

On Your Terms podcast Episode 32:
Should We Always be in Growth Mode in Our Biz?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:10] Should we always be growing our business? Does our business constantly have to be growing? Does everything have to keep getting better, and bigger, and faster? I don't know. I'm excited to dive into this topic with you today on On Your Terms.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:24] Welcome to On Your Terms. If you're new here, I'm your host, Sam Vander Wielen, and I'm really excited to dive in today's topic. It's been something on my heart and mind lately, and I think it'll be just really cool to chat with you about it, and I can't wait to hear what you think about this week's episode. So, you're listening to this episode at the end of February, which means I just got done my big promo of The Ultimate Bundle, and I had my live workshop, and I hope that you were able to come if you hadn't been to it already and that you got something out of it.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:53] It was a lot of fun for me to do, and I just love doing these live workshops, and getting to interact and to meet new people, and welcome so many new people into the Bundle. I'm actually going to host a podcast episode for you soon about like a little debrief breakdown of the promo and kind of show you the behind the scenes of what it's like to run a multi-six-figure promo and stuff like this. So, yeah, you have that to look forward to.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:01:17] So, until then, I wanted to read to you the review of the week from Coach Courtney, who said, "I'm so excited that Sam started a podcast. Her knowledge of all things legal and building a business has been so helpful for me. The legal side of things is never something that I thought about when first starting a business, and I'm so grateful to have Sam as a resource for that. I can't wait to learn more for her through her podcast."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:01:39] So, thank you so much, Coach Courtney. And if you want to enter to win a 25-dollar Starbucks gift card from me, all you have to do is leave a review of my show, On Your Terms, on Apple Podcasts, and we announce a new winner every month on air and across social media, and you might even get a shoutout. So, head on over to Apple Podcasts and leave a review for the show.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:02:00] So, let's get into the meat and potatoes, as they say in Philadelphia, this episode of whether or not we're supposed to constantly be growing our business, whether it's not normal unless our business is growing, growing, growing all the time. I think that in the online business industry, unlike other industries that seem to have already realized this, for some reason, we think that we're supposed to constantly be growing, like our business is supposed to be getting bigger and better, or there's something wrong with us, or with the business, or yeah, I think we really like internalize it being about us, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:02:34] Like people must not want us. They don't like our product. They don't like us, our voice, our look. And whether it's like we focus on the revenue side of things or the vanity metrics of like, "My Instagram is not growing, my podcast listenership is not growing, my revenue numbers aren't going, my core sales aren't growing", we think that it's always supposed to be better than the last, right? And it's not normal. It's not normal.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:02:58] Business ebbs and flows, right? There is no business principle that tells you that every single month, your revenue should be outperforming the previous months or even the previous year, right? Like in February of this year, you didn't do as great as February last year, it might be because you're doing things differently, right? This might be a month where you have your head down more and you're preparing to do something for next month.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:03:18] If I went back and looked at my books, like last January was a multi-six-figure month, because I ran a promo. The bulk of the promo was in January last year, whereas the bulk of the promo this year was in February. So, you can't always just look at these things in a vacuum, because you're going to come up with stories that aren't true, that are going to negatively affect you as an entrepreneur, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:03:38] So, not to mention the fact that it's just not normal to be constantly growing, to never have seasons of like, I don't know, I call them like gathering seasons, like they were like those seasons where you kind of are hunkering down, you might be preparing something big that's next, but you haven't quite gotten

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there yet. And it's all like an investment over time in your business, like those times in your business that you're hunkering down now, and you're preparing for something, you're building out a course, you're interviewing clients, you're doing something, you're creating some product, that is going to lead to maybe future growth or additional revenue, but that might be why your business isn't growing month over month right now.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:04:18] It all makes sense when we think about it, right? All of that pressure is very unfairly making you sick, and tired, and feeling defeated, and less than, and burnt out, and it just doesn't need to, because it's not based on actual like realistic principle of business, right? Businesses ebb and flow. So, when my dad got sick back in 2018, and remember, as you're listening to this in 2022, he was given 11 months to live, max. They said two weeks if he didn't take the treatment.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:04:54] So, he got sick at the very end of 2018. I went from being somebody who was constantly focused on growing her business, and putting my face on Instagram every day, and hosting Facebook Lives at that time, and emailing my list, and like doing all the things, all the things, I was right there in it with you until I had this like massive life bomb out of nowhere dropped on my life, right? And it took me months of like just—I mean, this business and growing this business was like the last thing.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:05:30] And my business is a little different in the sense that I sell digital products, so there were still sales happening, because it doesn't need me. Since I'm not a coach, it's like I don't need to be on the phone with people and stuff, so things were still being sold, but things definitely slowed down, I remembered. And I took, I would say, a solid three, four months, where I was really in the thick of it with my dad.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:05:52] I was like helping him to get started with treatment and some of the stuff that came along with that, like side effects and things, and then navigating like all of the health—I had to get him health insurance. And, oh, my gosh, it was just so much, like so much administrative stuff. And I went to every appointment with him. And my focus, really, during that time was like helping him, then when I wasn't helping him, figuring out how to process what was happening myself, and it was so much and so overwhelming.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:06:19] And once things stabilized with my dad, and we kind of got in a rhythm, and like he had chemo every three weeks, and we were like, "Okay, this is like new normal", I wanted to get back to business. Now, I didn't necessarily want to grow the business, but I wanted to get back into it. Like I missed it, right? And I missed writing, and I missed sharing and creating. And so, I started to work on it, and eventually, I was ready to be like, okay, I'm going to grow this thing, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:06:43] And I knew that there was something like on my heart at that time, there was like a promotion I wanted to do, and I went with it, and it helped to grow my business. But I have gone through lots of different times, not just when my dad got sick, but lots of different times when growing my business wasn't necessarily my focus or my priority. In fact, didn't care at all about it, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:07:03] And you might relate, especially after the last two years, there have probably been a lot of things in your life that have made you be like, "Growing my business isn't one of them", like that's not the only thing in life. But it can feel, sometimes, when you're going through those phases by yourself, because you run your business by yourself, I assume, it can feel, sometimes, like you're kind of sitting on the sidelines while like everybody else is playing the game, and it sucks, right? It's like big time FOMO.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:07:30] And I think that there are a couple of things that are at play here. One is this idea that we are constantly being served this message that like growth, overgrowth, overgrowth, overgrowth, like constant growth is normal, right? But we're also getting served this message that growth is the focus, and I'm not trying to get like too deep or philosophical here, but I just think about this all the time when I'm like, what if it's not always about the money? Right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:08:01] What if it's not always about more sales? What if it's not always about more, insert whatever here? Instagram followers, podcast downloads, YouTube subscribers. Life is not about that stuff. I know you know that, but we, sometimes, need those reminders, because it's like we're in this world on Instagram, and Facebook, and whatever, Tiktok, I don't know where else everybody hangs out, that

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it feels a little brainwashed, sometimes, where you kind of have to remind yourself like that this is not the only reality in the world, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:08:38] And there are a lot of bigger things going on in the world than like Instagram followers, and YouTube subscribers, and revenue, and course sales, and like all those things, right? So, I just feel like I never really heard other people talking about like other goals or that it was okay to like, it doesn't make you a bad business owner, it doesn't make you a bad person if like you're not constantly like, "In quarter two, I'm going to hit more, and in quarter three, I'm going to double my revenue". It's okay. It's okay.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:09:07] That doesn't mean you're a bad entrepreneur. It doesn't mean you're a bad entrepreneur if you never reach that. It doesn't mean you're a bad entrepreneur if it's just like, right now, I don't want to do—like I'm in a season of life. Maybe you just had a baby. Maybe you just got married. Maybe you just moved. Maybe a parent is ill. Maybe you're going through a worldwide freaking pandemic for like two years, right? It's okay if this is not always the priority in your life.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:09:33] And if I'm the only voice that you hear telling you that that's okay, then like that's great, I hope there's somebody else that is telling you this, too, and that money is not always the thing to be focused on. Money is not going to fix everything. When my dad was really sick, like there wasn't enough money that could have been going on coming my way that would have made this any easier to navigate.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:10:03] Have you ever felt lost about where to begin with the legal side of protecting your online business? Some people say you can just wing it at the beginning and get officially set up later. Not a good idea, by the way. Whether you're afraid to even start working with clients because you don't want to do something wrong legally, and then get in trouble, or your business is growing and you sort of forgot to take care of the legal pieces, I've got you.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:10:26] I don't want you to live in fear of the internet police coming after you and your business, but you do have to do certain things and get certain things in place in order to legally and safely run your business online. As much

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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: [00:10:53] And you're not behind at all. We can get you set up and 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 Is and cross your Ts in a few key areas that can't be skipped.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:11:14] That's exactly what I'll teach you in my free one-hour legal workshop called Five Steps to Legally Protect and Grow Your Online Business. Just head to mylegalworkshop.com, 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: [00:11:43] So, it's just there are these times when I've grown my business, and my business now is just exponentially bigger than I ever, ever, ever would have thought, and then I ever planned to, right? And I definitely have my moments where I'm like, are you sure you want to do this? Like yesterday was one of those moments where I had like eight million like people pecking at me being like, "We need this from you, we need that from you, we need this content, you have a three-hour marketing meeting, you have an interview, you have this, you have that, you owe this person this thing", and it's just like, oh, my gosh.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:12:16] I have those moments where I'm just like, is this what it's about? Like is this what growing your business means? Like I don't have to do any of these things, right? I'm choosing to do this, and running a business that's like this comes with some of those stresses and responsibilities. But I think it's really important

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to check yourself and remember that that is a choice. Like I am making the choice to grow a business of this scale.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:12:39] I could simplify things, and scale down, and get rid of a lot of stuff, and make it cheaper to run my business, which would then make it easier to not have to generate as much revenue, because it's expensive to run a business that's of this size, but I am choosing to do it. And I just think it's like important to have ownership over that. Like it's not happening to me, I'm not a victim of this, I am choosing, and I can choose to also pull back and to drop things, because I understand that I can make my life easier by like pulling a lever and like dropping a content channel, or like dropping some sort of obligation, or something like that, or a plan to do another promo, or something.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:13:14] I can chop all of that, just like I did at the end of 2021. I was like, enough is enough, like how much more do we need to make? I don't know, right? Like it's just money. I just didn't need, like I'm not in it just to see how much money can I generate or I'm not in it just to be like I just have to generate more. Why? Oh, I just need more, because I'm constantly supposed to be growing, right? And it was like, I think the first quarter of last year, I had already well outpaced the prior year, the entire year, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:13:48] By mid-year, I was like six times over, and it was just like, I want to take—isn't the point of all of this that this business is supposed to give me time, space, and freedom? And yes, of course, I know what you might be thinking, is like, "Yeah, you need money to do that", right? But I guess what I'm saying is like, if you get to this point, it's like tipping point, it's like, what's enough? Right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:14:09] Where is that happy, sweet spot for you, where it's like I have the money I need to live, and to live an abundant life, and yeah, to like take care of myself and take care of others the way that I want to, but then there can come a tipping point, where it's like you're just generating more to generate more, and that adds a lot of stress to your life, and you don't necessarily need that, right?

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:14:30] I think that's a good question to ask yourself. If there's a way that you can continue to build your business that doesn't add stress to your life, which is always the thing that I'm thinking about, is like, how can we maximize this more without more of me being needed, then that's cool. That, to me, is like what I'm constantly thinking about and what the kind of business that I am building.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:14:50] So, I think that it's just important to remember that this is a choice, right? You can choose to be in growth mode. You can choose that you're not in that place right now. You can choose that you want to do things that you know are going to generate more money for you, but that also will generate new responsibilities, possibly stresses, maybe more team members, which generates more responsibility, more stresses, it can.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:15:16] So, just remembering that you get to write this story, you get to choose this path that you're taking. There is not one right path. It doesn't always have to be the path of growth, right? So, there are some times, I thought of a couple of times, that when you're maybe not in growing mode, but you're more in building mode, right? And I think that more of us would benefit from saying that we're building our businesses instead of growing our businesses, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:15:41] So, we're building our business during times when we are maybe going through a hard time, right? Like the hard time that I described with my dad, or you might have some similar time, unfortunately, and if so, I'm giving you a big hug, but this might be a time when you're not in a position to focus on growth. Maybe you're just trying to keep this thing alive, or maybe you have your head down, you're working on something.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:16:04] Maybe you're doing product research, and creating and developing something that down the line is going to make you money, right? Maybe it's just something like you're focusing on lead generation, getting new eyes on your stuff. Maybe you're focusing on nurturing those people that you already have. And maybe you just don't feel like it. Maybe you just don't feel like focusing on growing all the time, because of this idea that we constantly need to be making more money so that we can like buy more coaches programs or so that we can buy like fancy things and

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material goods. And then, all that does is make you have to work even more so that you buy more stuff, and it just keeps like cycling, and cycling, and cycling through, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:16:44] I would get really clear on exactly what you need to be happy, not what you're being told to chase after, but what do you need? Right? Do you need more flexible spending money to take care of yourself, take care of your family, take care of others? Do you want to give back? How much is that going to—how much would you ideally, like in your dream scenario, want to make so that you could have enough money to feel safe, confident, secure, and support others in the way that you want to, to feel flexible, and free, and fun, to travel, to do whatever it is that you want to do? Right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:17:18] But it doesn't matter. If handbags are your thing, like my sister, she has nine million handbags, that is her thing. She loves it. So, for her, like that is important to her, and that makes her feel good. For me, it would be like food, traveling, paying for services, like that makes me feel really supported, and like I have more free time when I feel like I can afford to support others to help me, and my family, and my house, right?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:17:42] So, being able to give back in certain ways that mean a lot to me. I love like donating to food companies, food organizations. So, like that just makes me feel really good and that's what I want to do this for, right? But sometimes, I have to check myself and say like I'm adding on all these things because I feel like I should, and I'm adding on promotions or I'm adding on this, I'm adding on this arm of my business this new product, this new thing, is this what I want to do or am I doing this because I think I have to? Am I doing this because I think I have to constantly be in growth mode? Am I taking any time just to enjoy? Am I taking any time just to build, to nurture, to develop, to connect, to take care of myself, to make sure my health is okay and not just like constantly running myself into the ground?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:18:28] I think these are all really legitimate questions to ask yourself along the way. And I just wanted to have this quickie little episode here with you today just to say that like we don't always have to be growing our business. It is

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okay. It's okay if that's something that comes for you down the line. It's okay if, right now, you don't even know when it's going to be your priority again. It's okay. I swear.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:18:53] I hope that this episode was helpful. I would love to hear your thoughts by sending me a DM on Instagram @SamVanderWielen on Instagram. I'd love to hear what you think. Until next week, I'll see you on the next episode of On Your Terms.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:19:11] 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 podcast. 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.