to get better, you're going to start seeing what works, right? The beautiful part of posting more, especially in the beginning when you're kind of getting your feet under you, is that you get data. And with that data, you can make a lot of informed decisions, right? So, if you start posting, and you see, wow, every time I post about this, or every time I post in this way, or phrase things this way, I get way more engagement than when I post about this, or I see that like Reels do well for me, or I see that this does well for me, you will start to learn.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:14:18] The other thing is that you're going to start learning what you actually like doing, right? So, if you start showing up in different places and you start seeing like what kind of community might exist there for your type of work, you might see that you like or don't like showing up there. And that's going to be really important feedback that we'll talk about a little bit later in this episode.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:14:36] Okay. So, the second thing that I would do if I were starting over or doing things differently from the start is to focus on fewer platforms, both social media platforms and marketing platforms. In general, finding the one that I actually like and that I could show up on consistently, and then going deeper and more consistent with it. So, what the heck am I talking about? Well, I remember when I started my business, I was like, okay, Facebook was the primary platform at the time.

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:15:03] In 2016, Facebook was king. I don't even think there were Instagram Stories yet. Maybe they rolled out like right afterwards. And Instagram is still very much just a photo-sharing platform, but Facebook was where we were sharing like educational content. We were doing Facebook Lives. We had Facebook Groups. We had a lot more going on, on Facebook. So, I was in Facebook because I felt like that was the primary platform.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:15:26] I was on Instagram because that was the one I liked and thought was fun. And then, I thought YouTube and podcasts were just really intimidating, so I decided not to go anywhere near it. And I've never liked Twitter, so I just never had Twitter. There was no TikTok or anything like that, by the way. So, I remember like just having this kind of spaghetti at the wall approach, doing a lot of consumption just like I just talked about, and starting to get my feet under me by focusing on these platforms.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:15:52] And if I was doing it over again, I wish I would have put more of my energy and effort into being on a platform earlier and a marketing channel earlier, that two things, one, that I would have liked, because then I would show up better and more often, and I'll talk about that in a sec, but also, one, that would have built up basically a library, a bank of content that was searchable, that was more SEO-driven, or that gave me the opportunity to create it into an SEO-driven piece of content, like a podcast that you can turn into a blog post, or a YouTube episode that is searchable, but also that you could turn into a blog post.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:16:31] So, I wish I would have focused on something like that more from the start, and then just picked a social media channel to engage with my audience, to build a community, to get to know people, but then also, obviously, to share when I had like a new episode, or a new post, or whatever. I think when I started my business, it was very popular to have a lot of our content live on the social media platforms themselves, like you would write the Instagram caption like a blog post or the Facebook post like a big blog post.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:16:58] And instead, I wish that content would have just like lived on my site or become a video. And I remember everybody talking at that time

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

about like podcasting is going to be huge and video's going to be the future, and I was like, "Well, I don't know. We'll see. It's trendy." And obviously, that is what happened, that was right, and they still are. Video is king. Podcasts have exploded, right?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:17:19] And I wish I would have tried some of these things a little bit earlier, because I actually, even for somebody who's like very self-deprecating and pretty self-conscious, I don't love being on video, because I never think I look great enough, or I'm worried about what people are going to say, or whatever, but ultimately, I don't really care, and I don't mind at all about like actually being on video.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:17:40] Like I feel very comfortable. I would even go so far as to say confident in the sense of what I'm talking about, right? And so, I'm not afraid of public speaking or anything like that. And then, I really wish I would have tried podcasting, because it's been super, super fun. I've been running On Your Terms since July and I've really enjoyed doing it. And what's so important about enjoying those things is that when you enjoy something, it will come through in your content and you will stick to something, right?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:18:09] So, just a couple of weeks ago, when it was like the Christmas, New Year's break, I took a couple of weeks off, and things were quiet, and we had a couple of like snowy, rainy days, and I was just like, I really missed podcasting. Like I really look forward to it. So, I went off and I recorded like three episodes one day when I was just sitting around. It was like a cold day, I cozied up, I recorded my episodes, because I actually look forward to it.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:18:31] And so, that batching then took a huge weight off my shoulders for the first couple of weeks of January when I came back. And so, I think when you really focus on creating content on a platform that you actually love, you're going to show up. It's going to come through in your work, right? I've gotten more engagement from this podcast than any blog post or anything that I've ever written.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:18:50] And then, I think like you're going to build up that snowball like effect of community, listenership, viewership, whatever, a little bit faster, because of all those things. Because if you're going to be more consistent, and when you do show up, you're going to be a bit better, more energized in your content, that's

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

going to attract the audience that you really want. So, I would encourage, just like I encourage any time I do like an extra training or something for my customers, I'm always talking about like, where can the hub of your content live?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:19:16] Not on Instagram, not on TikTok, not on Facebook, I'm talking YouTube, podcasts, or blog, right? And if you could only pick one of those three, which one would you pick? Youtube, podcast, or blog, which one would you pick? Right? And then, if and when possible, the best case scenario is that you pick YouTube or podcast and you turn it into one of the others, right?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:19:41] So, you record a YouTube video, which you then have transcribed through like Rev, for example, and you get a transcript, and you have somebody clean it up or you clean it up, and you turn it into a blog post with very like SEO-optimized headings and keywords, and you allow people to actually find this content who are already searching for it on Google anyway, right? That's what I wish. Like I know that it's so tantalizing to be like, "But the latest TikTok trend, or this dance, or this Reel, or this filter on stories, or this, or that, or the sticker. Now, people are doing collabs and lives", and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. It's very enticing because it's loud.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:20:19] It's what's going on around you all the time, and it's really easy to get drawn into feeling like those are the things that deserve the bulk of your attention when if I could do things differently and if I could pass anything on to you, it's that the more that you can focus your time, energy, and attention on these, what I call the big three, of the YouTube, podcast, or blogs, that you will be paid dividends like over, and over, and over again, well beyond what you could ever get from an Instagram post.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:20:51] Now, don't get me wrong, Instagram's a lot of fun. It's a place where we get to actually know people we can show different parts of our personality. I just don't want your content living there. You're going to be working your ass off like basically sprinting uphill, right? It's like sprinting uphill against like 50 mile an hour winds. That's what it feels like. And then, it's like you're also sprinting uphill with 50 mile an hour winds, and the road keeps like dropping from under you and shifting under your feet.

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:21:15] That's what Instagram feels like, right? We can't control it. We don't own it. Yadda, yadda, yadda. You've heard all those things before. But what's most important about what people are saying when they say that is that your content needs to live somewhere else, needs to have a home. I want your content to work for you, not against you. I don't want you to be posting your best Instagram post ever and seven people see it.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:21:36] I want you to create a high quality piece of content, whether that's a podcast, a YouTube episode, or a blog post that people can be finding for years to come. And keep in mind, when I started my business, I started with a core 10 blog posts, like I wrote 10 blog posts that I heavily like researched and optimized, and I made sure the titles were good, and the headings were good, and all of this kind of stuff.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:22:00] I had no website traffic, right? I just started my business. I started my website myself. I started this business from scratch and I put these 10 blog posts up. And in the beginning, they actually were responsible for gathering like the first little handful of customers and subscribers that I got. And five, six years later, those blog posts are still pulling in leads every single day, right?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:22:25] And of course, since then, I've written a billion more pieces of content, and created more videos and more podcast episodes, and all of these kinds of things that are also pulling people in every day. And so, that stuff, over time, it just stacks, and stacks, and stacks. So, I know, I just want to share that because some people will say to me like, "Well, what's the point of doing this blog post or this YouTube video when I only have 50 subscribers now, I only have 50 followers now?"

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:22:49] It's like, yeah, now, but that the point is if you're taking an SEO-driven, evergreen content-driven strategy, meaning that your content will be helpful to people down the line, and pull people into a freebie that will always make sense and will always be helpful, then it doesn't matter how many you have now, the point is to like get this brick layering going and just build this thing brick by brick by brick. And one day, you'll be like me, you'll be looking back six years later, and you'll be like, "Whoa, that dinky little blog post that I wrote that wasn't even any good is pulling in

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

leads every single day and people are purchasing from it. That's wild." So, yeah, you might not feel like it now, but it will.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:23:25] Okay. The third thing is that I would focus more on educational content that establishes you as an expert versus the sexier things that you might be seeing online. So, I often think about like if I was starting my business now, I feel like it would be even harder than when I actually started back in 2016, because I feel like right now, there are a lot of distractions for you of very flashy forms of content that aren't necessarily helpful for building your business.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:23:51] So, I could see it being really enticing to like build a platform on TikTok, or to do lots of different like Reels or these like catchy little, I don't know, trendy things on Instagram, and I think that that stuff is a helpful part of your strategy, I just don't like when people make it their strategy. Like I wouldn't build my business off of Reels like exclusively without creating that content that I was just talking about.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:24:15] Because years from now, those Reels aren't helpful anymore, Reels aren't even a thing, or they've just fallen to the complete bottom of the Reel shelf, then you're not getting anything for that content. So, it's going to be like a great hit right now, but I'm just worried about you putting all your eggs in that basket, you're not really like building up that brick-by-brick strategy. And what I'm interested in for you is you putting in the work now, it's kind of like investing, right?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:24:42] It's like putting in the money now and letting it grow over time. Collect that interest over time instead of just tossing it all out the window. So, don't get me wrong, I think Reels can be a great strategy. I have a whole podcast episode about easy Reels tips and the way that I would do Reels, which is in a way where they could live over time, because I do have Reels now that are like eight months old that are still pulling in leads at this point, and that's really cool.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:25:08] So, if I were you and I was going to do something like Reels or TikToks, I would do them on things that are a bit more evergreen and that are constantly pointing people to your top of funnel, or to your freebie, to your opt in, whatever it is, so that these things are actually working for you. And every once in a

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

while, it's fun just to do a fun one, or like a behind the scenes one, or allow your audience to get to know you, but I really think if I could do this all over again, I would focus less on the kitschy stuff and just do more of the like solid, foundational, like let's build this thing kind of content.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:25:41] So, the next thing I would have done differently is not to worry nearly as much about using like the perfect tech tool or platform, or making sure that I'm using the "right platform", like the one that everybody else is using or something like that. And I'm talking like, whether it's whatever you use for your email service provider, what you use to house your courses, sell your products for productivity.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:26:03] If you're like Team Asada or Team ClickUp, it doesn't really matter. And I just talked about this in Episode 27 last week, I'll leave the link below, but I talked about all my favorite tech tools and which ones I've actually ditched. But I talked about in that episode the fact that like I think people just put way too much time and energy into like picking the perfect tech tool or platform for them, and I think that you can waste a lot of time in the early stages of your business.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:26:27] I also think it's funny, like in the earlier stages of our business, it's not nearly as consequential to change platforms. Like if you decide to try out Asana now, and like a year from now, you decide you want to do ClickUp, if your business isn't gigantic, like it'll be fine, you can transfer it over. There are people you can hire to transfer it over. There are softwares that you can use to transfer these things over, and things you can just like download and re-upload.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:26:50] So, it's not super consequential. Like it's actually a bigger deal once your business gets further down the line. Like when I moved my courses from Teachable to Kajabi, it was like this whole big thing, and we had to hire people to help, and we, for months, dealt with certain like login issues, and people not knowing where things were, and all that kind of stuff. It was much more consequential at that point. But I remember in the beginning being like, "Oh, should I use Teachable or should I use Thinkific", or I don't even remember what else existed at that time, but I was like looking all around, I just remember being like, "Screw it, I'm going with Teachable".

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:27:22] And I'm so glad that I did because I just got started. No one bought or didn't buy my course because it was on Teachable, just like no one buys or doesn't buy my course now because it's on Kajabi, because nobody even knows what it's on until they get inside, right? And even once they're inside it, I bet you most people wouldn't even be able to tell you what kind of platform it's on. So, focus more on the actual content of your offerings, or your products, or the content on social media or whatever, then the platform or the tools that you're going to use.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:27:50] And if something doesn't work for you, you're not married to it, just back out and try something new. I would commit to things for like at least 90 days so that you're not hopping around, because the like start up and restart up costs can be kind of high, but I think as long as you've kind of tried something and you've tried to make it your own, then it's really no big deal, you can switch down the line.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:28:11] So, the next thing I would do differently if I was starting over again is such a big one for me. I really wish that I wouldn't have wasted so much time worrying that I must be doing something wrong, because I didn't see other people doing it the way that I was doing it, or I saw people doing it differently and assumed that they were right, right? So, I remember pretty early on kind of coming to this conclusion about like, I want to focus on SEO content and I want to focus on really writing evergreen content that's going to be drawing my ideal client for years to come, and this was like an idea that I had that, by the way, it's not like a novel idea in business in general, it's just that I didn't see a lot of people around me doing that.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:28:52] I primarily was surrounded by coaches and other online creatives who were using social media to build audiences, and to talk about how many followers they had and how much money they were making, and to be on Facebook, and like building a Facebook Group, and how many people they had in their Facebook Group. And I remember thinking like I just felt so bad that I didn't have—I probably had like a few hundred Instagram followers at the time, and my business was starting to like get up to six figures.

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:29:20] I had only like a few hundred Instagram followers. Like it really didn't take much time. And I remember thinking like, how is this happening to me, because this person who's talking about making a lot of money or doing really well in her business, like she has tons and tons of followers? And I think looking back on it, I wish I could just like release some of that confusion, and judgment, and whatever of like, just do your thing, like keep your blinders on, keep your head down, keep going, do your own thing.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:29:47] Just because somebody else is or isn't doing something doesn't make it the right way, and it definitely doesn't make it the right way for you. So, it might be the right way for them, it might be the right way for their business, they might be completely full of shit, by the way, and not be doing nearly as well as they tell you, they could be doing amazing, too, who the hell knows? So, the point is like I just wouldn't listen to it.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:30:07] And if something's working for you and you like it, go for it. Don't worry about the fact that like you don't see any other people doing it that way. In fact, I think looking back on it, if I could like pass myself a little message back in 2016, I'd be like, "Hey, Sam, the fact that you don't see other people doing it this way, that's going to be your like secret sauce", right? "You're ahead of the pack. You're doing this SEO stuff. You're doing this, you're doing that. That's working for you and your business."

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:30:34] It's not that you're better than anybody else or that the other people are wrong, it's just that it's working for you. And I think all of this has to come from a place of you knowing your customers best. When you really feel confident about the person that you are meant to work with, the person that you want to help, the person that you like see yourself having the best relationship and results with, you will know what's best for them, and it will allow you to start tuning out a lot of the rest of like, you should be doing this, you should be doing that, you should be doing it this way, because you'll be able to say like, "Uh-uh, not my customer, my customer likes this", right?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:31:12] And so, I remember a lot of people telling me back in the day when I wanted to start a podcast, people were like, "No one would ever listen to

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

a legal podcast". And I was like, "Hmm. Okay. Two things. One, my customer most often is the kind of person who likes to know a little bit about most things", right? "They like to do things the right way. They are a little bit freaked out that they could potentially not be doing something the right way. And they're also the kind of person that doesn't just hand things off."

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:31:41] I always say to my friends like, "They're not my mother who like hands things off to other people is", like, "Just tell me when it's done", right? That's not you guys. That's not my ideal client. My ideal client is usually the kind of person who's like, "I need to understand this a little bit, because that level of understanding is going to make me feel confident". You don't need to become a lawyer or anything, but you need to at least understand like, why do I need an LLC? Why do I need these website policies? How exactly do I use this contract to protect myself?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:32:07] Once you know that stuff, I think that my ideal client feels so empowered that she can go on and build her business, right? And she can get back to the stuff that she wants to be focused on, which is not contracts. And so, when I thought of it from that perspective and I thought about how my ideal client is the kind of person that likes to know that stuff, then having a podcast with like bite-size legal tips and just trying to get down to like brass tacks is not that crazy, because I understand that he or she is the kind of person who wants to hear this stuff.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:32:38] And so, I have to, sometimes, just keep that in mind and like block out all of the like, "Well, no one's going to want to listen to that. Well, if you're going to talk about that, well, then you should also talk about this." I'm like, "No, my ideal clients can be okay with this, that's going to be okay with the way that I talk about it", and all of that kind of stuff, right? And I also understand that my people like to like walk, or they travel, or they're like out with their kids.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:33:00] And so, they want to have content in a way that's easily digestible and on the go. And so many of you have shared with me that that's how you listen to the podcast. So, that's just an example of how like you really have to come at this from a perspective of knowing who your client is and what would be best for them. How do they consume content? How do they want to hear things? And with

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

what you're talking about, the kind of content you're talking about and the way that you're presenting it, what's the best medium for you to do that?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:33:29] Like if I was trying to teach people how to cook, I wouldn't have a podcast, necessarily, maybe I would talk about like cooking tips and things like that, but you bet your butt, I would have like a YouTube channel. And when I was on Reels or on Instagram, they'd be clips from those that would be showing people, because it's so visual, so people need to see it. So, I often think about like not only is it about what platform you like, and where your clients hang out, and all that kind of stuff, but it's also like, what is the medium in which this content will be most impactful? How do they need to see it, or hear it, or experience it? That's something to think about when you're deciding all of this.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:34:05] Okay. Last but not least, and you have to tell me if this is you, too, but I remember wasting a lot of time, wasting time thinking that there was some mystical secret or magic bullet that I must be missing that was going to make this all easier, and that was going to make my business really successful. And I would often blame like the lack of this magic bullet, the lack of this little piece of information that I must be missing, like how are they doing that? I don't understand.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:34:30] I thought that because I was missing that, that was why I wasn't "doing well", right? Looking back on it, I realized like, "Wow, I was doing well, like things were building". That's all you can ask for. I was making mistakes and learning. I was making connections. I was building genuine connections, and audience, and a community with my audience and with my customers. I was creating and improving my products.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:34:56] And I was, yeah, just like getting better every time. That's all you can really ask for. And there's nothing that you're missing. You're not missing anything. I think a lot of the marketing that you're getting is always this like—it's so much to do with it, actually. Like I can't tell you how many times I purchased courses, or purchased, I don't know, guides or sessions with people thinking like, "This is it, this is the answer. Once this person, once I get access to this person's course, everything's just going to flow from there."

## On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:

### If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:35:25] And you can probably agree or tell me if you've like ever experienced this, because I hear this so often from friends, and clients, and all that kind of stuff, that, oftentimes, when you buy somebody's course that's about those kind of magic bullet-type of things like, "Oh, this lady has a secret to Pinterest, or YouTube, or Instagram", or whatever, every time, people say the same thing, "I got in and it was just so obvious. Everything she said was so obvious."

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:35:53] That's what everybody says, right? And so, there could be a lot to that and why people say that, but I think a big part of it is that there was a part of you that was hoping that there was going to be that magic bullet in there. And when you realize that you already have access to so much of this information, it's disappointing, right? And I think that certain people can package information in a certain way, and tell you certain things, and give you like tips, and shortcuts, and collapse time for you, and that's all so, so helpful, right?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:36:21] But nobody has a magic bullet, because so much of building your own online business is just practicing getting better at content, being a better marketer. I've spent my entire day today filming three YouTube videos in a podcast episode, like I'm a full-time content marketer, content creator. So, you have to get good at creating content, that is your job, right? And that content has to speak to your ideal client.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:36:49] It has to speak to their pain points. You have to speak to what they're going through and where they want to go. And your offer has to make sense for what they want, right? It has to make sense. It has to be valuable. And I don't mean in the pieces that you include like 10 calls and three PDFs. I mean, in the transformational benefits, right? It has to be helpful. People have to understand why this is for them, why now.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:37:13] You have to overcome their objections. That's what business is all about, is about being a real human and letting certain parts of your life down, the walls down around your life, so that people feel connected to you truly being genuine and not being like vulnerable for vulnerabilities sake, but actually being genuine, and open, and honest, actually doing a good job. That is so much of it. It's like creating good products that actually help people.

**On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:**  
**If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)**

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:37:38] I can't tell you how helpful it has been to have created a product that actually is just a really good product that people enjoy and get a lot out of, because that has paid me back a million times over, because people tell other people about the product, or they share about it, or they feel more excited about it, because they experience good results from it. And the more you can create that kind of experience for your people, the more that that snowball effect is going to happen for you, too.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:38:03] There is no magic bullet. No one's coming to save us. No one's going to give us any sort of plan or shortcut. Everything that is happening to you is happening for you in the long run, and it's all a really important part of the process. I think the biggest key is just figuring out what was I meant to learn from that. What am I to take away from that? What is the data telling me about what I'm doing?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:38:28] And what can I take away from that and do differently, double down on? All that kind of stuff. That's what I would lean more into if I was doing things differently, if I was starting over. And I would not beat myself up for having experienced any of these things. I wouldn't shame myself for feeling like I was far behind, or like there were other people who are already doing it, and doing it better, bigger, more money, whatever. I would say like, "You're on your way. Your time will come."

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:38:55] And by the way, what do you really want? Because you don't need to want what she's having, right? You can want what you want. And you have to be clear about that, because otherwise, you're going to spend your whole time here building your business, chasing after what other people have, only to find out that it might not be what you want anyway. You might not want her life, and you probably don't even know what her life looks like, because she's definitely not sharing about it openly. Because nobody is. No, we're not all sharing our worst moments. I'm not. You're not. Nobody is. So, just keep that in mind.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:39:25] I hope that something in this episode sparked a little idea for you or made you feel better in some way about building your business. I would love, love, love for you to send me a DM on Instagram. Let me know what that was for

**On Your Terms Podcast Episode 28:**  
**If I Started Over (What I'd Do Differently & Exactly the Same)**

you. What was your number one takeaway? Just send me a DM on Instagram @SamVanderWielen. And until then, I will see you next week on On Your Terms.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:39:49] 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.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:40:28] Just remember that although I am an attorney, I am not your attorney, and I am not offering you legal advice in today's episode. This episode and all of my episodes are informational and educational only. It is not a substitute for seeking out your own advice from your own lawyer. And please keep in mind that I can't offer you legal advice, I don't ever offer any legal services, but I think I offer some pretty good information.