

# TRANSCRIPT

## On Your Terms



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Episode 190:

HOW TO CREATE LOYAL CUSTOMERS, REPEAT BUYERS, AND REFERRALS (WITHOUT SPENDING A DIME)

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Sam Vander Wielen:

Hey there, and welcome to a brand new episode of On Your Terms. I'm your host, Sam Vander Wielen, an attorney turned entrepreneur who helps online coaches and service providers legally protect and grow their online businesses using DIY legal templates and my Ultimate Bundle training. So in this episode, I'm going to talk to you all about the Olive Garden approach to taking care of your customers, treating them like their family, and the two major ways that you're going to want to do that because it's going to seriously benefit your business and your bottom line.

So I'm getting into it today and teaching you all my best tips and tricks for how I really, truly take care of all of my customers to create little word of mouth foot soldiers for my business and to increase their lifetime customer value, all without struggling that I am trying to make everybody happy or trying to get it perfect or never have somebody who's disappointed because that is impossible to do, but it is possible for sure to make sure that we treat our customers really, really well so that we get the maximum juice for our squeeze out of what we're doing in our business. So you know I'm all about that. With that, let's get into this week's episode.

So sometimes in our industry, people are so focused on getting more clients and finding new clients, and even just like in building their audience, making their audience bigger, that they don't always think about nourishing the people that they've already got. And so today, we are going to talk about how do you build an Olive Garden like client base? How do you treat people like their family once they're in your community? It's kind of like the mafia. The way that I look at it is like once you're in, you're in. And like you'll do anything to protect them and welcome them but without all the murder and the bad stuff.

So we're going to talk all about how to treat people today in your community, in your client and customer community Like their family for the purposes of obviously providing incredible customer service and just like taking really good care of the people who have extended their wallets, time and money to you. But also, because this is a great way to build your business.

On the other hand, we're also going to talk a lot today about how to make sure that you don't go too far with this whole thing because I think I used to do this. I was definitely guilty of this where you start feeling like you have to give and give and give to the customers that you have already because maybe you're wrestling a little bit with feeling guilty about how much you've charged them or wanting to prove your worth, making sure that they know how valuable you are, how helpful you are.

Maybe it's just me, but that's something that I used to struggle with. And so this idea of treating our customers like family, like the Olive Garden approach that I like to take is that is a careful balance between making sure that we're treating them really well and providing great customer service and making people really happy with our products while not going so far that we're diving into like people pleaser, so forth, land, right? So we're going to talk all about this today.

I'm really excited because really, if we take care of our customers like they're family and we treat them like this mafia like situation, maybe this is a bad analogy. I don't know. But if we do, then we create a group of people who are not only really happy, and all that good stuff in there and they're getting a lot out of your product, but we're also creating people who want to buy from you again. Right? So we want to constantly think about customer lifetime value. It's really important. But we also create a community of people who are ready to tell others about you.

So I really see this as like a two pronged approach where we're creating the spider web like effect, right? Where for not going out and searching for all these new customers, which costs your business a lot more money and time and energy and attention. We focus a lot of our energy on the people that we already have. And in doing so, we naturally bring in those new

people, right, for much lower cost than if we went out and tried to find them on our own.

So I felt like I really went through this when I first created the Ultimate Bundle. That's my signature program. You get 10 legal templates and 35 on demand video trainings, and then people get access to a private Facebook community where they get to ask me questions and they're always getting bonuses and I'm always adding things. And so, when I first created the bundle, I felt like this was the premium product that I offered, and it was going to be the end of the road in terms of my product suite. And so I felt like I just had to keep adding and adding and adding and adding. Right.

And when I created the Ultimate Bundle, honestly, I didn't think -- I mean I'm very honest about this and I've shared about this openly before. Like, I didn't think anyone would buy it. Not because I didn't think the product was good or anything like that. I just didn't have any faith that really in myself, I didn't have a lot of faith in what I was doing. I just didn't know. I just didn't know. Right. I'm not the poster child for like believing in yourself. So maybe a bit more now. But back then, I really just didn't know.

And so I really struggled with feeling like if somebody did buy it, I needed to make them feel like they would never regret it for a moment in their life. Right. And five years later, I'm here, I'm telling you, like, you can't control what people think when they buy your product. Like if you want to make sure that like nobody ever has a bad experience or nobody ever has a bad thought or is disappointed in any way, you're pretty much setting yourself up for failure because you could do like everything in your power, and somebody could still be disappointed.

So that's really not what we're talking about today. We're not talking about like making sure that everything's perfect or making sure everybody is super happy because we can't control that. But what we can control is making it fun and like sprinkling in surprises and little things here and there to make people feel like they're really a part of something. Like they didn't just come in, and buy a product and leave, right? And I think this is like, especially important when it comes to online business, because we don't have a storefront, right? It's harder for us to create a

vibe for lack of a better term. Like you get a feeling like when you go to Starbucks and stuff, there's like consistency and branding and like some of them tried to make it like kind of cozy, like cool coffee shop vibes. Like you can relax there and work there. And it seems like nice and upscale. And Target makes it like fun.

And Costco, I watched this whole segment on YouTube one time about how actually, what is it? CNBC has a really interesting YouTube channel where they do these little, like mini dives on different businesses and kind of like talking about some of their strategies and approaches to their business. And so CNBC had this one segment that was about Costco, which I love. I don't know about you, but I love Costco. And so shout out to Costco. And I remember watching the segment and learning about how Costco does this thing where they essentially create a scavenger hunt like effect throughout the store.

So they come out with these new products and they've trained us as the customer, as the member, I think they call us, to know that, let's say Costco gets a new product, it is not necessarily true that that new product is like in your face on display. It can technically just be like mid aisle, down aisle 27 in the middle of like olive oil and peanuts. That's what they do. Right. And it creates this like sense of wonder, I would say, where if you're anything like me, I get really excited of like, what am I going to find? Like, this is so exciting, you know?

So there are little ways that we can create, I don't know, a sense of belonging to something that's larger than just the product or the membership or the community. It really makes us feel like we are part of that community or something, right? We're bigger than that. So I find this whole thing fascinating and this is something that I have worked really hard on in my own business.

And I really just want to dive into at least some of the trials and tribulations that I've gone through in trying to take really good care of people while also balancing the fact that I can't make everybody happy and while also being a businesswoman and saying I do have to think about lifetime customer value. I have to think about how do you get more sales from the same people who are already ready to buy and already like what you

have to offer. Not because I'm like robbing them, because I'm giving them something that's helpful to them. Right.

So I'm hoping that you're going to take something away from today and that maybe I shift your mindset on something or just spark an idea of some way that you can do this in your own business. And if you do come up with that, I hope you'll send me a DM on Instagram at @SamVanderWielen. But yeah, I've had to, over the years I've had to find a balance. Of course, I've always included updates for free. And that's something that I will continue to do because of what the nature of what I do with writing legal templates and recording these legal video trainings, like stuff changes or new things come up. And so I record new stuff. I update my legal templates as much as needed and everybody gets those updates for free. That's something that's really important to me.

It's funny cause people will contact me and say like, oh, I'm just like, so grateful that these are free or like, I can't believe these are free with these updates. And I'm like, of course, like, does someone charging for this? I don't know, but that's just me. Right. And I also do things, like I add in surprise bonuses. And I like layering in surprise live elements, right? I like grandfathering my Ultimate Bundle members into stuff. So like, if I come out with something new or I'm going to add a new bonus, I like gifting it to them for free. I like letting them know about stuff first, right? I like giving them exclusive content.

So there are little things that you can do. And I'm sure as I'm saying this, you might be thinking of your own stuff that you could do for your clients. And I'll give some more examples later, but some things that you could do for your clients to really make them feel more like, wow, like once I bought from her, like I'm in, right? I'm in.

And so, I think the thing that I hear the most from people is like, I kind of assumed -- like people will email me this all the time, they'll say like, I kind of assumed that once I bought something from you, like that was it, right? Like you got what you wanted from me. And little did I know that I was going to get so much more. Like I thought I was just buying this, or I thought I was just joining the Ultimate Bundle. And for some reason, you've just like kept giving to me. Right.

And so they feel really well taken care of I would say for the most part. If you're an Ultimate Bundle member and you feel that way, let me know. If you don't, well, I don't know what to say. So I definitely try really hard just to make them feel like the relationship, the conversation is not over once their credit card is processed. I think that's like the really important part.

So how do we then make people feel like their relationship's not over once their credit card is processed? And why is that even important? Where do you see benefits in your business? Well, I think that the first thing to do is that we want to build in some customer service into our offer, right, some level of support. And this is going to change for you depending on what you do. If you sell products, this might mean having a Facebook community where people can ask questions or a dedicated email support line.

And it doesn't always mean that you have to offer this kind of support. I think if you do anything like me or you have like an area of expertise, then the way that I think about it is that you have to answer the questions that are more of the like substantive, kind of go to the substance of what you teach about. Right. So you might be answering the questions about legal, financial, nutritional, wellness, fitness stuff. Right.

But then you can also, as your business grows, have somebody who's available to people and maybe is a bit quicker because as your business is going to be growing, it's going to be hard for you to be really fast with getting back about customer support. So you could have somebody who's there to help them log in and get access and change their payment information and figure out how to download something, and yada, yada.

So I think just having somebody like that who's available, it makes people feel so well taken care of. Right? So I set out from the start to say customer service from my perspective, I never imagined I would even ever have to hire anybody in my business. But in the beginning, when it was just me, I was like, customer service is a huge priority, right? So people, when I check my inbox, the first people that I'm looking for in my inbox are customers.

And I heard Sunny Lenarduzzi say this one time. She's a YouTube entrepreneur, but she was saying one time that in the morning, I don't know if she still does this, but she was saying that in the morning, the first thing that she does when she wakes up is tackle anything that has to do with current customers. Right? So she's in her Facebook group answering questions or answering emails, DMs, these kinds of things.

And that's really the way that I've approached it as well as like, this is my priority every day is making sure that I'm getting back to the people who have already shown up and need what I have to offer. Right. As my business grew, it was a lot for me to handle those customer service type support situations. Plus, the like, hey, I can't log in or I got kicked out or my credit card got stolen. That was too difficult. Right. So I couldn't keep up with the volume. And so now I have somebody who answers those kinds of questions, but I'm still answering all of the legal stuff on my own. That is just a core business value of mine.

And so I really do think it's as simple as you deciding, like, this is something that means a lot to me. And just because I have an online business doesn't mean I can't provide like concierge type service. And what does that look like for my kind of business, right? So you might think about what does that mean? Does it mean a certain response time?

By the way, legally speaking, you just want to be clear on this. Like in your contract or your terms, you want to say like, this is how you get support, right? Like by Slack, by email, by phone, whatever, Monday through Friday, between the hours of, with an average response time of, or we will do our best to get back to you within 48 business hours or something like that. But it's really good to spell this out because then legally speaking, you don't want to disappoint on that end.

So I think it's about getting clear on what kind of support you could offer. And as your business grows, just thinking like how else you could support people. Especially cause it's a good, I mean, it's just a good idea for you as the CEO and as the founder of your business that you're not doing all of those like admin tasks plus all the other stuff. So just think

about that and what that looks like in your business and then make sure it's reflected in your policies.

You can also, if you're a coach or something, you can also provide some sort of scalable support where you have co-coaches in your program or my friend, Christina Galbato, she has an influencer bootcamp and a blogger bootcamp, and then she has a mastermind. And in her mastermind, she has co-coaches that are specialized, right? Like a mindset coach and people who do different things than her, or maybe really like focus on an area of business. And so that's another way that you can offer support.

Another tip I wanted to give you on how you can offer support sometimes to your clients, because I see this a lot with business coaches who try to offer legal support themselves and financial support and tax support where they're like, here are my contracts and here's my tax stuff and blah, blah, blah. I think sometimes the best way that you can actually support somebody is by bringing in other experts and offering your customers that expert's knowledge, right?

So like a year ago, when I brought in Lattice Hudson to the Ultimate Bundle to teach everybody in the bundle how to write a diversity and inclusion statement, that was because that's not in my expertise. It's something I was really interested in for myself. It was something that I pulled them, and they were really interested in for themselves. And so I brought in the expert and I paid for it. Right. And I paid the license to be able to continue to use her training. And that was really important to me.

But that's also customer service, right? That's also a way of nourishing them. And it's going to be something that nourishes my customers for a long time, because when people log into the bundle, and they didn't know that training was there, now it's there. Right. And now this is like another little, I think, element of that wonder and that surprise, that sprinkle that we were talking about from Costco. It was like, once you come in, you're like, oh, this is even better than I thought, which is the thing that I hear the most about the bundle. Right. It's like this actually -- I was like buying it for X, but I didn't realize it had like X, Y, and Z until I got in there. So that's really cool. You want that more than you want the emails being like, I was kind of hoping that this was going to be



this. We don't want that. We want people who are telling us like, this is way better. So think about how you can do that.

It really though, as I mentioned earlier, it really does go beyond just answering people's questions, like the typical standard level of support of like I'll Slack you back in 48 hours. You can text me. You can email me like that. That is a form of support. But like I mentioned earlier, I'm really talking about doing that and making people really and truly feeling like they're a part of a community and not in a cheesy way and not in like a sorority way or something like this. But what are the ways that you can truly create a community? And I don't just mean Facebook community either, right? That is one way.

But even if you create a Facebook community, for example, for your business or for one of your programs or for like all of your clients, that still doesn't mean that you have a community. Like sometimes what I think happens is that people think like, oh, well, I created a Facebook community, but like -- I hear people say this all the time, but like no one's posting in it. Right. I have my clients in there, but they're not very active.

And it's like, you are the leader. What are you doing in there to facilitate conversation, to create an inviting environment? Right? Are you telling people at any point in your onboarding sequence when they become a customer, which by the way, do you have an onboarding sequence? I hope so. That's just a series of emails that people would receive once they purchase from you. You could set the stage for this. Like let them know this is what my community -- here's the community. Have you joined yet? Pressure them a little bit more and then saying like, here are some examples of some things that have gone on in my community.

Like recently, Naomi posted about this, and Simi posted about that, and Paige posted about this, and this is a place where I want you to go to share wins and ask questions. Let them know that, if it's true, that they don't just have to ask you questions in this community. Are they allowed to ask each other, right? Can they post there when they're having a bad day? Can they post there and ask for support for resources from other people other than just yourself, right?

That's truly how you can create a community, right, where all of the people in your community start to actually interact with one another. It kind of reminds me of like when Ryan and I got married, it was really cool. We rented out this pizza wine bar, which was like a nice pizza wine bar, but it was a pizza wine bar. And we rented this whole part of the, basically the entire restaurant out and had this beautiful open, the doors slid open and had this all glass and you could go out into this stone patio and grass area and stuff. It was great.

But it was really cool. Like I remember kind of standing back on that day and, May 16th. And looking back, looking out at everybody from all these areas of our lives, right? His family from Wisconsin, my family from primarily Philadelphia, but all over the country, having friends there from the law, friends there from volleyball, his friends from childhood. All these friends from different and family from all these different areas of our lives sitting and chatting at the same table. Right. I remember looking over and seeing my uncle Joe, who's like super cool and looking over and seeing him chat with a guy that I went to law school with, who was at our wedding. And me being like, I always thought they would be friends. But it was that cool moment where you see all your worlds colliding. And I loved that.

And I feel like sometimes when I log into my Facebook community for the Ultimate Bundle, that's kind of how I feel because somebody will post something and say, like, I'm struggling with this, I'm having a bad day, I'm having trouble growing on Instagram, I'm like so frustrated with the tech side of stuff, I'm trying to set things up. And it's like all these people pile in and like, I got you, don't worry about it. Like, oh yeah, that happened to me too, right? Here are some resources. Here's this person or what's your Instagram handle, let me connect with you over there. I love what you're doing. I want to learn more. It's so cool for me to see that.

And I have to be honest, I have my like proud mama moments sometimes where I sit back and I'm like, that's it. That's why I did this because I wanted it. This is not supposed to be about me. I'm here to answer questions. I'm here every single day to answer whatever questions that they have Monday through Friday. But I also wanted it to be a community, I wanted this to be a place where people could come and get all kinds of questions answered

because the point was like the vibe of what I'm trying to do here is make people feel less intimidated, make them feel less anxious, make them feel more confident and sure of what they're doing and they can put themselves out there. And then that's exactly what I see people sharing about. So that makes me really happy.

So you want to think about what is this community really for? What kind of vibes do I want to put out there? And what can I do to facilitate that, right? Not just hoping that other people are going to do that for you or hoping that you call in the right clients. If you call in the right clients, that's great, but people are really busy, and they might still not be doing these kinds of things. Right.

So whether this is in a Facebook community or maybe on a call or some other sort of membership or something like that, I want you to get creative. I want you to think of something about how you can create the kind of connection that you want to create. And then I want you to DM me and tell me whatever it is that you thought of maybe after you listen to this episode, that would be really cool, but just let me know whatever you come up with.

Okay. Another way that you can create a sense of community amongst your already clients is by giving them access to exclusive content. So I do this through a monthly newsletter and then also through adding in little sprinkles of different content, bonuses, trainings, things like that. It's definitely live elements here and there as needed. And I find that really, really effective. And I really like it too, because I kind of consider this, several thousands of people now, but I kind of considered that group of people like my nearest and dearest right in the business.

And so I will sometimes share more behind the scenes stuff with them. I'll share more personal stuff with them, more news, exclusive content, exclusive discounts or something. I've had experts come in and give trainings for them. All that kind of stuff. I let them know, like what I'm using in my own business and what's been helpful to me.

So I think you can do that in different ways. If you were like a health and wellness pro, I could see a monthly newsletter being really awesome, letting people know what products you've been loving, give them an exclusive recipe

or something. There are just all different kinds of things that you could do with that, I think, for sure.

So another thing that you can do is to get them to interact with one another, even within your group or your membership itself. Right. So creating content, kind of going back to this idea of creating community, but even creating content that gets them to interact with one another, getting them to follow each other on social media or if everybody owns their own small businesses, getting them to shop from one another for the holidays or on calls or something, getting them to do breakouts.

One of my customers is actually using breakout rooms on virtual calls to get clients to kind of volley back and forth with one another, and then they come back to the group. Kind of like in high school and used to do group projects or work with a partner and then come back to the class and report what you learned, something like that. So I think you can really give them this feel.

So why does all this stuff matter? Why do you have to make people feel like they're part of an Olive Garden family? Or you might be wondering, you can tell me if you are, but you might be like, why am I wasting my time on people who already bought from me? Shouldn't I be on to the next one kind of thing? And first and foremost, there are a lot of statistics, which I won't bore you with here, but I actually was just looking them up and researching them for the book that I'm working on writing, that the cost, the acquisition costs of a new client is much higher than the acquisition costs or reacquisition costs of a current client.

So whether you're doing this because you have the kind of business where you can get repeat business from a customer, somebody buys a three month package from you and they can re-sign, or you have a next level program or other programs, or you're just trying to cultivate an environment where your customers are really happy and they experience really great results because of what you do and people who experience great results and are happy naturally tell other people that they're happy and that they experience great results, right?

Think about if you've ever gone to a massage therapist that you love, or I have like a vacuum that I love that I tell everybody about, or I just got this new coffee grinder from Fellow that I'm obsessed with. And I've been sending all my friends who love coffee pictures of this grinder, being like this is the coolest thing ever. So when you really like something, you tell other people about it.

So I think it is worth cultivating this community, not only because -- I think the prerequisite, by the way, is because you should always do a good job and offer good things. And I think that customer service is very undervalued and ignored in our industry, especially in an industry that focuses a lot on the goals and benefits of the entrepreneur. Like, how much money am I going to make? How much revenue am I going to generate? We sometimes forget about the people that we're generating the revenue from. Right.

And customer service is an old school classic value that will never go out of style. And if somebody is not talking about it, who you're paying to teach you about business, you need to do this work on your own or consider working with somebody else. Right. I'm telling you, this is a magical, magical ingredient in your business. And it looks different to everyone, and I don't care whether you have a coaching business, a service-based business, a digital products business like mine, it doesn't matter, you can integrate these tips and make them your own and you will see a difference, right?

So the pre-req is that we just like want to do this, we want to do a good job because we should. We should take pride in what we do. We should care about the fact that people are getting a derived benefit from the thing that we're selling, right, and we're not selling snake oil. And so it's really, it should be, I hope very important to you that you do. Right. But again, little asterisk here, we can't make everybody happy. So I'm not expecting for you to make everyone happy. The point is just to provide good customer service.

Even Nordstrom who lets people return things whenever, and is the most incredible with customer service, I'm sure they get cursed out every day, all day, by people, right, even though they have great customer service.

But the other reason, the other two main reasons is to make the customer lifetime value increase in the person who's already purchased from you, right? Meaning that if they paid you \$500 now, over the lifetime, you might be able to generate \$2,000 in revenue from them, instead of going after a bunch of people for an additional \$100 or \$200 in sales, right? We can generate more money from the same person, and not in a weird way. These people are getting something. They have autonomy. They can choose to work with you and not choose to work with you. Like, let them decide, right? But if people like you and they like what you're offering and they're really getting a benefit, then that's awesome. And you should continue to get paid for that.

The other thing is that you're going to make them little foot soldiers. You're going to make them go out there and tell other people about you, and they're going to be happy. And then those people are going to come in and they're going to be happy. And I see this in my own business every single day. Right? So I see all of these people buying, so and so told them about it. And then I look at that and I'm like, oh wait, but so and so found me from so and so. And it just like keeps going and going and going.

So at this point, the spider web is very long and complex. And the more that I do that, the more that sales are generated. organically, automatically, right, without me putting out additional effort necessarily. So without me having to generate new content, without me having to be on social media 24/7, all of those things. And so if you're somebody like me who doesn't want to be on social media 24/7, doesn't want to be doing all that stuff, wants to get the maximum juice for the squeeze, and then I think that the Olive Garden approach to business, treating people like they're family, getting increased lifetime customer value and creating little foot soldiers who are going to go and tell other people about you is a huge key to your success.

So I hope that after listening to this episode, you came up with at least a couple of ideas. I hope you'll DM me on Instagram and tell me what you thought about this episode. Tell me what you're thinking, what ideas do you have about how to create a community? What's coming up for you? I'm so curious. And with that, thank you for listening to another episode of On Your Terms.

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