

TRANSCRIPT

On Your Terms



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Episode #: 174

Can A Business Even Do Well Without a Black Friday Sale?

Sam Vander Wielen:

Hey there, and welcome back to On Your Terms. I'm your host, Sam Vander Wielen. And if you are in the U. S. and you celebrate, Happy Thanksgiving. I hope that you're having a nice, restful week. I hope you're getting to spend time with people you love. I understand very much so the problematic nature behind the origins of this holiday and I'm here to celebrate what it means today, which is just celebrating your family, your friends, your chosen family, the people you really like to spend time with, and slowing down and getting cozy, which you know, I am all things cozy.

And if you haven't yet, by the way, listen to Monday's episode that I just aired, Episode 173, because that is where I just shared with you all the things I do, just like slow down, tune out a lot of the noise, get really quiet, accidentally become more creative, but live a bit of a slower life and stay grounded, which I think is what has really helped me to grow a business.

So, I wanted to chat with you today about Black Friday and Black Friday Sales, because I actually have never run a Black Friday sale. I never want to say never because I don't know if something would come up in the future, but you'll hear a little bit more about my take on this.

All right. So, I don't typically run Black Friday sales, like I said, I never have. And because of that, I get asked often, What happens if I don't run a Black Friday sale? You might be feeling like you're missing out, you're getting lapped, everybody else is going to be making sales this weekend and you're not, and now everyone's going to have bought and they're not going to buy from you. I totally get it.

My answer always starts with this, What kind of business do you want to be when you grow up? When you think of a store or a company that you admire the heck out of, what comes to mind about why you like them? It's probably

not a surprise to you that I take who and what I buy from really seriously. Seriously, no joke. I need a new sneakers for the gym and I spent weeks researching best eco-friendly gym shoes, and I found out who had good labor practices and what the materials were from and all of that. I take everything I buy super seriously. I typically only buy clothes from people who are super environmentally friendly, all of that. I am so concerned about the impact on our environment, on labor standards, on fair wages, on minority and women-owned businesses. My list of concerns and things I'm looking for goes on and on.

And just like I researched my companies that I purchase from just before I buy practically anything these days, I also take note on what businesses I want to be like and why I want to be like them. Maybe you've heard that REI started this Black Friday tradition or campaign called Get Outside. Instead of opening their doors and encouraging people to line up during Thanksgiving dinner, like some big box stores, REI pays its employees for a day off and encourages their customers to do exactly what their products help people to do, which is get outside.

If you listen to my podcast, On Your Terms, which you are right now, you know that I obsessively study and observe a lot of companies, their marketing moves, their advertisements, their emails, different strategies that they implement. And I am admittedly strategic as heck. I do everything for a reason in my business. I'm very conscientious about why I do what I do. And I love marketing and I love online business, probably a little too much.

But I think that REI or companies whose values align with yours, it doesn't have to be the same as what aligns with mine, can teach us something really powerful. Just because everybody else in your business or in your industry is doing something doesn't mean that you have to.

Even before my business generated millions of dollars per year in revenue, I decided to step off the Black Friday train and allow myself to embrace what my soul really desires this week, which is quiet. I don't want to be on social media. I don't want to be scrambling. I don't want to have my team working. If you know me, you know that Thanksgiving is my Super Bowl.

And like I mentioned earlier, it goes without saying that I wholeheartedly am not okay with the origins of this holiday. I just love what it's come to represent, which to me is cooking, coziness, spending time with people I love.

So, while I could run a very big sale this week or I could have even done it before, right before this week, or right after this week, and I could have my team checking up on Slack on Black Friday and helping people with broken links and figuring out why they can't check out and why a page isn't redirecting, I voluntarily step out of the rat race this time of year. Are my competitors running sales? Could that mean that I lose out? Sure. Probably. Maybe. I have no idea. Who the heck cares? Not everything in life is about making more and more and more money. My happiness and the quality of life comes at quite a cost too.

Plus, I never understood this part, this part especially, there are 51 other weeks to run a sale, why does it have to be this week? Why does it have to be the week that is about a holiday to give thanks for what we already have? I don't understand it. But please hear me loud and clear, there is 100 percent nothing wrong with running a Black Friday sale. I don't think that everybody who runs a Black Friday sale is a terrible person. Promotions during any time of the year don't have to be hysterical or stressful, so you could have a Black Friday sale and be like, I'm going to keep it super chill, low key. Great.

I'm not trying to say any of this from a place of judgment. I just want you to know what's possible for you and that you can reach your business goals without doing what everybody else is doing. Have you ever had that feeling about something in your business, where you're like, "I know it's what I'm supposed to be doing for my business, but I just don't want to." Maybe you feel like that about TikTok or doing more Reels or starting a podcast or YouTube channel. You're like, "Everybody says you have to have a YouTube channel. I just don't want to." It's okay.

For me, personally, my goal was and continues to be to build a business that can be so successful throughout the year that Thanksgiving is just chill for us. What an incredible privilege, right? What an incredible

privilege. That's why I built my business to what I have so that I can take off during this time. This time is not to make my business what it is or to make it successful. Because it's successful, I don't need to. And I'm thinking a lot these days and have thought a lot for a long time about what is enough. What is enough? I don't need to make more and more and more. I focus more on being profitable and saving money and doing all that so I don't have to do this.

I have one friend who takes off the entire month of October every year just because she likes to. I have other friends who keep their summers light and they work less in the summers so that they can spend more time with their families when they're outside of school. Or I have another friend who took it easy this summer so she could pick up a gardening habit, take a pottery class, and learn how to speak Spanish.

You can build a business that allows you to choose what you do and don't participate in. You don't need to build a business by begrudgingly participating in what everybody else is doing and then resent it. You should be building this business that is about really what you want to do. My friend, Simi, always says if we're going to live the corporate life, then why not just go back to corporate then we could get health insurance.

So, me and my team will be out of the office this week for the holiday. Yeah, we get lots of time off here in Sam Vander Wielen LLC. We work hard. We've already generated over seven figures in revenue this year, we have for a long time. When is enough, enough?

So, for anyone who's felt some FOMO sales anxiety and you feel like you're going to be left behind because you're not keeping up with the online business game, I hope that this message helped. And even though I write my emails pretty far in advance, I'm practicing what I preach and I'm not sending out lots of emails and doing sales and doing all of that this week. I'm practicing what I preach and I'm just hoping that by sending this little note, it's a note of encouragement and inspiration, maybe calm for you during a time that you needed it.

So, I hope you enjoyed this episode. I hope you will reach out and let me know if this spoke to you. I would love to hear if you are or aren't running an REI strategy - if you are running a Black Friday sale, I mean, if you're taking my REI strategy. Or if you we're not feeling so great about not running a Black Friday sale and you listened to this and you feel a little bit better, will you let me know? Please do me a favor, take a sec, DM me, send me an email, reply to my email, let me know. I hope that this helped you.

With that, please enjoy this cozy time. I hope that you're with those that you love. If those that you love are still alive, I just really encourage you to unplug and enjoy this time. Take my tip from Monday's episode and do one thing at a time, be with them. If they are here, be with them. I so wish I could be with my parents today.

And the last thing I will tell you is to take a lot of pictures. Actually, no. Take a lot of video. That's what I always want to tell my friends is take a lot of video. One day you will be so happy to have that video to look back on, to hear their voice, to see their movement. So, please, if there's anything you could do for me today, it would just be to enjoy the time that you have. And please do not worry about a Black Friday sale. You are going to be fine. Your business is going to be fine. Life is not all about this stuff. Okay. So, take care of you, have a good weekend, and I will see you back here on Monday.

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