

On Your Terms Episode 141:  
Re air Episode 65. How to Build an Email List with without  
freebies

**Sam Vander Wielen:** Hey there. It's Sam. And welcome back to On Your Terms. I'm so excited that you're here. So I'm really excited because for the next couple of weeks, I'm running something that I'm calling Online Marketing Summer School. So I'm going to be airing a series of episodes that are all geared towards helping you bump up your online marketing game this summer.

So I'll be real with you, as always. I am taking a little time to recoup this summer because I just lost my mom. My mom just passed away. Yes, you heard that right. Both of my parents, I have lost both of my parents in the past year. So as you can imagine, it is very tough, very overwhelming. And I need a little bit of space. And I know that I've already given you hundreds and hundreds of episodes of this show and thousands of emails and blog posts and social posts. And I know that there's so much waiting for you that you might just not have had time to catch up on yet.

So I decided to put it all together for you. Call it Online Marketing Summer School. And I am really excited to bring back some of my favorite episodes from my, and also from your favorite teachers here that I've had on the show to help us bump up our marketing game this summer. It's such a good time to revisit your marketing strategy or to create one. If you haven't yet, don't worry, I won't tell anybody. But it's such a good time for you to do that because you can get some things set up this summer to maybe do some sort of promotion in the fall or just have a better half of the rest of 2023.

So I invite you to kick back, relax, listen to the next couple

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of weeks of episodes all about online marketing, and I hope that you'll send me a DM on Instagram at @SamVanderWielen or leave a review of the show wherever you listen to. Let me know if you've liked these episodes. Hopefully, if you've never heard them before, I'm introducing you to something new.

And if you're listening to them again, take a note from my mom, who was a brilliant, brilliant woman and would reread so many books throughout her life. Like she read, reread the book *Flow* and like *Tipping Point* and so many different books. Throughout her life, she would reread them in different parts of her life, and she would always walk away with something new. And she would always put in the notes what year she read it and what year, like what she learned that year versus the other years.

So there is nothing wrong with relistening to things. I relisten all the time. So I hope that if you've listened before, you take away something new from this great episode. So I'll see you on the other side. Please send me a message. Let me know how you liked it. Thank you so much for listening.

So I know by now you've probably heard like all these email list building strategies, like do a pop up or like add opt ins all over your website. But you're like, I don't understand. I still don't understand how to build an email list. Like, how do I get anybody to actually put their email in there? Right? I feel like this stuff is just like so dialed in in our industry and people don't really give you great email list building strategies because they're not thinking about it from a high level marketing perspective. So today, we are talking all about easy email list building strategies, things that I have tried in my own business, things I've seen with so many other people. So I

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am really excited to chat with you all about email lists today.

In case you're new here, hey there. I'm Sam Vander Wielen. Welcome to On Your Terms. I'm an attorney turned entrepreneur. And in my day job, I help online coaches and service providers legally protect and grow their online businesses using my DIY legal templates and my Ultimate Bundle program. Here on the show each week, I bring you fresh tips on how to legally protect your business. But just like today, I also talk to you about how to actually grow our business on your terms.

So if you're new around here too, or if you've been here for a while but you don't know yet, every Thursday I have been doing a legal Q&A on my own email list, and I would love to invite you to join us. So essentially, one of my email list subscribers submits a legal question for me, and every Thursday I send out the answer. We've talked about things, everything from business insurance, to scope of practice, to LLCs and sole props to contracts and beyond. You can really easily get those legal Q&A series emails by signing up in the link below. You actually won't get any massive marketing emails sent to you. You'll just get signed up for my legal Q&A newsletter every Thursday called Sam's Sidebar.

Okay. Before we hop into this week's episode, I just have to give a shout out to Reading Bard, who left a review on Apple Podcasts of the show. Reading Bard said, I just found you on YouTube and followed your podcast. And after just one episode, I know this will become a regular listening indulgence. Thanks for your practical, down to earth approach to the legal aspects of running a small business while somehow managing to make it fun to listen to. Well, thank you so much Reading Bard.

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You can 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 leave a review on Apple. I pick a new winner every month, so be sure to submit your review. Now, I hope to give you a future shoutout.

So with that, let's hop into the episode. I talked about in this episode, how I built my own email list from zero to tens of thousands of people over many years. Don't worry. I talked about really the two main, like what I call inroad strategies to building an email list and what you really need to know about freebies in order to make them work. At the very end, I do share a little Q&A series. A lot of people submitted questions about building email lists and freebies and all kinds of stuff, so I addressed all of those at the end. I hope you love it. If you end up liking this episode, please text it to a friend. It means so much to me. Thank you so much for listening. Now go and enjoy the show.

All right. So let's talk email list building. I wish you could see the look on my face. I'm giddy with excitement to be able to chat with you about this today because I freaking love email marketing. Not from like a weird, like schemy way, but because I don't, at least in my experience, I feel like the email list community is one of the strongest parts of my business.

And again, not from like a sales perspective, but I just feel like I get such kind emails back and I feel like people share such interesting feedback and thoughts and their experiences and their stories from my emails. And it's just different. Like it's different than a DM or I don't know, some other place where I

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hear from people all the time and I just really love our email list. So I don't know, not to get all gushy and stuff, but I'm very excited. And I feel like this is an area where I've really like dove in and tried to learn a lot about online business and have kind of made all the mistakes for you, but also have sharpened my elbows a little bit in this area too. So I'm excited to chat with you about it.

So I feel like a lot of times people, you know, it's been funny. Like I started my business in like 2016, 2017, email list were really popular and then I feel like they got poo pooed on for a while. And now I feel like they've been really popular again, especially because of the uprising of things like paid newsletters through platforms like Substack and stuff like that. And I just am kind of, I don't know, I just feel like for myself, I'm just kind of like, oh, I was just doing it the whole time. Like, I never stopped, right?

So I think that there's something to just email marketing being a backbone and a workhorse of your business. And I don't want you to pay attention so much in business as to like this is in and this is out and no one cares about email, no one cares about websites, no one cares about blogs. I think that first of all, you have to find what you like to do, where your audience and how your audience likes to consume content.

And I also just think of where it makes sense given what you talk about, right? So for what I talk about, I think things like this, like a podcast. Talking about legal topics is a little bit easier to do in audio. Sometimes what I write about with legal is easy to do in writing because I'm just giving you tips and tricks and it's very digestible, right? But when there's like

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more nuance, I like to do it through audio or video.

So yeah, I just would consider that and kind of step out of the rat race of is this popular anymore? Does anyone care about blogs? It's like, Google is my number one traffic driver. We drive a ton of traffic to my website from Google every single day since 2016 to today. It's never changed. It's only grown. So like, I don't know what the proof's in the pudding, you know? So I feel like a lot of times people will ignore email marketing too, because of the flashier stuff. Like it's not as sexy, nobody knows how many followers you have or subscribers you have like you do on social media.

And being so only focused on the flashy stuff like social media, it just keeps you in this cycle. The social media platforms are constantly changing. I mean, the platforms themselves are constantly changing, let alone like talk about flashy stuff. Are we supposed to be into Instagram anymore? I don't know. Is Instagram dead? We're all supposed to be running to TikTok. Like, is TikTok going to crash and burn? Who knows? Right. And it keeps you on this cycle of creating little bitsy pieces of content that don't necessarily work for you. I want you to create more content that works for you. And we'll talk about how your email list kind of plays into that.

It also keeps you in this cycle of what I call toilet content. Maybe you've heard me refer to that before, but I don't mean that your content is garbage. But what I mean is that you're creating this content and it's literally like pouring it down the toilet and flushing, right? It's just like you do a story that has this brilliant tip in it for your audience. And in 24 hours, it's gone. And unless you save that video and repurpose

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that video and use it somewhere else in your business, it's gone.

And for a lot of people, that's the only place that they're doing stuff like that, right? Even writing an incredible caption, it's like, Instagram's like, cool, we'll show it to 12 people for 3.5 seconds. Oops, it's gone. And it's not that the physical content is actually gone like stories, but your ability to really reach people is gone, right?

So I like the fact that when we talk about emails and other forms of content being more of your base content, like you've heard me talk a lot about on the podcast about emails should be based content and then something like a podcast or a YouTube channel or a blog post, right? That should be kind of the foundational content. And then from there, you can break it off and share on social media. So let's say you write this brilliant email to your email list. You can break that probably into many, many social posts, but at the very least, you could break it into one.

So instead of focusing all your time and energy on social posts, all I'm asking is to shift your energy to something that's a bit more foundational that will work for you for the long haul and create a deeper connection. And you actually own the email list and that's your customer contacts, which are super valuable to a business, by the way. And then you can take that foundational content and go share it on these flashy, always changing algorithmic. Is that a word? Yeah. Algorithmic platforms, right? So that's a lot of what we're going to talk about today.

I think that my experience too, I feel like people spend more

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time worrying about what to write or writing the right thing than just getting started and practicing. And I know that that's not the sexiest advice or tip. Nobody wants to hear like just keep practicing, keep messing up. But I think with writing in particular, that really is what it takes, especially if any of you came out of a different background, maybe you have different educational experience and like what you're talking about now, or different job experience.

I know for me, like beating the lawyer language out of me, right, I was kind of a -- one time, this lawyer I worked for, referred to my writing as flowery. So I was a flowery writer, whatever that means. And then, don't worry, the law beat that out of me where I wrote really dry and just write the facts, man, kind of thing. And then becoming a coach first and then an online legal templates entrepreneur, I learned how to write the way that I would talk to you, right? The way that if you just ask me a question, this is how I would say it. I wouldn't say it like a robot. I wouldn't be like dear sir or madam. I would write the way that you and I would just sit down for coffee.

And that's really what I want my brand to feel like. That's my goal. That's also just the goal for copywriting, right? It's just like feeling like you're getting a note from a friend. So I do think that practice goes a long way with that because maybe you do have to shift out of it or just maybe that's not comfortable for you, right? It takes a lot of unlearning and relearning.

People also make a lot of mistakes when it comes to freebies. And so, we're going to talk about that in detail today. I actually asked my Ultimate Bundle members if they had any

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questions about building an email list and almost all of the questions that everyone submitted, which I'll share at the end, were about freebies. So I'm excited to dive into that.

So when I started my business back in 2016, I did what I think a lot of people do and very stupidly through all of my family and friends on an email list, right? So I was like, I think I used MailChimp for about 4.5 minutes and then I almost immediately went to ConvertKit and I felt like ConvertKit was like pretty new at that time. I'm not sure, but it felt pretty new.

And I remember I transferred all of the contacts over and I started using ConvertKit. That's still what I use 2022 and it's still what I use today. I love it. I will share the link below for you to have access to a free, like a free trial that they have now. So if you don't, if you like MailChimp because they have a free option, ConvertKit has that now too. So I'll share my affiliate link below. But I set myself up on ConvertKit and I started emailing my family and friends.

Now at that time, I was starting a health coaching business, but it was a great way to just like get in the habit and make a commitment to write. My friend, my coach, my colleague, Jen Diaz, she's a mindset and success coach. She talks about just getting in the habit of writing and how like she helps people to achieve their version of success, right, and define even what that means.

And one of the things that she's talked to me a lot about is how committing to something and then showing up is how we actually build confidence in ourselves. And I didn't do this on purpose at the time, but I look back now and I'm like, oh, by committing

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to doing this once a week and emailing them every Monday or whatever day you pick, I didn't realize it then, but what I was really doing was establishing this trust in myself. I was also practicing. And it made me feel comfortable, right?

And so, I also got into the habit of feeling like I was writing to family and friends because I was. So it kind of helped me to just start off this tone, this friendly tone that that's what I wanted to carry over. Even when I hoped that one day it wouldn't just be my family and friends. And I'm sharing that because a lot of people submitted questions being like, what do I do when I'm starting from zero? So I just wanted to talk about that.

Eventually, when I started my legal templates business, I created my first freebie, which back then the hot thing to do was create really in-depth guides. So I created the Legally Legit Guide a million years ago. I actually still have it and I recently updated it big time. I'll share the link below in case anyone's trying to legally protect their business. But that was my first freebie. I added a signup sheet for my in-person workshops when I was hosting workshops. I would teach legal workshops at conferences. Or I would do things in Philly, like different entrepreneurs would host things, and I would go there.

And I would always bring with me, I would look up on Canva email list, sign-up sheet or sign-up sheet or something like this. I would slap my logo on it and print it out and bring it with me and literally just have like the person's name, email, and then I would have like a little checkbox that said, is it okay if I add you to my email list, which is not necessarily the recommended, it's not the best marketing way of making your email list sound great. But honestly, I think when you go to in

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person stuff, everybody wants to keep in touch with you after because they probably have learned something from you.

I then started sharing tips on social that led to my freebie. So essentially, my Legally Legit Guide has like five or six parts. And so I would create social content from those five or six parts so that it would directly make sense to now, like, okay, you want to learn more, now go get my guide. And for the last five, six years, I just kept emailing. I kept emailing and emailing and emailing. I've never missed a week in over five years. I was always vulnerable and honest with them because again, I kind of maintained this hey, it's all friends here.

Even as the numbers crept up and I started to be like, oh, actually we're not all, you're not all like in real life friends anymore, right, or all of these people don't have my last name. Even when people started writing back some pretty dang mean stuff, right? I was like, oh, it's not just my aunts and my cousins anymore, right? But I kept focusing on community and engagement and my email list is super engaged. So yes, we have tens and tens of thousands of people on it, which is super nice. But what's more important to me is like a lot of people open them and a lot of people respond, which is really, really important.

It's also okay and normal, I think, by the way, that if you send out a lot of emails and you're like, man, I feel like no one cares, no one's reading this, blah blah, blah. There are a lot of lurkers out there because a lot of times people will respond to my emails and be like, I've been on your email list for five years and I just want to let you know I love them, and I've never heard from them before. And so just don't let that get to

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you too much.

Once I started Facebook ads, I feel like a ton more people started coming into my list. And what happened on my end was that I shifted for the first time, and I got sort of like, I would say, safe. I was like, okay, I'm going to just start emailing them like, hey, Lindsay, I have a new podcast episode this week. In this podcast episode, you learn A, B and C. Have a great week. Bye-bye. Right? And I just started to get very nervous because one thing that happens not only when your business starts to grow a lot, but when you start running Facebook ads too, you start getting a lot of feedback and you start getting a lot of feedback from people who aren't familiar with your brand yet, right.

So in the old days, in the olden days, when I would just like be on Instagram or something, someone would probably follow you for a while. They get to see you, hear you, yada yada. If they chose to get your freebie and get on your email list, they kind of knew you already. But nowadays, we see this rapid acceleration of people, like a lead generation of people just opting in and then getting my emails and then they're angry and they hate you and you're like, wait, who are you? And they don't know you. And it's just this whole mess, right?

But a couple months ago, I had a breakthrough moment. Several months ago now, I had a breakthrough moment where I was like, you know what? I need to go back to how I used to do this, which was like storytelling and tip driven and legal tip driven. And the emails themselves are valuable and they're not just letting people know about this stuff and like about the podcast or whatever. And I'm going to do it in a super different way. And

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I'm going to add a legal Q&A every Thursday called Sam's Sidebar, Serving Up Legally Legit Tips since 2017, which I did, and now people love that. That's really taken on and it really drove up the value of my email list again. It drove up engagement.

And I even started experimenting with something that I'll talk to you a little bit about today, which was what I'm calling an easy email list sign up internally, which is just allowing people to join my email list because my email list itself is valuable versus having to go through a freebie or having to go through some huge, long email drip marketing campaign. I've been testing that for several months and it's going really well so far, but we'll talk about it a little bit more.

Okay. So here's kind of my like big picture perspective on building your email list. Essentially, in my mind, there are kind of two roads into your email list. The first is that the email itself is the value, but there's a huge but here and we're going to talk about that in a second. The second road in, in my opinion, is that the person joining your email list gets something valuable in exchange for their email address, going onto your email list so they get some sort of freebie, something. Right.

Those are kind of the two roads in as to how you can collect and build email list strategies. Now the ways that you do that, whether it's through pop ups or challenges or freebies and all different kinds of stuff, right? Having opt ins all over your website are all different tactics, I guess. But sometimes, I feel like the strategy behind it, the big picture marketing strategy, just gets lost in being like throw up of pop up. It's

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not just a pop up. There's a lot more that goes to this.

In my mind, one of the things that you have to kind of shift in your mind or step into if you're doing this for the first time, if you really want to build your email list, is that you have to start thinking about your business big picture, like the 30,000 foot view that I talked about in episode 60 of On Your Terms, where I talked about taking the 30,000 foot view of your business. I think that you have to start thinking about the fact that all roads lead to your email list. The goal of pretty much every piece of marketing thing that you create is to get people to your email list.

And then from there, we have a bunch of goals beneath that, right. You want to get them to your emails and then obviously we want to do something about that. We want to nurture, and we then obviously want them to convert at some point if it's right for them and it's right for you and all that good stuff. But all roads have to lead there. So you create a piece of content on Instagram.

The call to action is a lead magnet to your email list. You have a podcast, and you film a podcast episode. You have a commercial for something that once they join it, they end up on your email list. You have a website, you've got opt ins all over it, right? You run a challenge. It's to make sure that you have people sign up so that you're collecting their email address. You're not just having them join a Facebook group or something like that.

So it really just has to become a priority in your mind. I feel like that's like the first piece is just this level of awareness of every time you think of an idea of like, oh, I'm going to run

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this challenge or I'm going to create this video series, how can that benefit my email list? How am I capturing this for my email list? Right? That really just has to become part of the deal.

So let's talk about the -- remember, I talked about the two roads. Road number one is that the email itself is the value. Road two is that they get something valuable in exchange for joining your list. Let's talk about road number one. Let's talk about when the email itself is the value. So what I'm talking about is like join my email list because I sent like, this is not how I'd say it, by the way, but I'm just you and me, we're just talking. So it's like when you say join my email list because this email is amazing. Like the email itself has value in it. Like I'm going to email you about awesome stuff that's going to be super helpful for your life, your business, your relationships, your career.

So I think that one thing that it's helpful when you're going to focus on the email itself being the value and you're going to use that to drive leads and people opting in to join your email list is that you have to almost like name it or establish it. Establish like the email in some way, right? It has to be something that's like consistent and it almost has to have like a theme or a vibe to it.

So I just brought up my example. This is a good example. So every Thursday I email my list, a legal Q&A. So that's essentially what it is, right? So essentially, people on my email list can submit questions to me and then I answer them in an email every Thursday called Sam's Sidebar, Serving Up Legally Legit Tips since 2017. I just always have to read the subtitle, the tagline because I just love it.

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So it has like a name, but also within the name, it's describing to you what you're going to get. So instead of me saying to somebody, hey, Sarah, join my email list. Instead, it was like, hey, did you know that every Thursday I answer a legal question from the audience, and you get the answer on things like business insurance? Or last week, I wrote to someone about scope of practice. Somebody submitted a question about scope, or it's where I've always shared my tips about how to read contracts other people send you or something like that, right? You could give them examples of prior emails or give them examples of prior topics you've tackled in those emails, something like that.

I think the more you can almost create this sort of theme around it, it would be really helpful. The point of all this is that we have to give people a reason to be there. What value do they get from your email? What's in it for them? I mean, that is a copywriting tip 101 is always like, what's in it for them? What's in it for them? Why should they care? That is always in the back of my mind. A lot of times, I go, and I write something, even as simple as like a caption on one of my Instagram stories and I'm like, nope, that doesn't make sense because that's just me describing it or it's me describing why I care about it. But that's not why they should care about it or it's not what they care about this thing, right?

So that's why we don't use things like sign up for my newsletter because that benefits you. But what's in it? How does that help me? Why should I join your newsletter? But if instead you say join my newsletter, you can get ten recipes a week delivered straight to your inbox. I'm like, what, I can get ten recipes a

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week, I need that. I want that. Right? So that's for me. I want the recipes, not join my newsletter.

Or be the first to hear about my podcast episode when it goes out. Nope, that's about me. That's helping me just promote my own podcast episode. But instead of telling people you'll be the first one to hear about my podcast episodes that drop that are full of legal tips for your online business, blah, blah, blah, something like that. Right? I would probably phrase it even better than that. But the point is just that you have to get in this mindset of shifting everything to be about the other person and not about what this is for you, or just merely descriptive.

The email itself just has to have independent value. And so I think creating some sort of expectation around this, like it comes every week. This is a Q&A Tuesday. This is something that goes out every Friday. I have a bunch of emails that I subscribe to that I get, like I know when I get them. Like this one by Leslie Stevens, who used to be a blogger for cupcakes and Cashmere. She shares links and recommendations to things she loves. It comes out every Tuesday morning. I think it's even called Tuesday morning or something about mornings. I forget.

But the point is like, look, I know, I know it comes out the first thing Tuesday morning. It comes out real early and I always look forward to sitting down with my coffee and I read it every single week. Right? I know about other people who email Sunday nights and I always look forward to looking through all their links and recipes and things they share. So I think something around creating this consistency, this theme, give them a reason to expect it.

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Now, here's where I really need you to dig deep, though. All right. We got to have like a friend-to-friend conversation here. If you have two people on your email list, I still need you to send this out whenever you've committed to doing this. You're never going to get from 2 to 200 to 2000 to 200,000 without passing all of those along the way, without showing up consistently and doing this always.

Now, I'm not, you know me, I'm not talking about like something horrific happens in your life or you need a break, you're really burnt out, please do whatever you need for you. But what I'm saying is like, don't, please do not stop emailing them because you say I only have two people. I don't know what to say. I feel like I've already said this. Please keep emailing. And we're going to talk about strategies of things that you can email.

Even so, I mean, I could talk to you all day long, but like what to write to your email list, I'm sure you have boundless ideas. I hope you do. Anything that comes up in conversation with customers, react to something you don't agree with, share how you've walked the walk. I love those kinds of emails. Share about something you've already gone through, processed and done differently, and what the lesson is in it for them, right? Like there's so much that you can write about, there's so much, but please just do me a favor and keep going. Keep doing it because that is the only way to build this in the long term. Even if you have one person and they have your last name, please keep doing it.

All right. So now we have to shift gears. We have to talk about scenario number two, the road number two, which was that the person gets something valuable in exchange for joining your

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email list. So typically, this is in the form of some sort of freebie. Freebies can be many, many, many different things. They don't have to be guides. They don't have to be webinars. I just think there are so many different ways that you can do this.

So here's the deal with freebies. Freebies in general, I think the biggest thing that I've learned about them is that the best freebies, the ones that really rack up a lot of email list subscribers, which by the way, is not always the goal. You want to get like the right people and all that kind of stuff. But the ones that really will get a lot of signups are no brainer, easy quick wins, something that somebody not only from the title and the description of this freebie but something that like when the person actually opens the freebie, they get something very tangible, that's very implementable, very easy win, and that can mean something so different for you based on what you do.

So I could come up with eight million examples, right, of things from recipes to a resume outline or template or something like this, something that's just so easy to implement. I think it's helpful to teeter on the, I think like the freebies that I've had that have been the most successful are things that teeter on the like I feel like I should charge for this sort of thing. So if you have something in your mind that you're like the next time you come up with an idea of some sort of resource or template, people love templates like calendars, downloadable things. If you have that kind of thing and you're like, should I make this like a \$9 product or \$20 product? For me, that would be like a no brainer freebie that you would turn into.

I had this last year when I had this idea to give people my pre-qualify before they buy email templates. So these are a set of

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three templates that I'll link to below that are free. It's a freebie for my business that you get these email templates to send, to set up in your like calendar scheduling thing when people book a call with you, to set out to those people to pre-qualify them before you ever even get on the phone. It leads to less people wanting to pick your brain, less people who just never intended to buy, and more people who are warm and ready to purchase.

So this was something super easy for me to throw together. It was something I considered making a product, a digital product, but I also just felt like this was a great easy win for people to have these email templates that you can literally copy and paste and use as your own. And a lot of people have grabbed these. I hope you grab them if you haven't already. But something that kind of teeters on that, like, should I charge for this? I think it's helpful.

Now, in terms of ideas, I mean, the list is endless. You could do things like checklists. I think checklists are pretty cool, but they have to be helpful, right? You really want to, again it has to be a quick win, a calendar. I love the idea of a self-care calendar. Like, I love the idea if you did, if you were a self-care coach and you every month gave out these pack of calendar or if you signed up for your email list, then every month you sent me a calendar with ideas of little self-care tips beyond taking a bath. I think that's so cool. And you could theme them to the months and the seasons and all that kind of stuff.

Recipes are huge. Again, if you're a coach, you're not allowed to tell people what to eat in terms of the amount and the time

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and don't eat this and eat that, but you can give people recipes and obviously can give people recipes. So I think that is such an easy win if you're helping people with that, if you're helping people with food and you can make the recipes very specific to the kinds of people you help. Are they all one pot recipes? Are they all the kinds of recipes that are done in 30 minutes or less? Are they all vegan recipes? Are they all high protein? Whatever it is that you help people with, I feel that is a super easy win.

I think things like prompts are really helpful too. For those of you who maybe are more in like the life coaching, mindset coaching realm. People love prompts, people love journal exercises, guides like kind of walk you through processing something. I think that's really helpful. If I were you and I did something on the more techie, creative side, I'd probably do something a tutorial through a screen share video, like a Loom. I think like a Loom could be really cool.

You could do a template like my email templates that I have, but you can do all different kinds of templates, resume templates, email templates, Canva templates. There are all kinds of things. Screen share videos and tutorials. And then obviously there are things like bigger things that are really high value freebies, like video lessons, which you can either do like a one-time video lesson or a video series that's dripped out.

One thing that I really love is a secret podcast episode. I think that's really cool. If you have a podcast, I think what a smart way to have a freebie would be get the secret podcast episode that's not around. Then one thing I would do is then turn that into a marketing campaign, like a nurture after that

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to let people know about my podcast. Right? That would be really smart. But also, I think in that podcast episode itself, you could probably pitch your product or let people know about the next step that they should take or something like that. But I think like an unlisted podcast episode could be really cool.

I also think there's a lot that you can do around audio depending on what you do, like a visualization or a meditation. Personally, I feel like I've been looking for this. I haven't seen anybody doing this as a freebie. I'm absolutely positive it exists. I just don't come across it that much. But I feel like if anybody does that in their business, can you please start doing meditation or visualization audios that's your freebie? I think that's such a smart thing. And then if you had an app that you set up or a membership site, that's just such an easy like, oh, I get your freebie of your visualization. I love it. Oh, you have a membership site where you have all your visualizations, that makes sense to me. So that's what I would do personally.

And then, the old standby, the Old Mac Daddy is the webinar. So I have this with The Five Legal Steps to Protect Your Online Business. Obviously, lots and lots of people do this. Webinar is a great way to, I think nurture people who are very interested in what you're teaching about and probably also need your offer, right? And it gives them really the time to learn from you and get to know you and really see your teaching style and see if this is something that they need and also gives you this opportunity to pitch your product at the end.

There's a lot of nuance to webinars. They have to be done right? I mean, we put an insane amount of research into everything down to the title, to the tagline, to the branding, to the teaching

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points, to the voice of customer, to the testimonials that we share. I'm very, very strategic about what I share and what order and why. There's so much to it. Mine is still very highly converting.

I know that there's a lot of talk about in the industry about webinars don't work anymore, but going back to the beginning of the episode, it's like, I don't know, we have to just sometimes put a little bit of that aside. I would say that webinars are not working the way they used to, in my opinion. They're not working like the same webinars that we did the same way are not working in the same way. That's kind of how I would put it. And I think maybe it's even just some of the marketing stuff that goes around webinars too, like the emails that go out and just the way it's marketed and talked about.

I think personally for me, this has just been like a year of diversifying a bit more and not relying on any one thing, whether that's a webinar or Facebook ads or Instagram strategy or email marketing. I've just diversified and gone back to a bit more of my foundational roots and removed some of the shoulds, like you should never let someone join your email list without sending them a million emails after to like nurture them. I'm testing that and I'm seeing that it's okay. So that's what I kind of have to say about webinars. I know people ask about that.

I think when it comes to any of these freebies that we just talked about, the place that most people go wrong is that the freebies are way too overloaded. And I don't necessarily mean that from the perspective of you gave too much value away for free because I don't really believe in that. I mean, unless you

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literally gave your product away for free, I think that people still probably need you. But it's like when there's too much in a freebie, it's too overwhelming. And because of that, they don't have that quick win, that tangible takeaway that we talked about.

So if you can maybe pare it down, right, take some stuff out of it, give people more of that tangible win and then encourage them to share about that with their peers, that's probably not only a good way to make the people happy who joined, but also to get a lot of referrals. So I think you also need something that's kind of easy to explain, right? Like not something that's really complicated or sometimes I hear people describe the title of their freebies and I'm like, but what's the takeaway? What's the benefit? What is that little quick win that I'm going to get from that?

Like one I just thought of was like three weeknight recipes you make with no cooking skills, right? And so first of all, you told me that I was going to get three weeknight recipes, which I feel like kind of connotes they're going to be a little bit easier, usually a little easier to clean up, a little bit faster cooking time. But you also told me I don't need to have any cooking skills, which was probably one of my objections when you initially told me, I'll give you these recipes and I thought, I can't cook.

Obviously, we all know this is not for me because I love cooking. I'm not saying I have cooking skills, but I love to cook. So I'm not tooting my own cooking horn. But I think that's like a great example where you told me who it's for and what the tangible takeaway is. And then when I open up this freebie,

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there's three super easy, implementable weeknight recipes. You could go even deeper with this and make them all vegetarian or whatever it is that you do for people, right? So I think something that's very easy to explain would be helpful.

The very last but probably the biggest issue that I see when it comes to bad freebies is that they don't lead to anything that you actually do or have to offer. Right? So I'm a big fan of reverse engineering a lot in life in general. And I like to start out with the product that you're trying to lead to or the service in your case and then kind of back out. So based on like, let's say you're trying to fill seats in a group program and or online course, right? And you're like, you teach these five things. There are five sections of your course.

And so, then I would kind of back out and say what's like one easy, very early on thing that somebody would have to overcome before they'd even be ready to do this. Right? And I would probably make that my freebie. And so that when I make my freebie, it's a very natural transition that the person who would want my freebie would want my product or service, right? And so, a lot of times what I see is that there's just some disjointment there where people will create this freebie and then it's just like they're on your list and then you don't email them that much and then you're all over and you have a million different offers and all these things. But instead let's pare down the offers, reverse engineer the offers to what would make sense for somebody to opt in about, right. And get them to your email list.

So we've talked about so much today, but I know you might still be thinking like, I don't know, but how do I get people to my

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list? Like I get that the freebie is the way I get to my list, but how do I do it? That's kind of what I was saying is there are tons of different ways and I'm going to drop some resources for you below. I use Copyhackers a lot, actually, for my own. Like I've talked about this a lot that working on my own copywriting skills I think is one of the best investments that I've made in the business. I don't mean actual literal money. I've done a lot of time and reading and just practicing, honestly. It's just been more just writing. I'm writing and writing, writing things that flopped, writing things that didn't.

And so I go to Copyhackers' website a lot to learn more about the strategy and the psychology of writing and tips and different ways you can structure things. So I'm going to drop some stuff for you below. There are many people who teach this on a I guess a higher level than me. And they'll tell you like create a freebie, do a pop up, have a hello bar on your site like I do, or make sure there are opt in boxes all over your website or make sure it's in your Instagram link, mention it on Instagram.

I think that's all great and I think you're more than capable of coming up with the ideas of where to stick this in your business. But if you don't think about the thing that you're offering, you can create a pop up and if your freebie sucks or doesn't quickly explain what the quick win is going to be or it doesn't lead to anything, then it's not going to help your business anyway. So I didn't want to bore you or waste your time telling you create a pop up, right? It's like, come on. Yeah, we know that. But like, if the pop up is annoying, then first of all, people are also going to leave your site, which I don't

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want to do either. And maybe you don't even have a website.

So I hope that this was a little bit like of a different way of talking about this today. This is one of my favorite topics in the whole wide world, so I hope you'll reach out to me and let me know. But before you go, we have Q&A, a little Q&A time. So we had a lot of questions submitted from my Ultimate Bundle members. And I'm thinking that maybe you have these same questions, too.

So Deanna submitted a question, said tips on how to capture emails, besides creating a freebie, I sort of have an idea but could still use more ideas. I also have this feeling that people don't want to be bothered with more emails since they have so many and I'm afraid to ask. So I'm so glad you asked this, Deanna.

I would say that the very first thing that we have to talk about is that if you feel like you're bothering people when you email them, then they might feel bothered, right? I think if you focus on creating valuable emails, you have to start working on this idea that you're providing a lot of value in this email, in your business and wherever else you are posting about stuff in your business. If that person who's on the receiving end of the email, the DM, the Instagram story, whatever doesn't find you valuable, it's on them to go, You're not responsible for that, right?

So if somebody is feeling bothered by your emails, there's an unsubscribe button at the bottom and they can go bye, they can go, right. But we can't focus our attention on that person or we're never going to talk to the people who are like, dang,

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Deanna's emails are so valuable, right? So focus on the value. You have so much to offer. You know so much about what you teach people.

So I want you to first, like, work on it with yourself because you cannot approach this from a place of like, oh, man, I don't want to bother you. It has to be like, yeah, I have a lot to offer. And it's okay if it doesn't work for you, that's totally your choice. I'm not for everybody. Or maybe you just don't need me right now, you know, totally fine. But there are a lot of people who do, and you got to focus on them.

In terms of tips of how to capture emails, besides creating a freebie, I think I mentioned a couple today, but like I know you, Deanna especially, are doing some in-person stuff. So that's one way. Having this what I call the easy email list sign up thing where people can directly enter your list is helpful. But again, like I talked about today, that's the road number one. You have to focus on the email being valuable. So you kind of have to give it some sort of theme. That's what I could think of.

All right. Morgan asked how much information to give away in a freebie? How in-depth should it be? What should I do with them after? Is it okay to throw them into weekly emails after this? Or should we be sending a series of emails after the freebie to kind of ease them into a weekly newsletter? Okay, great. So, Morgan, this was such a good question, and I don't think you should get too hung up on how much information you give away in a freebie. I also don't think it should be super in-depth, not because you want to be nervous about giving away information, but because we want it to be implemented.

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So focus more on what is a quick win. What is something that's valuable? You have a unique way of putting it or a method of how you help people with something. Just focus on that. In terms of after, traditionally, the thing to do is to throw people into what we call a nurture sequence, which is a series of emails that would let people know about who you are, what your brand is, what you do, address some common questions, set expectations. And I still do do that sometimes, and sometimes I lead them to another freebie that's like a bit more of a buy in, like a webinar. So if they opted into like a guide or a checklist, maybe we nurture them and send them to a webinar.

Sometimes, though, it's more that they just enter into my weekly newsletter, my weekly email list. I think it's helpful to let people know about who you are and what you do for. So at the very least, I would have a couple of emails that follow up, first of all, about the freebie, ask them questions. The key after somebody gets onto your list too is to establish this kind of habit of like, hey, this isn't a one-sided communication. Let me know. Like, what did you think about that? Or did you cook one of those recipes yet? Hit reply and let me know which one did you like best?

Like, that's what I would do. I would kind of focus on getting them at the very least to respond to you, to start engaging, to let them let you know a little bit of something about them. I would focus on that right afterwards. I think the reason that I was able to start recently this easy email list sign up where people just joined and didn't like nurture them is because the business is much more established. It's been around for a long time. My email list has been around for a long time, so I've

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even seen a lot of people come back to the list that way, right?

And so I would say that I want to preface my advice by saying that it's a lot easier to do once you've been more established to just be like, hey, come on in, because there are like 9 million places for you to go to get more information about what I do. So hopefully, that's helpful.

Katie asked how effective are printable guides these days as freebies? What, in your view, is the most effective type of freebie currently a printable or a masterclass? So Katie, that's a really good question. Personally, I like the idea of having both or different kinds of freebies to hit different learning styles and different people on different journeys. So for me, like having a simple checklist that gives you an easy win is really great for somebody who's maybe a little bit earlier on and really needs that 30,000-foot view. Whereas for me, having more of like a webinar masterclass situation is for the serious person who's invested and is going to take the time for an hour to sit down, watch this, and then maybe they're really ready to work with me.

So I would think about doing both if you could. Hopefully, that's a possibility. And I think that guides can be really effective. I just think people make them way too long. Again, not from a value perspective, but from the lack of like, what do I get from this? Like did I actually implement this? Or did it just clog up my inbox kind of thing?

Alyssa asks I would love to hear some tips on how to get your email list started when it's completely from zero. Where do you even begin? So yeah. Alyssa, that's a good question because it's

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really intimidating when you really are starting from scratch, right? So I would actually start with creating a freebie of some sort. And I think I would focus less on getting it right or making it perfect than just starting out and then you have to talk about it a lot. So you have to commit to actually talking about it on social media. Or if you have a podcast or YouTube channel, you have to talk about it there. If you're in groups, you have to talk about it there.

I mean, in the beginning of my business, I was even like cold emailing, not cold emailing. Like I was emailing people that I knew to say, hey, I created this resource. If you think it would be helpful for you or if you think that this would be helpful for your students, would you share about it? And the better that your resource actually is like that, if it's actually helpful to other people, people will want to share it who are in shoulder industries to you, right? So for me, maybe I'd send it to like a business coach or a copywriter or something like this who would then share it with their audience, because a legal tip is going to be helpful to their audience. So the better that you can make your freebie, I think the more that other people want to share as well.

Trish asks, I don't even know what I need to know. I'm brand brand new. What are some of the traps to avoid and what did you learn not to do? So Trish, I learned not to stop emailing. I think that was a very good lesson that even when I thought something wasn't helpful or valuable, I often was surprised to learn that other people found it helpful and valuable. I learned to not take the you out of emails, I would say as well.

And so I'd say one trap to avoid is like dialing it in or saying

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like keeping your emails very boring and saying like this week's new podcast episode is on this, this and this. Right. And allowing some of your personality to show, sharing stories that are relevant to whatever you're going to teach them. I think people also avoid, like they have the trap of thinking that some people are good writers, and some people are bad writers or like that one day magically they're going to, like something's going to happen, or they can buy a course that's going to make them a good writer. But in fact, I think it's just a heck of a lot of practice, to be honest, and starting to let down like your inhibitions a little bit about like, oh, I have to be so put together and I have to sound this way and I don't know what they'll think of me. Instead, I think just continuing to write, owning up when if you do stumble a little bit and then keep going. Yeah, that's what I would say.

All right. Last but not least, Gayla said when to build your email list and what needs to be in place before you do. I'm worried about prematurely starting to build and not having enough content already available or confidence that I can generate it consistently. That's a really good question. So for me, I would say to build your email list as early as you possibly can because of a lot of what we've talked about today, like there's not going to be a point where you wake up and have a thousand-person email list. I know that you know this, but it's like you have to do one, two, three, four, five, six. Like you're going to go all the way. So that's how you have to start because otherwise you're never going to get there.

So personally, I would start early because it's also cool that when you start early, you're messier stuff is shown to fewer people. That's the big upside, right? So I don't think that

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there's any worry about when to start. In terms of prematurely starting to build and not having enough content, I think I would just think about what I'm talking about. If you know what your offers are going to be, then start writing about that. Or you know about the topic that you're going to help people within your business, you have to start, first of all, learning your voice about how to talk about what you do, but you also have to start establishing yourself as an authority.

If you commit to something that's doable, I think that's more important than I have to email my list twice a week. If every other week, one time sounds like, okay, I can nail that every two weeks, I send out one email right now, that's great, right? For me, I do to and I can do that. But it's also like I also really look forward to writing those emails. I'm always like searching my Asana task to be like, when do I get to write emails again? But I just really love it.

And so I think it's just like a workout routine or something like that. You have to kind of pick a routine that you feel like you can nail because that's how you're going to build that confidence right now of like, oh, I can write an email every two weeks. Also, for all of you, start a list on your phone, your iPhone note, wherever you like to do this and write everything down even if you think that it's not going to matter.

I have -- let me open mine up actually. I'll open this up right now. Yeah. Okay. So I just opened my ideas list in Asana. And I have like the most random stuff in here. It's like you don't have to teach everything you learn. We pay more attention to who doesn't show up than who does. Taking things in without putting anything out. I don't know what that means. Dumpster fire

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series. That's an idea. I just have all these, like, random things in here. And I usually make some more notes in the description section in Asana, so I know what the heck I was talking about.

But that is one way that I've really helped to like, I had this, I saw this thing on TV, or I saw something in an ad when I was out. And then I thought, hey, that's kind of like when this happens to my customers, right? Or that reminds me of the way that people think about LLCs or something like this. I just make a note of it and then that becomes an email. And I have thousands. I mean, I have thousands of these things, like just random things, little stories. You can take notes on stories that come up throughout your day, anything like that.

All right. So that was the end of our Q&A. I hope you liked this episode. If you did like this episode, do me a favor real quick. If you could just text this episode to a friend, send them the link, let them know about this episode. Let them know about our podcast. Obviously, if you haven't left a review yet, it would be so helpful for us if you do that and hopefully, I get to give you a shout out on a future episode. Send me a DM on Instagram at @SamVanderWielen and let me know if you're going to implement any of these tips today that we talked about. I hope it was helpful for you and can't wait to chat with you next week and thank you so much. I'll chat with you soon.

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protecting your business and take my free legal workshop, Five Steps to Legally Protect and Grow Your Online Business at [samvanderwielen.com](http://samvanderwielen.com). And to stay connected and follow along, follow me on Instagram at @SamVanderWielen and send me a DM to say hi.