

On Your Terms Episode 100:  
Sam's Sidebar Q&A  
ALL MY BEST PODCAST TIPS  
(Q&A+MAJOR GIVEAWAY)

**Sam Vander Wielen:** Welcome back to On Your Terms. This is such a special episode for me and the team, hopefully for you, too, because it's my 100th episode. I cannot believe we have done 100 episodes of On Your Terms.

I was actually just talking to a friend the other day who was talking about starting a podcast and she's so excited about it and she's like, "I just want to get going. I feel so anxious. I just want to get it out to the world." And I was like, "That is exactly how I felt when I started my podcast." And it's kind of crazy now to be like, "We've done 100 episodes." So, thank you so much for being here.

And to celebrate, I'm really excited to dive into one of my favorite topics, which is hosting a podcast and what your podcast can do for your business. Whether you have one already or you're just thinking about starting one, I want to give you all the tips today. So, this episode gives you the scoop on how I plan my content, the tools that I use, software, editing, ideas, strategy, all of the things.

I actually got a whole bunch of questions on Instagram for one of the Q&A polls that I posted, and I am just really excited to do a little Q&A with you at the end. So, normally this is a Sam's Sidebar episode where I answer a legal question for you every single Thursday in ten minutes or less. But you know what? You're going to have to humor me this week. This is your fault. You submitted such good questions about podcasts, that, today, I'm probably going to go a little over. But I'm really, really excited to get into all of your questions.

Okay. So, I want to give you a couple of my best tips. I think some things that I've learned over the years of podcasting and how I've made these episodes. Not just episodes that are fun to make and I look forward to - hopefully, you find them valuable - but I can tell you as a businesswoman that they are extremely helpful to my business to the bottom line. So, I am interested in helping you create content that really works for you. It's a little ironworking horse in your business where it's out there churning new leads and making sales for you, warming up your audience all the time so that you don't

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have to be working like a crazy person, which is always my goal.

So, I think if I could give you a couple of tips about podcasting, I would say that you want to make the episodes the types of questions or topics that your clients really want to know about.

The way that I like to go about this is actually creating cornerstone or almost like SEO-fying your podcast episodes. So, if you think of the questions you consistently get or you think about the questions, like, if you were going to make titles to a blog post on your websites, you could drive consistent traffic to your site about the topic that you teach about, do you have episodes on all of those or how do you start out with those?

So, for me, for example, this might mean like I have an episode on what is business insurance. And I'll link to these all down below because I actually have done these. It's like, What kind of contract do I need? How do I send and sign contracts? What do I do if somebody steals my content? Those are all things that are not only Google-able and very Google-worthy, people are searching for these things, but they're also things that people who are constantly in my inbox, in my DMs about.

And the reason that it's so helpful to have those cornerstone pieces of content on your podcast is, not only does it give you that searchability and you're able to SEO-fy, you can turn it into a blog post for your website, it's also going to give you a great touchpoint. So that when people reach out to you and they say, "Hey, Sam. I heard you talk about business insurance in this reel, or I heard you mention that business insurance is important, I don't really understand what it is or how to get it." And then, that's a really natural way for me to be like, "Hey, thanks so much for watching that reel. I actually talked about it in episode blah, blah blah. Here's the link to listen."

And then, when they listen to that episode, not only is the episode full of a lot of value and it's helpful - and I obviously teach them what business insurance is - but it also has a call to action to the next step, the next natural step. Which, for me, would probably be

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going and watching or listening to my free legal workshop, Five Steps to Legally Protect Your Online Business. Or maybe it's to get my legal checklist or something like that.

So, you kind of start to build out this cornerstone pieces of content that's going to be the most helpful to you. It's going to be your workhorse that you're going to be able to go back to. Don't get me wrong there. And Chelsea actually submitted a really great question about strategy and how I go about picking topics. And I'm going to talk about this. Not all episodes need to be this way. Not all episodes have to be strategic. I definitely don't do this 100 percent of the time. But it should be the bulk of your content, just like the bulk of your content on Instagram should be educational kind of authority building content. So, that's how I like to go about it.

In general, I like to build out this evergreen library of sorts of episodes. I try to phrase the titles in a way that makes it super easy. Like, if someone was scrolling through their podcast listening platform of choice, they would easily be able to tell what the episode is about, what they're going to get out of it, what they learn from it, if it's right for them. And so, I try to phrase it that way. I also try to phrase the topics in a way that you would talk about them and not necessarily in the way that I would phrase a question.

So, for example, I just had an episode that went live on February 16th that talked about - actually, I can tell you what episode it is. It's Episode 94. I actually talked to you about if you learn something in a program, can you teach it. And that's not something that I would phrase that way. I would teach you the legal thing of is it legal or is it breaking confidentiality if I share content from a program. But I know in my DMs or my inbox, the question usually is like, "I took such and such a course. Am I now allowed to teach on X topic?" And so, I literally phrased it that way when I made the episode go live.

So, I try to phrase titles the way that I think my customers would or the way that they would ask a question or something like that. Of course, I use the standard copywriting strategy of making sure that my titles are geared towards you. It's really kind of a what's in it for you type of strategy. You can apply that across the board, it will change your

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business overnight.

I really try to make the episodes as much about you as possible. And I never ever think about am I giving away too much. That's not something that ever enters my mind. I've never found that to be a problem. I mean, I guess I don't really know if my business would be more or less successful if I didn't have so much free content.

But I guess I'm an example of somebody who gives out a lot of free content, has a very, very successful business by my standard, and so it can be done. It's just not something that I ever fuss in my brain about because I just want to get you the information. There's always going to be more to learn. There's always going to be more needed in terms of support and all that good stuff. So, I, personally, just rely on making the episodes as helpful as possible.

And then, I think it's just helpful to put your spin on your personality, your background. Having a little bit something that's kind of unique to you and the way that you talk about things. Even if you have a podcast that gives legal tips, for example, there's no reason why you can't tell little stories or have a little intro that's more behind the scenes and more personal, if that's what your brand is about.

Okay. Let's get into all of your questions because everyone submitted such great questions. Desiree asks, "Do you record on your computer or have a setup? What app do you use to turn your video clips into IG posts?" Okay. So, that's a great question, Desiree.

So, I actually just record on QuickTime when I'm just recording audio. That's all I do. So, usually, for my Monday episodes, those are just more full length, full form podcast episodes. I just record those on QuickTime on my computer. I just open QuickTime, I hit new audio file recording, and then that's it. So, that's what I do for those.

For anything that I need to do on video - well, we're actually just having a meeting about

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this - I'll tell you how I currently do this, but I'm not going to do this very long. So, I started out just to keep things simple because I'm a really big fan of just keeping things simple so you can actually get them done and get started on a process and remain consistent with it. So, whenever I do video podcasts, I actually just go on Zoom just by myself. I record on my Zoom. And then, I hit upload to the Cloud so that it uploads automatically.

Now, I'm fortunate that I have a team, and so somebody on my team can go into that file, they can upload it to the podcast. They then edit it and produce it and all that good stuff. If it was just me, I probably still would do it that way. There's probably like a Zap, you can set up for that on Zapier. But, yeah, that's the way that I do it.

The reason I'm not going to continue with Zoom, doing it that way, is because the video quality is really bad. So, I'm thinking about either using my phone or I have a nicer camera, and then attaching my mic to it. So, I'm going to kind of start playing around with that. I know some people use other apps called, like, Riverside. I just did a podcast interview the other day with Joe Casabona where we did the interview over Riverside. So, that's something you could explore as well. Okay.

So, Desiree asked also, "I'm starting a podcast. What's your favorite way to plan and outline?" So, my favorite way to plan is to have a once monthly brainstorming session. So, you kind of have to reverse engineer because I stay about a month ahead of time for my podcast episodes. So, when I'm recording an episode, it's typically about a month until you're hearing that. And so, I'm always like a month ahead.

This was something I definitely learned and became committed to when my dad was sick and then when my dad passed away, it was like, "Thank goodness I did this," because I took off a little over a month and we were pretty much okay on podcast episodes. So, I like to plan in advance.

I've talked about this many times, but I keep a running list in Asana of all of my ideas in

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general. Some of these ideas are always on the cutting floor. Some of them become posts. Some of them become Instagram stories. Some of them become full-fledged podcast episodes. Some of them just become stories and emails. I don't judge it or try to put too much into it. I just, literally, jot it down free form, like completely brain dump in this list that I call ideas in Asana. So, I do that every single day or whenever I come up with it, but just because you'll run out of them or you'll forget them.

But at least on a more formal note, once a month we have a meeting and we plan out. So, I'll pitch all of these ideas of I want to talk about this, I want to talk about that. Or my marketing manager, Rachel, will say like, "Well, we have a promo coming up, so we're going to talk about X, Y and Z." And we kind of plot it all out and move it around on the map and make sure everything falls into place.

In terms of outlining - I talked about this before on the podcast - Lindsey, my operations manager, came up with a really good idea awhile back, probably been almost a year. But she said that it's really helpful to have different weeks where we kind of focus on different elements of the podcast.

The podcast takes a lot of effort. I put a lot of effort. We, obviously, spend a lot of money to put this together. There are a lot of people working on this behind the scenes, so this is a lot. It doesn't have to be that much to start out, but at this point it's a lot. So, we have a week where we plan or IDA or whatever, then an outlining week, then a recording week. And then, there's kind of the production and all the deliverables that come from it, like I'm supposed to write emails and things like that. So, I write, like, some intro copy.

It's a little bit different now that I hired a full time marketing manager recently, so I don't have to do as much of that backend marketing stuff. But I think that's a great way if I was by myself, that's how I would do it. I would kind of have that flow. So, you'll have to let me know if that's helpful.

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Okay. Let's see here. I got so many good questions on Instagram yesterday, so I want to get to those. Okay. Teresa asked, "Does it cost any money to start one and are there continuing charges?" So, here's the the deal - I'll be honest with you, Teresa, and everyone else - I hired a production team right away because at the stage of business when I started a podcast, there was no way that I was able to do that.

You could record on QuickTime for free, for example, and then you can hire an audio editor. Or some VAs, for example, have experience with this, doing some audio editing, creating some audio grams for you to share. So, there are more affordable ways for you to go about that. I don't know whether or not it costs money to then go post - I don't think so - your podcast on Apple or Spotify. I don't think so. I think that's free. So, that would be, I would say, the cost of whatever equipment you get up and running.

And then, maybe if you needed to use any software, like if you wanted to use something like Riverside to record or something else like that. But otherwise, if you already have a computer and it has something like QuickTime or some other kind of audio recording, then, no, in that sense. But it would be probably difficult to edit on your own, although I know a lot of people do. Okay.

Our Radiant Life said, "How do you keep inspired with topics? I struggle a lot with what to talk about." So, that's a really good question. And I find that the best way to stay inspired with topics is actually to make sure in your business you're doing a lot of things that don't relate to what you do.

So, it's really easy in online business or with having a small business at this stage that our whole life kind of becomes the business and we we think about the business a lot or you have a lot of things going on but maybe it's always in the back of your brain. So, when that happens, we can sometimes run a little short on creativity.

I find that the best thing I can do is go take a tech free walk, practice some mindfulness where I'm looking at the leaves and seeing the color and the texture, and trying to bring

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myself down. Like, for me, grounding myself really works. It also really works for me to get into any sort of pop culture situation. So, I don't know why, but my brain converts a lot of stuff from T.V. shows and movies or if I go see a play or something like this. I always walk away with whatever lessons are in that T.V. show or in the movie that I see. I always walk away with like, "Oh. That's how this happens in business." And then, I make that into a story of some kind.

I think the other way to make sure that you never run out of topics is to dedicate yourself. Like, give me 90 days with this ideas list and keep it wherever you want. It could be a note in your phone. It could be a journal. It can be an Asana task, white board, whatever. But give yourself 90 days to commit to writing any little story.

So, here's why I think people make the mistake. People make the mistake of only writing stuff down once they have the idea. What I do is I write stuff down that I think is like a funny thing that happened to me.

Like, you went to the coffee shop and you were waiting for your coffee. And the girl who had walked in way after you, when they hear the guy call up cappuccino with almond milk, she knows that cappuccino is not hers. But she goes up and she snags it because she's in a rush. And like me, because I'm literally the embodiment of Larry David would be standing there being like, "What? You just took my latte." And then, complaining about it. And everybody being like, "Why are you complaining about it? You should just be cool with it."

So, I feel like that's an example where that's literally something that happened to me. It means nothing. It could be a nothing. It could be a total nothing burger. I wrote it down. I wrote, "I was at my favorite coffee shop. Girl stole my cappuccino. I felt like I couldn't say anything for fear of being labeled Larry David, having Larry David's situation happen to me," something like that. And then, I think later on, I actually use that as a story that converted to not speaking up for yourself, not taking what's yours, not taking up space.

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So, that's an example where I didn't have a brilliant idea or a thought or a lesson when I saw that. I just wrote down like, "That's interesting." It's my understanding - I know nothing about comedy - that this is actually what comics do, that they write down funny stories or things that they see when they're out and about. Like the lady yelling at everybody at Starbucks that her cappuccino doesn't have enough foam or whatever. I'm giving a lot of cappuccino examples. But I think that that is actually something that comics actually use as a strategy to come up with topics, especially because you're poking fun at life.

And I find in our businesses that the best content that we probably can create comes out of our own experiences. And we live such busy lives and we have so many experiences. And we're so overstimulated and inundated with all these experiences that if you wait until later, what happens is, you're sitting down, you're like, "Okay. I have to plan a podcast episode. What should this podcast be about?" And then, there's just like a blinking cursor and you're like, "I can't think of anything." But instead, we're going back to this idea bank. We're going back to the cornerstone content, that I talked about earlier, like have you knocked all those topics out?

I also think the last thing I want to say to you about this topic is that, if and when you see stuff, either out and about or on social media or in an email or whatever, that gives you a strong reaction of any kind, you either are angry, you're upset, you love it, you're like, "Yes, yes, yes. I agree with this," that's a topic you should be speaking about. So, maybe you do some reflection about what you want to think about or say about it. I highly recommend processing things first before you go and try to put a podcast episode together. But, yeah, that's what you would do. That would be my recommendation. All right.

Chelsea asked, "How far ahead do you plan your episodes? Do you use a system based on your launches?" So, this is such a great question, Chelsea.

So, I plan ahead, usually a few months, but we kind of keep it flexible like when it's past

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a month or two. It's a little bit of we kind of think this is where we're going, but it's always subject to change because things change. But I record a month in advance. I highly, highly recommend to any of you who are thinking of starting a podcast, do not release a podcast when you only have one episode.

I think I recorded maybe six or eight before we went live the launch day. So, they released two maybe on the first day. And then, back then I only posted once a week. So, we had about a month of slack to be able to get back up and running. You don't want to get into a habit, like if it's me, I would really rather you just do it right and have enough of a runway with your podcast because stuff comes up, and you can't be in the cycle of ideating, outlining, planning, recording, editing, and then writing all the deliverables that go along with the podcast, like an email and social post. That is a lot to do every single week.

So, I think Lindsey's method of kind of giving yourself themed weeks and doing this in batches where you're recording maybe a handful of episodes every week. I have a rule that I never record just one podcast to sit down because it's a lot of inertia and planning. By the time I sit down, I better be recording more than one.

So, I would say that you would get this kind of planning batching method down, and then that way you can work ahead and have a lot of consistency. I think with podcasting, just like any other channel, if you're posting on YouTube or Instagram, consistency is key. People want to see you keep showing up.

In terms of whether or not I use a system based on my launches, in general, yes. So, what we do is, essentially, look at the content calendar. If you listen to my planning episode back in December - which I can link to below - I plan out just a handful of promotions or live webinars throughout the year. So, if we know we have one of those, that's kind of a big red dot on the calendar in terms of the podcast of like, "Hey, this webinar goes live this day or this product goes on sale that day."

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And so, we back out a couple of weeks. We reverse engineer a few weeks and say, "What do we want to talk about to warm people up for a few weeks before this thing goes live or the thing goes on sale?" And then, the week of the podcast, when it actually goes live, that's pretty targeted, usually, to the product or the sale. And then, afterwards, I usually try to keep a really light episode or a guest interview, like something that's really not about me pitching anything or talking about a product or anything like that. So, that's kind of my flow.

In between those periods, if you listen to my planning episode - which I highly recommend listening to any time of the year - you'll know that in between those periods I'm nurturing. So, from there, I'm going back to working on my evergreen strategy and like, "Am I hitting my cornerstone stuff? People keep asking this question, we got to address it. Or somebody brought up a really great question, I want to talk about it."

And then, I sprinkle in more personal stuff to keep it fun. And just for me to have something to look forward to. I don't want to talk about legal all the time, so it's fun for me to talk about something that's a little bit different. And I find by kind of releasing those parts of myself, it makes me able to show up and do my job much better, like when I am doing legal episodes. So, hopefully, that was helpful.

Okay. Deanna asked, "What if your topic has been talked about so many times in different podcasts?" I'm so glad that you asked that, Deanna, because I think that you should talk about whatever you want to talk about. I think as long as you're getting your ideas from yourself and not getting them because you're seeing other people talk about it. What I don't want to see people do in the online space is go, "Okay. Let me look up another person in my industry who kind of does what I do and let me see what they're talking about."

And then, you almost use that as a rubric. Like, I'm not saying you're copying them, but I don't want you to treat what other people are talking about as the standard. You get to set the standard. What should you be talking about? What do you wish people were

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talking about more? I also don't care if people have talked about something, if it needs to be talked about, you should be talking about it, too.

And I would also love for you to start putting yourself in the position of being the person who starts conversations and doesn't just participate in conversations. You don't comment on conversations. You start conversations. And having a podcast is a great way to do that because you actually get to start really interesting conversations. And because it's a long form piece of content, you have the time to be able to flush out your argument or, really, walk people through something. And that really sets you as an authority in your space. Hopefully, that was helpful, Deanna, let me know.

Okay. So, Megan asked, "Let's say I've recorded my first podcast episode. Now, what do I do?" So, Megan, that's such a good question because it probably feels a little overwhelming. But, hopefully, I've given you some information about the fact that, first, I would not post it yet. I would bank more episodes. I would come up with a little bit of a strategy about what episodes you're really going to roll out.

I think it's usually a good idea if you roll out a couple of episodes at once when you first release your podcast. You give people a little bit of a flavor. I tried to give people a few episodes that were a little different. I had a hot take, like Community Over Competition was actually my first episode. And then, I did a legal one. It's the second one for scope of practice. So, I was like, "Okay. I want to show people like what this podcast is going to be about. It's not just going to be about any one type of those episodes. It's going to be a little bit of everything." So, I tried to give people that flavor right off the jump.

So, you could record more, come up with a plan, get in your groove, make sure you have enough material to post for a while and start batching and getting ahead. And then, I would also start thinking about your distribution strategy of how are we getting this podcast in people's hands or in their ears, how are we getting people to listen, how are we spreading the word, what's your podcast all about, who's it for. So, that's what I would think about, Megan.

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All right. We got another question on Instagram that said, "What is all of the equipment and software that I really need to start?" Okay. So, I'm a big fan of not going crazy on tech or equipment or software to get started. So, in terms of equipment, I think that your best bet, the thing that I would spend the "most money" on is a mic. If you don't have a good mic, then that's going to be really important because audio quality is very, very important, obviously, for podcasting.

I have an Audio-Technica mic, which we're going to link to below. It's also the one that I'm giving away. So, if you haven't participated in the giveaway, just go down below, you can fill out the form to submit a question for a Sam's Sidebar episode, and then you're entered to win my tech package. But that's one thing.

I would say the second thing I got, which is the cheapest thing I got, was a little windscreen for the mic itself. With that windscreen, I'm able to block any of the super popping noises. I also talk with my hands a lot, so sometimes if I touch the table or I hit something by accident, it can help to blunt that a little bit. So, that's that.

You're supposed to have these big fancy headphones. I feel like that's what podcasters say. But I hope that my podcast production team is loving this part of the episode where I'm like, "Why do you have to wear these?" I'm not really sure. It helps me at least to block out the noise, but I'm not having any audio come back out, so I'm not sure why I'm supposed to wear headphones, but I do. You're also going to get those, and you can use them for anything else in your business that you want to, but that's part of the giveaway. So, I don't know, they told me that a nice pair of headphones was pretty necessary. But, honestly, I don't know why. I just popped them on and started recording.

I guess other than that, it would just be if you had to invest in any sort of software to record. So, something like Riverside or something similar would be really important, or getting QuickTime set up and running, or whatever. And then, from there it would be whatever it costs to edit or produce that podcast. There are plenty of people who are

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**ALL MY BEST PODCAST TIPS**  
**(Q&A+MAJOR GIVEAWAY)**

available who do this on a smaller scale.

My production team, Nova, is amazing. I would highly recommend them. I think they're always linked, but we'll make sure that they're linked. It's not probably for somebody who's just starting out, unless you have a bigger budget when you're starting out. But I think it's great to hire this out if and when you can. It's been huge for me. I would not be able to do it without them. And I wouldn't be able to do it, obviously, without the team who works on this behind the scenes.

All right. So, I hope that this Q&A episode was helpful all about podcasting. And have you entered the giveaway yet? You got to go and enter a Sam's Sidebar question below. That will automatically enter you for the chance to win my exact podcast setup in terms of my tech tools. You'll get my USB mic, my Audio-Technica mic, you'll get my headphones - which, as we discussed, I'm not sure why I need them, but you're going to get them and they're expensive. And you'll also get the pop filter windscreen, which is a must if you want to record outside or if you use your hands like me.

So, to enter, submit your questions at [samvanderwielen.com/legalquestion](https://samvanderwielen.com/legalquestion). You got to do that before March 16th. You get one entry per person. It's limited to those of you who are in the U.S. 18 or older. You don't have to purchase anything in order to win or anything like that. So, you want to go ahead and do that as soon as you can. We'll make sure that the link is down below in the show notes so that you can enter.

Thank you so much for joining me on Sam's Sidebar. I hope that this episode was helpful for you. Please send me a DM and let me know if you got something out of it. I love seeing when you share on social media, just tag me on Instagram, @samvanderwielen, so that I can give you a shoutout. And you know what I always ask, go ahead and text this episode to a friend. If you have a friend who's been wanting to start a podcast, this is a great thing to go and send them. So, thank you so much for listening. I can't wait to chat with you next week.

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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.