

On Your Terms Episode 120:  
When Do You Need To Get Legal Stuff in Place?

**Sam Vander Wielen:** Hey there, and welcome back to On Your Terms. I'm your host, Sam Vander Wielen. I'm an attorney turned entrepreneur who helps online coaches, and content creators, course creators legally protect and grow your online business.

And today, we're talking all about timing. When are you supposed to get certain legal steps in place? I get this question all the time, and so I'm hoping to clarify any questions that you have about timing today.

And if you're new here to the podcast, welcome. I am so happy to have you. I share legal tips and marketing tips and behind the scenes business building advice here every single Monday and Thursday. I just absolutely love being here and chatting with you, and I hope that you do too.

So, every episode in the month of May is kicking off with a Norm Tip. That's a little honor to my dad, Norm, who passed away in May last year. So, today's Norm Tip, like all Norm Tips, is one that is neither mind blowing nor one I technically recommend. But we're going to go with it because it was a Norm Tip and that's what we're doing.

So, today's Norm Tip was that Norm, he would always say the store wouldn't let you have an item if you were a penny short, so you should always get what you were owed. Now, let's all keep in mind that Norm was in a much different generation than we were, okay? And they didn't do all of this abundance and whatever, all the stuff that we do. So, just keep that in mind before we judge him. But also, he was a dad, so he gave out lots of advice that was like - I'm not so sure. But that's just the way that it was.

But, basically, what he was always saying was that if you would go to a store and you'd go to check out, and sometimes they'd not have a quarter or a nickel to give me back or something for change, and I would always be like, "Oh. That's okay. Don't worry about it." And my dad would be like, "No. Because if you didn't have the quarter, they wouldn't let you buy it." So, you should get what you're owed.

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So, like I said, not necessarily the mindset that I would recommend. I tend not to fuss too much about this kind of stuff. But Norm was Norm and we're definitely not changing him now. So, that was our Norm Tip of the day.

And today, we're going to get into Julie's question. Our listener, Julie, submitted a great question about timing. And speaking of listeners and speaking of questions, if you love listening to the podcast, if you've been listening to On Your Terms and you have a question for me, if you want me to answer your legal question, your business question, a marketing question, go in the show notes, click on the link and submit a question for me because I love answering your questions. I'm here to help you and I really want to know what you're confused about, what you don't understand, something that you haven't been able to put into place. In the show notes, there's a link to submit a question to me. Just go drop a question in there and then maybe a future episode will be dedicated to answering your question.

So, today's episode is dedicated to answering Julie's question, and Julie asked, "At what stage of business building and planning process should a solopreneur mindset life coach, in the just getting started stage of business, who has no audience, email list, offers, or market reach yet -" and I love that, Julie, included yet "- but who is very active on social media, apply for an EIN, get a business address, a business bank account, and formed an LLC?"

I really love this question, Julie, because so many people accidentally fall into the trap or hear a lot of really bad myths around like, "Oh. If I'm not that profitable yet, then I don't need all this legal stuff," or there's just a lot of hubbub about the timing.

So, how's now sound, Julie? Because you might feel like you don't have a business yet because you don't have an email list or your offers aren't quite set up yet but you're working on it, according to what you told me. So, when your website's ready or something, your email list is going to start to build, you are going to have offers. Even if no one has purchased those offers yet, we have to get legal in place so that that stuff is

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in place for when the clients come. We don't wait for the clients to sign up and then get all of our legal stuff in place because legal is not retroactive. So, we need to have this stuff in place by the time people sign up to work with us.

So, here's kind of the gist of, I think, what you need to know in order for me to truly answer this question. For one, you're liable for free content. That's just the truth of it. I'm not saying that to scare you. I'm not telling you not to post stuff. It's just that you have to know because there's this myth that you can only get in "trouble" for things that you get paid for. When in reality, you can actually get held liable for things that you post on social media or stuff on your website, even when it's free.

So, even when you're just posting on social media, you need to have legal coverage already. You can get sued for anything you say and post about there too. And so, just because it's free doesn't make it any less liability inducing. What makes client work not more liability inducing, but I guess what changes it, is, if they pay you, then you could owe them the money that they paid you, and that sucks. But you can still get sued for somebody can say that they've been harmed in some way by your free content.

The second thing is that there are start up steps. So, you're already posting on social, which is great, but now you can use that time to get your EIN, for example. That's your Employer Identification Number. That's free to get from the IRS. It takes, like, 30 seconds. You can form your business and you can set up your business bank account.

I teach, by the way, all of those in depth in my signature program, The Ultimate Bundle. I teach you how to form your business. I teach you how to set up a business bank account, connect it to your payment gateways, how to get paid, and take the money from clients to yourself, how to pay yourself, all that stuff. I even teach you how to fill out the EIN. I do all of that in the Ultimate Bundle. So, there's a link to learn more about the Bundle below. I also have a podcast episode that's in depth about those three steps in particular, so I will link to that in the show notes as well. Okay.

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So, the third thing is about future proofing. So, a lot of people think that they need to have the email list, the client roster, sales rolling in before they start to get legal protection. But in reality, it's kind of the opposite, because you'll want to know how to legally build an email list. You can't just add anybody you want to your email list.

You have to have your website policies ready for when your website goes live because websites and the law around our website policies, it doesn't matter at all about how much traffic you have. Nobody says like, "Oh. If you only have a thousand visitors a month, you don't need to have a privacy policy." There's no rule like that. So, when your website's ready, you're going to need those policies to be ready to be posted on your website.

And then, you also want to have your contract ready for your first offer before anybody sets foot in your digital door. So, when somebody finally responds back and says, "Yes. I'm ready to work with you. I want to work with you," it's too late to be like, "Oh. I got to go find a contract. I got to fill it out. I got to prepare it. I got to now figure out how I'm going to send it to you." You really should have all of that set up ahead of time.

Lots of my customers use this, like, quieter time in their business to get the basics set up, and it gives them the confidence and the courage to get started and put themselves out there. So, as your business grows, you can add on and layer on legal protection as needed and you can keep your contracts updated.

I have a post for you about when to keep your contracts updated, which I can link to in the show notes. But I think a lot of times, you know, we see ourselves as being really, really busy when we're in the startup stage. And you are busy, don't get me wrong, and I know that your life is busy and you have a lot going on. It doesn't get less busy, let's just put it that way. I have way less time now to do that kind of stuff than I would have six, seven years ago.

So, the point is that you want to legally protect the business that you're growing. We

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don't necessarily want to just protect the business that you have right at this moment because the whole point is for it to grow. I talk about that a lot in a post that I'm going to link to down below, an episode that I did about future proofing your business.

And as I always say to my customers, my Ultimate Bundle members, you got to build this one brick at a time. You are building the foundation. You're building what goes at the bottom, which is the strongest part, and it's going to hold up all the rest, all the offers, all the email lists, all the websites that you're talking about. That's all going to be built up by this foundation that we're talking about right now.

And as an online business owner, I know that you know that questions like Julie's come up almost daily. And that ongoing need for legal and business information, as well as the contracts and the policies and all the templates that you need, is exactly why I created the Ultimate Bundle. It's the go-to legal program for online business owners. It's where you get all of my contract templates and website policy templates, the ten essential ones that you need as an online business owner, plus access to over 35 on demand video trainings. You get support from me in a private community. You get lifetime access and you get updates. I keep the Ultimate Bundle super updated. I just added in two updated contracts today and an updated training, and I emailed out everybody and let them know.

So, from start up to scaling, this is the go-to program to legally protect your online business. I'll drop a link in the show notes below. If you sign up for my free workshop, Five Legal Steps to Protect and Grow your Online Business, you can get a discount and a whole lot of bonuses to the Bundle. So, that's the best place to start.

So, I hope that this was helpful. I hope you enjoyed listening to this episode. Wherever you listen to this episode, please give it a quick rating and review. If you like it, send it to a friend if they find it helpful. And, of course, my DMs - I'm @samvanderwielen on Instagram - are always open to let me know what you thought about this episode or if you had any questions. I just so appreciate you being here and I can't wait to chat with

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you next week.

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