

**On Your Terms Episode 82:**  
**Is my biz legally protected enough [Sam's Sidebar Q&A]**

**Sam Vander Wielen:** Welcome back to another episode of Sam's Sidebar, where I tackle your essential legal questions about starting and growing a legally protected online business in 10 minutes or less. So, this week, you'll hear all about what you need to do, at least officially, to legally protect your online business so you know ahead of time that you're all set.

So, this question was submitted by our listener, Nila. So, Nila says, have I done all the things I need to do to legally protect my business? How do I know ahead of a stressful time that I'm good? I totally get it, Nila, because I get that feeling of like you just want to feel like you've done everything that you needed to do so you can kind of put it to bed, right? So, I hear this a lot from your peers.

So, let's go through this step by step. First things first. I believe in general, in life in general, in case you were wondering, knowledge is power, right? Fun fact. That's actually why I went to law school, because I actually wanted to do consumer advocacy law. I wanted to do food labeling. Sounds really boring, but I wanted people to have access to information about their food. So, I believe knowledge is power.

And one thing that I consistently see amongst online entrepreneurs is that the not knowing what you don't know thing kind of keeps you in this swirly place of how do I really know if I've really done everything I needed to do to legally protect my business? And so, it kind of keeps you in this treadmill-like state. And that fear or anxiety of really never knowing if it's enough, if you've done everything that you were supposed to do kind of keeps you put and put businesses don't really grow, as I say, right?

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So, I like to think of this as what would happen if I tried to build a car engine? I would have a million questions like, what parts am I supposed to use? What part is that? Where do they go? How do they work? What orders should I put them in? I would have no clue. And if somehow, some way, I even ended up remotely putting together something that looked like an engine, I would never really feel comfortable driving that car because I would never know if I did it right.

So that's why I do what I do to help you know what you need to know to legally protect your business. So, first things first. I just always recommend that you have a resource in this area because of what we're going to talk about in a second. This will make more sense in a second.

The second thing I want you to think of is that I just want you to focus on the basics, because oftentimes the people who come to me, the people who write me questions are super smart. They're smart cookies, as my mom would have said. So, they would have -- you guys come to me because you have really good questions and because you're smart and you're thinking about this stuff, right. But sometimes I feel like was legal, it's one of those things that we overcomplicate a little bit, especially when we don't know what we don't know.

It's one of those things in life that tends to feel a lot bigger than it really is. Like putting away all of my groceries just felt like to me now because the whole counter was piled up with groceries and I was like, this is never going to work, it's not going to fit and I'm not going to make it. And then what do you know? I just chip away and it all worked out, right? But we

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build stuff up in our head. I think that what's really important in those times when legal feels really overwhelming, when it feels like there's a million different strategies and policies and contracts and tactics and you need to be thinking of every single thing from every single angle, what I like to do in that time of overwhelm is check on my basics.

So, if you were going to check on your basics, here's what I would run through. I would think, did you properly register your business so that you're not personally liable for your business? Do you have business insurance that covers you financially for your work with clients? Do you have a legit lawyer drop a contract that you can send your clients or include a check out if you sell courses or memberships so that your boundaries and your sanity and your legal rights are covered? Right?

If you have all three of those, you have a really good start. And maybe it's all you need, maybe it's all you need for a while. It really depends. Everybody's situation is kind of different. But here's where number three comes in. It's so important for you also to keep in mind there's no apex here. We're not reaching the top of a mountain. This goes, by the way, with online business or with running a business, let alone with legally protecting your business or financially establishing your business. There's no apex that we're going to get to, to be like, oh, it's all over. I can just sit back, right?

I've built a business that's way bigger than I ever dreamed of, and I'm not in any sort of apex because with this sort of growth came new issues, new questions, new concerns. So, we're not looking for that apex. It's really important to keep in mind. I'm as legally solid as you really can be at this stage of

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business, right? I am a lawyer after all, but I still have legal stuff that I'm constantly working at, not constantly, but that I'm working on throughout the month. Things pop up. I'm going to create something new or I think of a new policy that I want to cover in a new way. Like stuff comes up. And so, this isn't just something you always like check out of and pass on to someone else.

Maybe you want to apply for a trademark in the future. Maybe you create a new course or program in the future, and that requires a trademark at that point. Right? The whole point here is just that it's not legal in general, it's not something that we check off. And I don't say that as something to be like, oh, man, really, I have to think about it forever. It's more just like, this is kind of part of running a business. And so as long as we have that foundation part down, then we can kind of move forward and just deal with stuff as it comes, you know what I mean?

So, I want to embrace the fact that as long as you have the basics down, the legal stuff is going to be an evolving, continued part of building your very legitimate and successful business, right? So, the true value of getting your business legally protected is really that piece of mind that you'll have knowing that once for all you're legally as set as possible. Just like we just talked about, you've got that legal foundation and then we can add on, we can layer on.

Over the next couple of weeks, I'm going to be diving into what it means to legally protect your business and cap it off with my first and one of maybe only two entirely live trainings this entire year. So, you can get on the invite list now by signing up for my emails in the link below. The easy email link sign-up

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