

On Your Terms Episode 48:
Do You Need a Business Coach

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:11] So, people reach out to me all the time and they ask me like, "Do I really need a business coach? Who do you recommend working with? Who have you worked with?" And I think my answer really surprises people. I'm going to share my thoughts today and some tips on when you should and shouldn't have a business coach, what to look for. I'll even share when I've had one. And the ones I think have been really worth it and what was a total waste. So, I'm excited to chat with you today about whether or not you need a business coach and what tips I recommend if and when you look to hire one.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:40] Before we get into the episode today, let's get to the Review of the Week from Kelsey Ann 13. She left a review of On Your Terms on Apple Podcasts saying, "Sam is real and honest which I love. The podcast has been a helpful resource to me as I begin building my nutrition coaching business. She talks about relevant topics to me and doesn't embrace the hustle culture, which I so appreciate." Thanks so much Kelsey Ann.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:01:02] You can leave a review of Apple Podcasts of my show, On Your Terms, and you will be entered to win a \$20 Starbucks gift card. All you have to do is leave a review on Apple. I pick a new winner every month, so be sure to submit your review today. You might even get a shoutout on a future episode.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:01:18] So, I have to give you, like, two big caveat/disclaimers, non-legal disclaimers, before we get into today's episode. The first one is that I think there a lot of good business coaches out there. There are just also a ton of bad ones. But there are tons of good ones. So, I don't believe in black and white thinking, all or nothing mentality. So, when I talk about business coaches today, I'm not talking about them as a whole. It's just kind of the majority of an industry. I would say finding the good ones is more rare than seeing all the other stuff. I have a lot of friends and clients who are many of the very, very good business coaches. People who have great experience who are super smart and who will be very helpful to you. I have worked with people in the past who I love. So, there are good ones out there.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:02:05] The second disclaimer here, I am not saying that you don't need help or that you should be capable of doing things on your own. So, I think sometimes the whole business coach discussion gets a little mucky when people are

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like, "Oh. A coach needs a coach. And everybody needs help." This has nothing to do with needing help or not. And so much of that is, like, nonsense that gets thrown at you to make you feel that you need to have someone at all times.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:02:31] We're just going to talk more today about discernment and getting support in your business with purpose and clarity from the right people. That's something that I just don't think that you're talked to enough about, is, finding business help, consulting with purpose and clarity. You going into it knowing why you're doing it and for what purpose, what you're to get out of it, not in the hope that it fixes something. So, those are my disclaimers.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:03:01] Let's get in to what is the problem when it comes to the business coaching part of our industry. Well, the first thing is that a lot of people are not actually qualified to help you. It's propped up on a lot of marketing, a lot of aspirational marketing. Meaning, that they show you the "lifestyle" that they have. And most of their marketing comes down to, "Don't you want this lifestyle too?" Instead of any actual business advise or business experience. Most of them, if you noticed, have no actual business experience. And most of them, other than maybe even just building their own business and then teaching you how to "replicate" that, have no professional experience at all. At all.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:03:00] And so, it is a little concerning to me that some of the biggest business coaches I see, I'm like, "They don't actually give business tips. It's like motivational speaking or lifestyle content. It's not business." No one is talking to you about business. And, obviously, I do the legal stuff and so I understand that I'm going to come at it from that angle. But it's always - I don't know - like a tell-tale sign to me that if a business coach isn't talking to you about the importance of certain financial and legal startup steps or requirements that you have to do, that should be a major red flag that you should run away from very quickly.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:04:27] And that is including people who give that stuff to you themselves. Because if they are not smart enough to tell you that they don't know, because they're not a lawyer or that they're not qualified to tell you because they're not a lawyer or not a CPA or a financial adviser, then that's not somebody I would give my money to.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:04:43] The smartest people in the room don't always know everything but they know who to send you to. So, in my opinion, a good business coach would make you aware of these other kinds of startup steps and they would also know enough to send you to somebody. Ideally, these people would offer you some sort of training or resource in their programs. Lots and lots and lots of really good business coaches have me come into their groups and give lessons to their students.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:05:11] And to me, I always thank them so much because I'm like, "Thank you for knowing enough; to know that this is important for your students; for not acting like the expert on every single part of business, which it's okay to not be. And to have somebody like me come in." And the same goes for accounting and taxes, and all that kind of stuff, bookkeeping. So, I would be very weary, especially of those business coaches who are like, "You don't need to worry about that legal stuff until it gets down the line or whatever." That's terrifying. That's somebody who just wants to take your money and help you with marketing and doesn't really care whether or not you actually have a legitimate business.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:05:52] I also get nervous on our end that people in the coaching space, a lot of the coaches that I see, they rack up courses and programs and downloads and all these stuff, and they spin their wheels. And they don't ever take any action because it's like a leap frog of courses. It's like, "Well, I have to take this course which then led me to learn about evergreen businesses." So, I realized I have to take Pinterest course, which made me realize I have to take a LinkedIn course, and it just keeps going.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:06:21] It also leads to a lot of copycat/everybody looking the same middle school type scenarios, which, again, if somebody knew something about business, they would tell you that the most important thing is differentiators. How is your business different than your competition? I mean, that's another big thing that sticks out to me is this whole, "There's no competition. Don't worry." Yes, there is. Yes, there is. There is competition. It doesn't mean you have to be mad at them or not friends with them or not want them to succeed. Those can all be true.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:06:58] But you better believe that Target is studying what other companies are doing. Nordstrom is studying what other companies are doing. Peloton is studying what other major fitness brands are doing. They are looking at it. They're observing. And they are making their marketing a reflection of their differentiators. What makes them different? Who is their ideal client versus who is the ideal client of this other competing brand? That's actually very important business idea. There's nothing wrong with it. It's just a way of doing business.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:07:26] It doesn't mean that you don't want your "competitors" to not do well. Or that there's not enough room for us all to succeed. There is. But you do need to focus on that. So, it's just like kind of one example where people are giving you this messaging so it sounds really pretty and sounds really welcoming and open minded. But it's actually not good business advise. And it leads to a lot of people just kind of bumping along, never asking questions, never thinking for themselves, not being unique and standing out, which is a really important business technique.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:08:01] So, I want to share with you a little story before I get into some of my tips about picking a good business coach. I was reading something the other day about a woman who wanted to start her own flower shop. So, she wanted to start a really cool flower shop. Actually, it reminds me of one that's close to me that only sells forages, Long Island native plants and flowers, and stuff, and she does workshops and all this cool stuff. But this woman wanted to start something similar. And she was like, "I have to learn every single thing about flowers before I open this flower shop." She was not a trained florist or anything like that. So, she was like, "I have to learn everything. I have to become a flower expert."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:08:02] Eventually, as she was getting the shop set up, it got to a point where the shop was ready to open. But she wasn't ready because she hadn't learned every single thing about flowers yet. But she had to open. Like, her space was ready. She was paying a lease. She couldn't afford to just continue to wait. So, she opened anyway. And her reflection when they asked her, "Well, how did it go? You didn't know everything about flowers so how did it go?" She said, "I'm so glad that I didn't learn everything about flowers so that the flowers could teach me what I needed to learn about them."

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:09:15] "I'm so glad I didn't learn everything about flowers so that the flowers could teach me what I needed to know about them." How crazy is that? I wrote that down. As soon as I saw it, I was like, "I have to write this down." It just went off as ding, ding, ding in my mind about this business coaching idea that you cannot gather and learn every single thing that you need to know and then go and apply it.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:09:41] Like, when I studied for the bar exam, I took it in two states at one time. I studied for, like, three or four months. I sat in the classroom and sat at the library every single day for, like, a kabillion hours, and, literally, memorized facts. And then, for four days on the bar, I just regurgitated those facts on paper. It is memorization. And all I had to do on the bar was apply that memorization.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:10:05] That is not business. That is not how business works. Business has to work in this space, in our space, you have to be comfortable with marketing, you have to get to know your customers. Things evolve. The way that I market my business now is different than a year ago, which is different than three years or four or five years prior to that. These things evolve. And what works for you might not work for me, and vice versa, all around all day long.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:10:33] So, we cannot learn everything that we need to know and then be like, "I'm all done. I'm going to go apply it now." That's not how it works. So, I think that there is a very delicate balance of learning some stuff that you need to learn. I actually believe in learning the foundation of actually setting up and forming a business. And then, learning about how do I create my offers? And maybe I learned some copywriting and then I learned some marketing techniques. And you continue to layer on as you go. So, I do believe there's a time and a place for it.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:10:33] But this idea that you're going to take a famous marketer's course and then you're going to have a business like theirs, or you're just going to keep taking courses and at some point you're going to reach this mountain top, or you're going to know everything, I just don't think that's the truth. And I think you're being sold a lot of bologna through marketing.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:11:34] 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

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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: [00:11:56] I don't want you to live in fear of the internet police coming after you and your business. But you do have to do certain things and get certain things in place in order to legally and safely run your business online. As much as it just feels like an unregulated, wild, wild west online, that is very much not the case.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:12:13] As an attorney turned entrepreneur and former corporate litigator, I can assure you that there are rules. There are real steps that everybody who runs or starts an online business needs to take. And you're not behind at all. We can get you set up and following the rules right away. In fact, we can even do it today.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:12:29] I want to teach you the five very simple steps to take to legally protect and grow your online business. You don't need an MBA to be a successful entrepreneur and stay out of legal hot water. But you do need to dot your legal i's and cross your t's in a few key areas that can't be skipped. That's exactly what I'll teach you in my free one hour legal workshop called Five Steps to Legally Protect and Grow Your Online Business. Just head to mylegalworkshop.com, drop in your email address, pick the time, and I'll send you a link to watch the workshop video whenever you have time.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:12:59] 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: [00:13:14] So, if that's my thought on it, then when is a business coach helpful? Because I do think that business coaching or programs related to your business can be helpful. If you're a beginner, if you are starting out your business, you don't have a consistent client flow, revenue stream yet, I think that it's okay to start out in one of these programs or to join a group program or a mastermind or something like this if you're doing it alongside taking action at the same time. What I don't like seeing

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and what I don't want you to do is take this person's course or work with a coach, or whatever, and wait until you're done with it to apply it. Or to be like, "No. I'm just doing this to get ready." I call it the to get ready, to get ready, to get ready, to get ready program.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:14:05] So, if you are taking something and actively applying it, like I just started playing tennis, for example. I just started taking private tennis lessons. If I took just my tennis lessons with Paul, my coach, and then never played outside of playing with him, I'm not really going to get any better. Because, first of all, he's just hitting the ball at me, like, he's hitting it exactly where I'm standing. And it's not real life. I'm moving around on the court. I'm running all around. There's wind. There's sun.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:14:32] So, when I play with other people, they don't have good aim. They're just hitting it randomly. Like, half the people I play with are just trying to get it back over. The ball is moving. Sometimes it comes off weird off their racket. I have to learn to start to navigate those things. I also have to learn to start to communicate with the other women on the court to deal with it as a team. Not just standing there getting balls logged at me and I'm smacking them back over. So, I find that to be very similar to what you need to do when you are working with a coach. You need to be out there practicing just as much as you are working with the pro, if not more.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:15:09] I also like what I call the stairs approach. Ever since I started my business, I think of these things in terms of stairs. So, if you do hire a coach or you purchased a program, the working with them part or the purchase is like the inclined part of the stairs. It's like the up part. And then, the flat part, the part of the stairs where you would put your foot, that's the implementation part. So, you would gather something or purchase something, start working with somebody, and then implement, before you would take the next step of gathering something more.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:15:44] So, ideally, what I'd like you to do is buy something, implement, experiment, and then adjust before buying something else. Because each experience that you have each time you work with somebody, not only every experience that you have working with a coach, but every experience that you have with your own clients, writing emails to your own list, writing blog posts, starting to see what works,

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what feels natural, what part of your business are you excited about. Do you start a podcast? And at first no one is listening, but then you start getting engagement, and you really like it. And you find it that it's actually leading to some leads and to some potential clients. It's creating conversation. Then, we have to keep experimenting with that.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:16:28] And then, maybe you say like, "Okay. I want to go do a program for podcasters to learn how to market my podcast better. Not just work with a generic business coach." Each experience will bring more clarity. And I think that's the part that I wanted to lead you with and kind of the part that I use in my own experience to decide, "Do I need a business coach? Do I want to buy a program? Do I want to do this?" I think that business coaching is best when you have a purpose. And when you are clear on exactly why you are hiring somebody, to solve what problem.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:17:06] Just like you wouldn't go to a doctor and you wouldn't walk in, but you don't feel well, you feel like things aren't going well. But you walk in to the doctor and you're like, "Yeah. I'm just here. I don't really feel well." And then, they say, "Well, what's the problem?" "I don't know. I just want you to make me feel better." That's kind of what I feel people do with business coaches. Whereas, it would be a very different situation if you went to your doctor and you said, "I don't feel like I have full range motion in my knee. I want to make my knees stronger. And I want to be able to play tennis better. I want to be able to run faster and jump higher."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:17:39] That's what I want you to do with a business coach. I want you to go to people with purpose and clarity. I want you to know what holes you're trying to plug. And more than anything, I think what I have really shifted towards, I don't work with anybody now. I barely ever work with anyone. And it's not because I don't think I need help or anything like that. But because I hire people for very specific things.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:18:07] So, Natasha, for example, from Shine with Natasha, who I had on the podcast, I hire her to do certain Instagram strategy, so to be able to talk with someone. She is an Instagram expert. I talk with Katie Steckly about YouTube. Now, I go to people with very specific niche expertise, and I go to them with clarity and purpose of what I want. Let me say it this way, I would not go to them to say, "I want to grow my podcast." I go to them to say, "I want to increase my podcast downloads or

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whatever with the purpose of generating more leads to this freebie, which then leads to the sale of my Ultimate Bundle, which is what keeps my business alive."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:18:55] So, I go to these people with very clear purpose. Not just vanity matrix. Not like, "I want to grow my Instagram." It's like, "How do I create a more engaged community on Instagram? How can I present my information, that I feel like I've been talking about for years, in a new way? How do I adjust to these changes in the algorithm?" Maybe I would hire somebody to say, "I want more website traffic with the hope of converting more leads to my freebie, and building my email list," which I want to build my email list so that I can sell more of my product, or create more of a community, or let people know about my podcast, whatever the thing is.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:19:31] But I go to very specific people now. And I think that's been the greatest area of growth of not wasting time, money, energy on these kind of big box programs of people who don't have a lot of expertise is really niching down and going to people who are like, "This is the person to go to about public speaking. This is the person to go to about PR. This is the person to go to about email list marketing." That's what I really like doing.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:19:59] And I think when it comes to buying all these different courses about all these different directions you can go in, you have to remain incredibly focused. You have to know what your cornerstone pieces are, the big three of marketing. Is it going to be a podcast, YouTube, or blog? And you always have to have your email list. That's just a given. That's kind of the fourth man all on the side. So, if you choose one of those, I would suggest getting help with getting better at that. Get good at your craft. Put yourself along people who are actually experts at that craft. And see how you can work with them and learn from them. You know what I mean?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:20:40] So, I hope that this has been helpful. I feel like the most helpful thing that I have invested in has been copywriting, because I really like to do my own writing. So, that's something that you have to do, but it's something I love to do. And I've always retained writing ownership of the day to day writing of my business because I like it. And so, that's something where that was really worth it for me to take certain courses or classes or just start studying about copywriting. But, again, I'm not doing it and then saying, "Once I do this and I learn this, then I'll start writing."

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:21:14] I was writing and taking messy action, and applying and implementing what I was learning in real time so that I got more and more and more at best. I got all this experience to do it. And the more I write, then I learn, and then I get response, good or bad. And then, I'm like, "Okay. I'm going to change that the next time." But I kept going. I was doing both. It's a both end thing. Not, "I'll learn this and then one day I'll think about starting this part of my business." Nope. At the same time.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:21:42] So, copywriting has been huge. Helping with somebody's platform specific things, like YouTube, podcasting, Instagram with Natasha, that kind of stuff has been immensely helpful for me. And that's just what was specific to what I needed as I grew. I've hired an HR expert as I wanted to expand my team and wanted to learn how to be a better leader. I've read books about leadership because of that. But that's really where I've looked.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:22:07] The other thing I would tell you is that I would look outside of our industry. Because sometimes I think that we get a little siloed looking in our industry. And, again, our industry is not always full of the biggest experts in these kinds of things. But I also think it gives you a fresh perspective to get out of the coaching bubble. Take what you can from what you learned outside of our industry and apply it to what you do in your business.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:22:34] So, I try to replicate and act like a way bigger business than what I really am because I want my business to be bigger than it is, and to grow in that direction. And so, I think I don't want to look at my little industry around me because I want to be beyond that one day. And so, I think it's been super helpful to look outside of our little bubble.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:22:59] I would highly recommend reading the book, Company of One by Paul Jarvis. It's about getting really clear on running the business and not letting it get too bloated and staying really focused. And I think that it will give you a lot of clarity on what you want to focus on in your business. And then, that will help you to get clear of what exactly you need support and help with.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:23:24] So, business coaches aren't bad. Lots of them don't know what they're talking about. Lots of them don't actually have any business experience and can't backup their own stuff. And if you start noticing, a lot of it is just about aspirational lifestyle just telling you about how great their life is and how they'll help you to have the same life. That's not business advice. And it's your choice, if that makes you feel good to work with somebody like that, that's cool, do that.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:23:50] For me, it's been helpful to work with people in kind of the peripheral space of kind of quasi life coach. Going to therapy every week, I think, has been the best investment in my business. Investing in some mindset programs, probably that stuff and copywriting, has been the biggest return on investment for me, personally. So, I wish somebody would have told me that, that there was not going to be this magical program that taught me a system of marketing that was going to work. No. It was just a heck of a lot of work, experimentation, trying, asking for feedback, and continuing to keep going even when things got really, really hard.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:24:27] I'd be so curious what you think about this, whether this episode made you mad, whether you liked it, whether you - I don't know - had a thought afterwards. Send me a DM on Instagram, @samvanderwielen, and let me know what you thought about this episode. And if you thought this episode would be good for a friend of yours, can you go ahead and do me a favor real quick. Shoot them a text, send them the link right now, whatever platform you're listening on. Send this over to a friend, post it in a community that you're in if you think it would be helpful to people. But I would love to get your feedback and hear what you thought about this episode. Thanks so much for listening to On Your Terms. I'll see you next week.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:25:06] 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.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:25:22] 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.

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