

On Your Terms Episode 95:
I Can Do It Better Myself
What to Outsource + Do Yourself

Sam Vander Wielen: Hey there, and welcome back to On Your Terms. I'm your host, Sam Vander Wielen, an attorney turned entrepreneur who helps online coaches and service providers legally protect and grow their online businesses using my DIY legal templates and my Ultimate Bundle training.

So, this week we, are talking all about when you should do stuff in your business versus when you should outsource. Do you have to be good at everything in your business? Do you have to be a marketer? Do you have to be a copywriter? Do you really have to wear all of these hats when you own an online business? I think it's a really interesting question.

Personally, as I talk about in this episode, I'm somebody who likes a lot of what we do and is also somebody who's inclined to be like, "I'll just do it. I'll just do it. I'll just do it." And that, well, you're going to have to listen. I shared how that went. And I shared what I did instead to actually grow my business, not drive myself crazy, but also how I still do some things I love in my business even though I don't have to. So, we're going to get into it.

Before we do, I want to give a shoutout to Megan FS. She says, "I've been following Sam for a while. I joined the Ultimate Bundle and now I've been bingeing the podcast. It's like having a conversation with a friend while also learning a ton about the legal side, being an entrepreneur, and how to build an online business. I feel more confident knowing that I have the tools to build a legally legit business. But even more than that, like I'm connecting with a real person that I can relate to in so many ways. Sam and her podcast are fantastic." Thank you so much, Megan. I so appreciate that very kind review. And we are friends.

And you can also leave a review in Apple Podcasts of my show, On Your Terms, and you'll be entered to win a \$20 Starbucks gift card. All you have to do is just leave a review on Apple. It's simple as that. All right. With that, let's hop in to this week's episode.

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So, the age old question, when should you do something versus when should you outsource it? How many things do you hold on to your business versus how many things do you try to hire out for? Plus, what do you do when, you know, budgets a little tight? You can't go around hiring everybody to do everything. It's a really tricky balance.

And what I often see is that on the one hand, people will hang on to things way too long and try to do everything themselves in the business and wear all of the hats. And I think we all know that there are many, many hats to be worn. And then, that ends up holding us back or it actually costs us a lot of money.

Ryan always tells me - my husband, in case you don't know - that one thing he thinks I'm really good at is seeing time is money, even in our own life. Because I'll just be like, "No. It's not worth us doing that. We can get somebody else to do this and then we can go off and do this other thing."

And I think that a lot of times in our businesses, we actually think that we're saving ourselves a lot of money by not hiring people to do certain things. And then, in fact, that's actually costing us a lot of money, for the reasons I'm going to break down in this episode. And so, we might maybe have a little bit of a mindset shift in that area today.

There's also the idea that somebody else could be better at it. On the flip side, I think a lot of people think that somebody can't be better at it or that it won't be done to your liking. That was something that I held on to for a long time, not that I wouldn't be better or that anyone could be better at stuff, but that it wouldn't be done to my liking and it would end up costing me more time. So, it was not that I thought I'd be better at it, but I was like, "I'll just get it done." Because that way I don't have to go back and forth.

It was also a really easy out for me to not have to express preferences to people because I didn't like giving feedback and saying like, "Hey. I don't really love the design on this." So, if I just designed it myself, I didn't have to give any feedback, right? So, it

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was a little sneaky way around that too.

And on the flip side, I see people also outsource things a little bit too quickly sometimes or outsource things in their own business because they are really nervous, and they're not really owning it, and they're not trusting themselves, and listening to their instinct, especially as a marketer. And so, they'll outsource certain things to people that I'm like, "Ooh." That makes me a little nervous because, at the end of the day, I do think as marketers, we have to be the ones who are the experts in our businesses on our clients and what they want, and kind of have our finger on the pulse of the market in what's going on, and be kind of dictating that down to other people.

And so, we want to hire experts and we want people who are going to be better at things than we are. But at the end of the day, you're signing the checks. Your name's on the digital door. Like, this shit is on you. So, that's the way that I always think about is that, at the end of the day, I'm responsible for all this. And so, I can hire other people. I can let other people do a lot of stuff. But I do also have to trust my instinct that, like, I've been here the longest, I've spoken to the most amount of people, I've really gotten to know what's going on around here. And if something doesn't feel right, I have to say something. So, that's kind of what we're going to talk about today.

So, I have to tell you, I pride myself in being somebody who loves all parts of my business and online business and running one of these kinds of businesses. I mean, how much time do you have? I love writing. I love copywriting. I'll preface all of this by saying, I don't think I'm good at all of these things. Just I thoroughly enjoy it. But I love writing. I don't mind creating all the content. I love creating these podcast episodes for you. It's an absolute joy and a privilege.

I love our team meetings. I love creating my products. I love digging in, answering people's questions. People have such good questions. I really love the strategy side of things. I'm obsessed with funnels. I love all the data. I'm just one of those annoying people who really, truly loves all of these things. Oh, I even love SEO. I know that was

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just probably the nail in the coffin. I love SEO. I love doing the website. I like all of those things.

And I had that attitude, first of all, I was like, "No. No. I just love it. I love it all. Don't worry, I love all of this stuff." But, also, it's just easier if I just do it myself. I would, like, dip my toes into the arena of hiring out a graphic designer or hiring somebody else to do something. And then, I would get some stuff back and it wouldn't totally sit right, and I would be like, "Oh. I'll just fix it myself."

And not that there was anything technically wrong. I mean, a lot of what we all do is very subjective. I mean, there can be spelling errors or something like that. But otherwise it's very subjective. And so, a lot of what we do is just up to our preferences. And so, I wouldn't see things that were up to my preferences, I wouldn't love it, and so I'd just be like, "Oh. I'll just fix this myself."

And then, I would hire that same person out to do, let's say, more graphic design work at that time. And what do you know, shocking, when the stuff would come back, it would be exactly the same. And I would just fix this stuff, again, myself. Never saying anything. Easy out, first of all, to not have to say, "Hey. Great job with this, but I would love it also from now on if you could do this like that or I like it better when this looks like that." It was a great way to avoid having to do that, which is stuff I have to do every day now.

And, also, it just kept me really, really busy. I was just running around like a chicken with her head cut off. If we can imagine, an office building that ran Sam Vander Wielen LLC, it's like I'm running from the art department, to the copywriting department, to the finance department, to the legal, to the customer service center, back to social media strategy. And I was just like running between these doors all day long.

And, you know, I built a nice little business doing that and it was fine. And I was really tired. I was working a lot. I really liked what I was doing. I enjoyed it. But I was like, "How am I going to actually grow this thing? I don't understand." Like, I just need to sell

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more and more and more, but I don't understand how to do that because I don't have another minute to spare. So, I thought at that time that I was actually saving money by not hiring anyone. I prided myself on not having any employees, any contractors. I was like, "I do it all myself." It's like a badge of honor.

And I thought I was saving money. I thought I was keeping my profits crazy high. Which, my profits were really high. My profits are still really high. But at the time it was insane. And it was just like, "But look how profitable I am." It's just kind of funny for me to look back now. And I remember, and maybe you can relate to this, but I also worry that I wouldn't have enough for them to do or I had this very irrational fear that the moment that I hired somebody, all of a sudden, everything would stop. Like, there'd be no more money coming in and no growth. And all of a sudden, I was going to have hired all these people and then there would be nothing. I was so worried about it.

I've talked about this many, many times on the podcast before and now I talk about this in my free legal workshop - which I will link to below - I really had this flip into this mindset of starting to prepare for the business I was becoming. So, I was running around thinking, "Great. This business is doing okay now, but what if it doesn't in the future? So, I'll just keep acting like, not only maybe even what it is like now, but what it used to be." Or, "Great, that it's growing now. But what if I don't see any change." Or, "I don't know if the business of this size technically needs a VA yet."

I then shifted though into this mindset of I'm on my way. I am becoming X type of business. It truly does not matter. I don't care whether or not your goal is to have a business that makes \$10,000 a year or \$100,000 a year, \$1 million a year. It doesn't have to. Screw all the figures and all this crap that we see online. None of that matters. Whatever that matters is what's important to you. And so, you need to know what kind of business are you building here.

I would love to see you have goals that are like, at least for the business to get better. I just also want you to be very kind to yourself, but that can be really different for a lot of

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people. Yours doesn't have to look like mine. Mine doesn't have to look like another person's. So, you really start thinking of this is where I'm going. And based on that, this is what I need to have in place to become that kind of business. So, we start acting today like the business we're already headed towards. We kind of just start assuming that that's where we're headed.

It's kind of like if you were driving from New York to LA, you would have this road trip, and you would make decisions on what highways you take and where you stop and all that kind of stuff, what direction you go in based on the fact that you know you're ending up in LA, even though it's going to take you - I don't know - five days or something to drive there.

So, that's kind of how I want you to think about it with your business, like I already know I'm headed there, so let me just start acting like that. And that doesn't mean spending irresponsibly and acting willy nilly. But there are some simple things. There's a very careful balance between that whole, like, jump in head first kind of mentality. I'm not one to tell everybody to, like, leave their jobs and just throw your life away and start a business.

But there's also not going to be this perfect planned point where everything becomes super easy and crystal clear. So, there is a little bit of start before you're ready, kind of. And it's a balance. And I think that people need to be more responsible with that advice that there's a way to do that in a very tempered way.

And I think that that's what was key for me, is that I stopped acting like the business I was at that moment and I realized that I was never going to become the business that I had in my mind, when I really let myself dream, and I really worked on my mindset. And so, I started to drop some of these stories and these limiting beliefs that I had about myself, and my business, and my worth, and my ability to be seen.

And once I started working on that and I got clear on what that vision was for me to

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build the kind of business I'm building right now, I was like, "Oh, shoot. I will never get there if I keep doing this." That's never going to happen because I'm just going to keep running. Remember the image I gave you of this digital office building? I'm just going to keep running between all those doors, and there's no way that this can ever get any bigger. I have to get out of the way for some of this stuff, and I have to leverage. And there are people who can do this better. There's time that can be spent better. There's so many different things that could be done differently.

So, I think that there are a couple of skills that all online business owners should strengthen, flex, sharpen. And that you're really never going to 100 percent outsource even if you hire people as experts. You're still going to be the CEO. You're still going to be the one calling the shots. You're still going to be the one that's responsible for strategy. And, also, you're always going to be the one who's here. Team members can change. And you're going to be the one that's here and you have to own this at the end of the day. And it's also going to be your responsibility at the end of the day.

So, what are some of these skills that I think all business owners kind of have to own? Well, one of the biggest, I would say, is marketing. And so, kind of like if you have this voice that's coming up in you that's like, "I'm not good at marketing. I don't know about that. I'm not good at this. I'm not good at that." As my therapist says, if we could just ask that to step aside for a moment and just keep an open mind, I think that it's something that we can become better at, first of all.

I definitely think that some people, they have an innate sense for marketing and it's just very natural to them. But I also think this is something you can strengthen. And so, I don't want you to count yourself out if you don't feel like you're coming into this at an Olympic level marketing person. It's okay.

I think when we break down what parts of marketing you really need to own, there are at least three that I can think of, which is the voice of customer. I would say, really being very, very clear about what your customer is struggling with, what they would like to see

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instead, what kind of stuff that they've tried, what they're really, really worried about. At the end of the day, when we break it down, what are they actually worried about happening? What do they actually wish would be different? What do they actually wish would be the best case scenario? Really knowing the voice of customer.

That also includes how your customer actually talks about you, what you do, and your topics, and stuff like that. Just to give you an example, when I'm talking about legal stuff, I can't use lawyer language. I try my hardest every day when I'm writing something or I'm creating titles or I'm writing captions or something like that, I'm like, "How would they say this?" Because it's not about how we would say it. So, that is one of the biggest things because it's such a starting block, because if you don't speak their language, then no one is ever going to talk back. So, it's a really, really important part.

And when you go to hire a really good copywriter, for example, to do sales copy for you for the first time or nurture sequence for the first time or write a sales page for you, you need to tell them like, "This is what my customers do. This is what they're worried about. These are the kinds of words they use. These are phrases I hear over and over and over again. This is really at the core of what my customer is worried about and what they want and what they hope for. And here's little snippets of their day." It's so much of that.

When you start to hire more and more experienced copywriters or funnel strategists over time, they'll actually ask to speak to your customers and they'll do customer interviews. That's why they're doing it is to get voice of customer research, and that's super helpful.

But there were many, many times I hired people on the way where I didn't have the resources to do that yet. And so, it was really important that I knew that. And then, when I was reviewing copy, I'd be like, "They would never say that" or "We don't use that kind of language in this community." So, it's really important that you own that.

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The second part of marketing that I think you have to develop and strengthen is social strategy and social media - I would call it - awareness. Let's say, whatever platform it is, I think one or two platforms like Instagram and YouTube or Instagram and Facebook, TikTok and YouTube, whatever, you would have to really understand those platforms and truly how they work. Kind of get a flavor for who hangs out on them, how they're used, how people are consuming content there.

I think staying a little bit on top, this is where you have to be very careful. I'm not talking about black and white where either you don't know anything or you spend your whole day scrolling TikTok. It's somewhere in the middle about just knowing generally speaking what's going on. Like, what's going on on these platforms? How are people using it? What are some of the trends?

Just as simple as on Instagram, what are the different surfaces that are available? What are the main types of content in my industry that are being shared? How are people engaging? What kind of patterns do I see? That kind of stuff.

Because, again, when you go to hire someone, if you hire someone to create social graphics for you or write captions for you or create social media post for you, you need to be able to analyze those and say, "That's not it. I want to take this strategy. I want to try that." Or going back to voice of customer, like, "This doesn't match up with my customer." So, we really do need to know a little bit about that and that's something that we develop over time. It's also the benefit to only picking - which I think you should anyway - one or two of these platforms anyway because you can go deeper and not wider. Okay.

Last but not least, the part of marketing that I think we have to own is product development. For you, this might be like program development, offer development, depending on what you do. I think that's where it becomes really important for you to be the one to know what is the demand in the market. Like, is there a demand for what I want to offer? Who's looking for it? What are they looking for? Obviously, doing pricing

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research and all this kind of stuff, you have to really own the development of your product to even make sure that there is a demand, a want, a need for what you're trying to offer.

Because, otherwise, what you're going to do is you're going to go to a person, you're going to outsource the creation of something, or hire an ops person to set up your product or something like this and be like, "I want to offer this product. Go set it up here." But you have to be the one who knows that that's even a successful idea in the first place as much as we can ahead of time, but we have to know that.

All right. So, those were the three parts of marketing that I broke down, the voice of customer, the social strategy, and the product development. But outside of marketing, there are three other things, I think, we have to own. One is copywriting. And I don't mean that we have to own this entirely because this is definitely a great area to outsource over time. But what I mean by this is that, I think that as online business people, people who market their online businesses for a living, we have to be good at copywriting. Period.

There is no way you're going to get away from writing at all. And if you completely outsource your writing stuff, it's never going to sound like you. Or if you don't know basics about copywriting, then when you get copy from a copywriter and it doesn't feel right, you're not going to know. Or worst case scenario, you're just going to get copy from a copywriter, assume that they know the best for for you and your business and go with it. And then, when it doesn't land with people, you're going to be like, "I wonder why that didn't work?"

I've said this so many times on the podcast, like, I just think that investing in copywriting is even so helpful for your day-to-day running in this business. So, I think about it every single time that I go to write an email. I write all my weekly emails to the list. I write so much that I feel like it's so important that I have a basic working understanding.

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Again, the point is, I'm not a copywriter. I'm not as remotely skilled as a copywriter. But it means I have to have some skills as a copywriter or a person who writes copy for a living, because I essentially do. I write it for my business. Not for someone else's. And it's also an area where I can learn a little and then have a lot of practice. I write a lot. I write things that flop. I write things that go really well. And I just learn over time with reps, more and more and more reps. So, I think copywriting is a great place to invest some of your time and energy and money because I think that it's great to learn about and it'll help you overall.

I also think you have to own customer service because I think that you have to decide pretty early on what kind of business do you want to be, what kind of experience do you want your clients to have. And you have to set the tone for how do you want everybody to be treated, and is this a premium level, Nordstrom level experience, or is this a Walmart where we have smiley face, but we're more about getting as many people in here and as many people out as we can.

It's whatever it is that you want it to be, but you have to create that because then you're going to set the tone for when you do hire somebody to interact with your customers, to say like, "Hey, here's how we do things around here. We go above and beyond. We're super helpful. We're super responsive. We're known for being responsive. We have sarcastic wit and we include jokes in all of our stuff." Whatever it is, we have to own customer service.

Last but not least, we have to own our craft. I mean, we have to be really good at what we actually sell for a living. You know, I feel like so many times in online business, we hear all these people talking about selling you courses about here's how to create a course or whatever, here's how to make this many figures and this many months, and yada, yada.

But we don't often hear about people really encouraging you to do a really good job and try to be really skilled, and taking a lot of pride in what you do, and taking ownership

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over the fact that you're putting yourself out there, you're taking people's money for your skill. And that doesn't mean being perfect and it doesn't mean knowing everything, but it means continuing to invest in ourselves, in our craft, and in our actual programs and offers and products themselves, and making them the best that they can be right now given the information and the tools that we have. And I think that that's a really, really important thing for us to own.

Now, all of the things I've just talked about, marketing, copywriting, customer service, and our craft, one of the reasons I think that we have to be so good at them is that, well, first of all, we do them every day. But two is that they are things that we can eventually outsource. They're probably some of the last things as you make more and more money in your business. But when you do, they are the things that I think you still have to have a good grasp of in order for you to outsource them.

Whereas, with other things, let's say you want to get a new website, you can hire a website designer and a web developer or their team. You don't need to learn how to do your own website and then hire a website person. In fact, it would actually be more helpful if you knew something about copywriting and if you knew something about marketing and strategy so that you could tell the website person what kind of layout you want, or what calls to action you want to highlight, or what kinds of marketing things you want to drive and write some of the copy. That would be cool.

But you don't need to learn certain things like that. You don't need to learn about web development. You don't need to learn about branding, like creating logos and color schemes. If you had a good idea of the voice of customer and you had a good idea of the vibe and the kind of environment you're really trying to create, then you can communicate that to an expert and they can easily turn that around for you.

I also think that legal and accounting are another two areas where I just don't think you need to waste your time. You don't need to learn how to become a lawyer to run your own business. You don't need to learn how to be a CPA to run your own business.

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Those are areas where I wouldn't invest much of your time to really learn all about them, other than the basics with legal of, like, learning how to talk about what you do, learning how to answer client's questions, and just learning how to set things up pretty easy to form a business or to send off contracts or protect your content.

Having that kind of information is really empowering, but you don't need to be your own lawyer. That's why I've created what I have. That's why I have templates for you. I have the Ultimate Bundle for you. But the point is, you don't have to become your own CPA. You can outsource that kind of stuff. And you don't need to beat yourself up that that's not something you know how to do.

The last thing I wanted to chat with you about was that - I thought this was interesting when I was preparing for today's episode - I want you to think about are there things that naturally interest you in your business that are investments in your business or that can bring you a return. Like, you could ask yourself, This thing that I like to do in my own business, does it bring in leads or does it generate sales? That's kind of how I would think of it.

So, for example, when I started my business, I liked SEO. I thought it was really interesting. I also thought it was a genius way of building up a lot of momentum in traffic by way of leads in my business because I was capturing people's attention who were already searching for something. I didn't have any kind of social media presence. And so, I felt like I was really starting from the bottom back then. And I was like, is there another way where I can do this?

And so, I just genuinely thought SEO was interesting and it was a huge place to spend my time in the beginning where I would be like, "Okay. I'm going to write ten blog posts that are super SEO targeted." So, I would do some SEO research and phrases and questions and words that people were searching for in my industry. I would then write a little outline using keyword-rich headings, subheadings. And then, I would write the post and I would kind of use SEO plug-in on my site to further optimize the post once it was

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done being written, and then I would post it.

That was something I was spending a lot of my time on and it was an investment in my business, something that, to be honest, brought in a lot of the initial sales and really got things off the ground. And some of those blog posts that I wrote six years ago are still pulling in doing that too. But if I was obsessed with bookkeeping, for example, that wouldn't have paid off. If I was just in a bookkeeping, all that that would be doing is saving me the amount of money I had spent on a bookkeeper.

But when I really liked to do SEO and I only did it for probably a year or so, probably two years, actually two years in my own business, I thought that that was one area that I could be like, "Okay. I understand that I could hire someone." I didn't really have the funds to hire somebody at the time, but at least this is something I enjoy doing and it's an investment in my business because it's actually leading to leads, and then those leads are bringing in sales. So, it was then making the business more profitable, which then allowed me over time to be like, "Okay. Now, I can afford to pay somebody else to do this." And they have all these examples now to learn how I like things done and how I like things written.

Copywriting was another area that I wanted to strengthen my skill in because I knew that if I was a better writer, it would be a big driver of both leads and sales. So, I just wanted to put that out there just to think about there might be some part of your business you're like, "But I like doing it." If you like doing it, just ask yourself, is this an investment in the business or is this something that's literally just a trade off for I'm just saving myself the 100 bucks to pay a bookkeeper a month to do this.

And then, however many hours that's taking you, if we could free up that time so that you could spend that time investing in marketing or investing in something else that's going to drive leads or sales, then let's get to that. So, that's why I think the sooner you can get some of these non-revenue generating activities, especially repetitive tasks that can be optimized and SOP'd, then that way, again, you do it so you run through

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something.

You're not ever having anybody come into the business where you've not done something yourself before, but you do it, and then you're like, "Here are the steps that we take when we find a copycat online, we have an SOP for that." And then, you can hand that SOP off to a very talented and capable person who can go and execute that every single time that it happens, and then you don't have to do it.

So, I'm a big believer in choosing a couple of things you really love to do. I know that you can also outsource everything and you can outsource everything all at once. It's a lot. It's expensive. But over time, the goal is generally to remove you from those tasks and start finding people who are specialized in it. And because you've done things yourself before, because you've walked the walk, you're going to be such a better leader and you're going to be able to give better feedback and advice.

So, now that you've listened to this episode, I would love for you to send me a DM and let me know, like, what is the one thing that you're really interested in now that we've had this chat that also was an investment in your business? And what's one thing that now you've listened to this you think you could let go because you realized it's really just a trade, like a time, money trade? I'd be so curious from you. Just send me a DM, @samvanderwielen, on Instagram.

I hope that you liked this episode. It was a lot fun on my part. If you're ready to start legally protecting your business, make sure you click below to watch my free legal training, Five Steps to Legally Protect and Grow Your Online Business. And with that, I will see you next week. Thanks so much for listening.

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On Your Terms Episode 95:
I Can Do It Better Myself
What to Outsource + Do Yourself

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.

Just remember that although I am a 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.