

On Your Terms Episode 94:
Sam's Sidebar Q&A
My Program Taught Me X - Can I Teach It Now

Sam Vander Wielen: Hey there, and welcome back to another episode of Sam's Sidebar, where I tackle your essential questions about starting and growing a legally protected online business in ten minutes or less. This week, you'll get legal tips all about scope of practice.

So, let's jump right in to Sarah's question. I want to preface this by saying, do not check out on me. Do not check out on me if you are not in the health and wellness field, because this is going to apply to you no matter what kind of coach you are. But just hear me out. So, Sarah asks, "Can I give macro goals as a nutrition coach if my certification and education covers how to do that?"

Oh, goodness. I love this question, Sarah. I am so, so glad that you asked because this is such an important question to get into in terms of whether if you learn something, can you teach it. So, like I said, do not check out on this. If you are not a health and wellness coach, this applies to you, too, and it also applies to you if you are a health and wellness coach.

So, scope of practice, which is what you can legally do, say, and teach based on how your license, qualified or trained, all that stuff. Scope of practice, it applies to all kinds of coaches regardless of our industry. So, every type of coach or every type of practitioner has a licensed or professional body that's like "above it" that dictates what it can and can't do.

Like, a money coach has a CPA and accountant above it. A dating coach has a therapist and maybe a doctor above it. So, there are these other kinds of professional bodies. And I'm not saying this in a qualitative sense. I'm just saying, generally speaking, these are kind of what I call hovering professions.

So, the reason I actually chose Sarah's question for this week is because of a kind of dangerous and misleading trend that I see in our online business industry. I see a lot of times how people mention that they're under the impression that they can do X, Y, or Z,

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usually some kind of higher level scope or area of advice that they can give because it was something that they learned about in their online program or in some sort of certification program.

So, here's what you really, really need to know about this. Coaching programs or courses run by private individuals that you take to uplevel a skill or learn something in your industry, or a program that you take through a certification body, like a health coaching program that gives you a certificate at the end or a money coaching program that gives you a certificate at the end, they are not able to expand your scope of practice.

In other words, taking a course or a certification program that's run by a private company or an individual does not give you any additional right to talk about things that are outside of your scope of practice. Courses and programs, any of those kinds of things that you're taking to become like a such and such coach, none of them are scope expanders.

Our scope of practice is simply dictated by our state governments and our laws and our regulations that every single state has on the books. So, if your state, for example, says that only RDs or licensed nutritionist or doctor could give medical advice on nutrition - like macros, for example, in this question - then a private program that you signed up for would not be able to make it legal for you to teach about macros. So, your state is still going to dictate that you can't do that.

Like in this example, let's just say your state says you cannot do that. There's no certification program or anything that you could take, like online or any of that kind of stuff, that would undo that. The only thing that would undo it would be, let's say, your state says only RDs could teach about nutrition or a doctor can teach about nutrition, then you'd have to go become an RD or a doctor. That's the only way.

So, it always upsets me because I see people spending so much time and spending a

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lot of hard work and a lot of hard earned money and everything else on all of these programs being like I took this program because it teaches me in the program about macros or it teaches me in the program about meal plans or it teaches me in the program about stocks and financial planning. So, as long as I learn that there, then I can turn around and teach that to other people. So, learning about something does not make it legal for us to teach it to others.

And if you listen to Episode 68 of the podcast, you'll know that we also don't need to teach everything that we learn to be successful. Because there are a lot of reasons for us to keep learning and there are a lot of reasons for you to take those courses. Like, if you just want to learn about macros, great. If you want to learn about stocks, that's great. It just doesn't make it legal for us to turn around and start teaching it to other people in the eyes of the law.

And I know what you might be thinking, too, "Well, wait. This program that I took, it told me that we'll teach you about macros so you can teach other people." Unfortunately, there is a lot of deceptive marketing out there. And just because a program says it doesn't mean it's legal. So, you have to do your own due diligence and you have to see what's actually legal for you, what's true for you based on you, where you live, how you're qualified, all of that kind of stuff.

So, I'm only telling you all of this for two reasons. One is so that you actually know what's in your scope of practice so you can stay out of legal trouble. That's the goal. And two is so that you have this information available to you before you sign up for another coaching program or some sort of certification. I want you to go into it thinking like, "Oh. I want to have more skills. I want to learn about something."

I want you to know that those programs won't make it possible for you to do things that are still outside your scope. But hear me loud and clear, learning new skills like upleveling, learning about something new, just even learning about something new for fun is still so valuable. I'm not devaluing any of those things. It's more just making sure

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you know what you're getting and why, what you're going to be able to do with it. It helps you to be a better coach and a practitioner. It can make you more marketable on the job market.

Like, if you were taking that course or program and then trying to work for a private company, they would probably be really happy, so that would be cool. It just doesn't expand your scope of practice within your own online business.

So, the long and short of it is, Sarah, who submitted this question, that if prescribing macros, for example, isn't within your scope, which is likely not as a nutrition coach, then, no, you can't do it even if you learned in your program.

So, to learn more about scope of practice - if this your first time hearing me talk about it, this is actually my fourth episode on scope of practice - I definitely would recommend going back and listening to Episodes 2, which is about scope of practice for coaches; Episode 69, What Coaches Can Legally Do, Part 2; and then we also have Episode 86 on what coaches can do legally. So, I have lots of different scope of practice episodes for you there. So, that's Episodes 2, 69, 86 and then, now, this is number 94, so you have lots of scope of practice resources around here.

I hope this has been helpful for you. If you have a question you want to submit to a future Sam's Sidebar episode, make sure you click the link below to submit your legal question. I would love to read it on a future episode. Thank you so much for joining me here. Send me a DM on Instagram, @samvanderwielen, and let me know if this episode was helpful.

And for a handy resource on how to write your own scope of practice, how to figure out what your scope of practice really is in your business, click the link down below to instantly download my legally legit checklist. It's super helpful. It'll help you get all the legal steps in order for your online business. So, thank you so much and I'll see you next week.

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