

TRANSCRIPT

On Your Terms



Driven by Goals.
Guided by Strategy.
Powered by Intention.

Episode #:222

☀️ If Social Media Sucks... Where Can You Grow Your Online Business?
[Summer Series]

Sam Vander Wielen:

Do me a favor, sometimes sit down and look at the stats on a recent social post you made, how many people actually saw it, and – I don't know – use whatever metric you want on the social platform that you use, not just whose thumbs scrolled past it, who engaged with it, who actually watched in the end, whatever it is, and then go and take a look at your email stats.

Hey, and welcome to On Your Terms. I'm your host, Sam Vander Wielen, and welcome to this very special Summer Series that I'm calling Summer School, Online Business Summer School.

So, here's the deal, this summer, I'm going to be sharing a brand new episode every single Monday. But these episodes are going to be a little bit different than what you're used to in my normal week to week content. Instead of sharing all my best legal tips and how to do stuff in your contracts, instead I'm going to share quick little episodes with you each Monday where I'm out and about and sharing about something that I'm learning right now in my business, something that I have learned, a mistake I've made, a thing I've overcome, and obviously share it in a way that would be most helpful to you too.

So, these are going to be a little bit less produced, a little bit more out and about, taking a walk, on the way home from the gym, all the times when I probably think of things or have relatively good ideas. So, I hope you'll join me this summer for these quick little episodes.

After you listen to this episode, I hope you'll reply to my email if you get my emails. If you don't, make sure you go click the sidebar link down in the show notes below. Or send me a DM on Instagram and let me know what you've been thinking of Sam's Summer School Series. So, I hope you love it. I'll see you in a few minutes on the other side.

Welcome back to Summer Series. It's a sleepy Sunday morning. One of those Sunday mornings where I wake up and I really need coffee right away, which I don't often feel like anymore. I used to be like that, but I've gotten a lot better now, I try to eat first and all that good stuff. But today was one of those days where I was like, "Coffee." I can't wait to wake up and have coffee and sit outside and talk with you.

Actually, when I'm talking with you, it's Father's Day. And if you're new around here, I lost my dad two Mays ago, and then lost my mom last May. And it's funny because ever since I lost my mom last year, whenever it's like a day that's about my dad, my mom co-ops my dreams. And if you knew my mom, you would know that that's probably not an accident. My mom needed and liked everything to be about her and my dad would have been happy to give her the spotlight. So, I'm telling you that because I've been kind of anxious about it being Father's Day and then I had dreams about my mom all night.

And one of the dreams I had about my mom, super random, was about how my mom started an email list back in the early 2000s, which is true. It's a true story. And my mom was a doctor. She owned her own practice. She was in private practice ever since I was a little girl. And if you're really new here, my mom went to med school when I was a baby, didn't graduate until I was seven, and went straight into private practice. And she started an integrative medicine practice, like it was really cool, way ahead of her time. And she wasn't just ahead of her time with the medicine part, but she was with the emo part too. And we're really going to be drinking coffee during this.

She started an email list, I would say, back in the early 2000s, and it was her primary marketing driver. She didn't have any freebies or anything like this. Her freebie was actually something that I advocate now, which I'm just putting together. But it was that her email itself was so valuable that you should sign up for it. So, my mom was brilliant and loved, loved, loved medicine. And she would read about medicine and studies that were being done and all kinds of cool things that were happening in the medical field all the time.

And so, her idea was that her weekly newsletter was going to be about kind of what's happening and the major issues that were impacting her patients. And she focused a lot on adrenal health and hormones and things like that. So, that's what she would write about a lot in her emails.

I remember when I was little, I thought this was so weird because I was like, "People just sign up for your email list? I don't even understand where do you keep this list?" I didn't even understand. And my mom, by the way, was not a tech person. She was a couldn't turn on your computer by yourself kind of person, so I don't even know how. Like looking back on it, I'm like, "How did she send out this email?" I don't know. But she did. Every week, she would email these great little articles, basically, and it was a newsletter before there were newsletters. She had sections, and she would highlight a patient, and she would give a tip of the week, and sometimes she would have recipes that she would get from me because she could not even microwave popcorn.

Yeah, it's really funny looking back on it. She didn't even know kind of what she was doing or why she was doing it, but it was so smart in terms of from a marketing perspective.

And I thought this would be a really good topic to talk about after we talked about social media. We talked a little smack on social media last week - and there's nothing more that I hate other than little airplanes going over my house right when I'm trying to film something. A little airplane break. I think there's like one of those little airports near our house where people can practice, and so sometimes they fly because they're flying over the water, or they're coming from Connecticut and flying around. I don't know what's happening.

Anyway, after talking about social media last week, I just never like leaving people high and dry. This is actually one of the things I hated the most about being a lawyer and why I ultimately wanted to leave, I hate just telling people no and then being like, "This sucks. Don't do it this way. Okay. Now, have a great life. Good luck running your business. Social media sucks and it'll destroy your mental health, and it's a lot of - what I call - toilet content." I don't like doing that.

So, okay, we know social is not great for our mental health. We know it also doesn't build evergreen content, like I talked about last week. So, this content doesn't have longevity. It's not nearly as searchable. It's totally - I don't know what you call it, like you'd have just as much luck guessing where cards are going to go if you threw them all up in the air because you just have no clue who sees your content, you have no ownership or control over that, and the algorithm is constantly changing, obviously, and it's designed to keep you pretty hooked like a game of Whac-A-Mole.

So, what do you do instead? Well, I mean, one of the things you do is email marketing. So, the way that I'm starting to - well, it's not really starting to, but the way it's starting to organize itself in my brain that I realized the way that I think about marketing is that you need to have discovery platforms and you need to have nurture platforms, because you never wait for people to discover you, and then you have the nurture platform.

My mom's email list, for example, was a good nurture platform because people, once they became her patients, or she would go give a lecture or she would meet people when she was out and about and she would give them her card and she would tell them sign up for my newsletter, then it's a nurture because then it's like people have already met her and now she's going to nurture them and give them lots of value. They're going to start to know, like, and trust her, find out what services she offers. And then, in her case, she would become their doctor.

But in our case, we have online businesses and we have this great ability - which my mom didn't have. Social media didn't even exist, or YouTube and podcasts, none of that existed when she started - we have this incredible opportunity to capture some discovery platforms. And like we started to dip into last week, my preference is that your discovery platforms are something more searchable evergreen related, like an SEO blog post, your website with blogs that are optimized, even optimizing your website. Period. I mean that's a discovery method. Having something on YouTube, having a podcast, something like that, Pinterest, these things will make you more discoverable.

And then, your email is your nurture. That's really, to me, the healthiest nurture because, I mean, we can at least guarantee it lands in people's inbox. How many people open it? Well, I mean, that really is something that you can control necessarily, but something you can improve because the better your emails get, the higher the open rate gets. So, if you write really good emails - my open rates are really, really high. I mean, I think for industry standard, they're pretty high. I think I've always focused on creating valuable emails, which has then driven people to be like, "Hey, I like these emails. I'm going to open them." So, that is somewhat within your control.

Imagine sending out an email though, and it's like, we're going to send out this email and we're not sure whose inbox we're going to send it to. It's like a guessing game. And, also, we're not going to tell you whose inbox it went to and whose it didn't. And then, when we do send your email, we're going to send them, like, 30 other emails from people who do exactly what you do to mess with them. That's what social media is, right? But with emails, at least it's like, okay, this person took an action. They signed up for your email. It's not random. And it's getting in their inbox. And then, if you write good emails and you continue to improve on your subject lines and write the little preview text that also is really good and leaves a little something to be desired, then people will open your emails, at least way more people.

I mean, if you look at the statistics - do me a favor, sometimes sit down and look at the stats on a recent social post you made, how many people actually saw it and - I don't know - use whatever metric you want on the social platform that you use, not just whose thumb scrolled past it, who engaged with it, who actually watched in the end, whatever it is, and then go and take a look at your email stats.

So, you might sit here and say, what if only 25, 35, 40 percent of my email list opens my email? I would be so curious to know how many people that is versus how many people actually saw your social post. And then, compare that to how much time you've been spending on social, and how much you've

been putting out in terms of content, and then how much time it takes to send one really good email per week, and how much return on investment.

Also, you know where people buy stuff? Email. People click on links. I know, yes, we buy little kitschy stuff on social, like something from somebody's Amazon haul or - I don't know - makeup, perfume, a book, whatever, something like that. I would never buy makeup or perfume, so that's a funny example for me to use, but you know what I mean. So, if you're buying though a \$1,000, \$2,000, \$4,000 course or a coaching package from someone, I, personally, I'm not doing that through Instagram. I'm not clicking a link in Instagram and just buying that. I'm engaging with you somewhere else. I'm probably already on your email list. I'm doing my research to figure out if I want to buy from you.

So, I'm a very big fan of email marketing. I would say I'm biased, but I have no skin in the game, so I don't know why I would put it that way. But I definitely believe wholeheartedly in email list marketing.

Now, remember in the beginning when I said that you need the discovery platforms and then you need nurture platforms? The way that I want you to think about this, too, is that I like to think of social being kind of the background. Like, if there were two phases to each of the discovery and the nurture platforms, social would be the second one of each of these, because my primary focus for discovery would be something like this podcast that you're listening to, my website, my blog posts, stuff like that. And I've dabbled in YouTube here and there, that kind of stuff. And then, my secondary discovery platform would be Instagram because we're on Instagram. We have a healthy audience there. We post there. But I'm not relying on it for my bread and butter. It's not my bread and butter. It's like a little side jam situation.

So, same goes with my nurture. My email list is my biggest nurture. I think this is a nurture, my podcast is also a nurture as well because people who already have purchased from us or people who are considering it often listen to many podcast episodes before doing so. And so, this is also a nurture platform, but I also consider places like Instagram to be a nurture platform. I think of especially somewhere like Instagram Stories, for

example, where I'm not expecting you to maybe make your core final decision on purchasing legal templates or something from me or the Ultimate Bundle from me from my Stories, unless maybe we're in a sale, but I am thinking that that's maybe where we connect a little more, where I share food or share things about honey or my workouts or just day-to-day life of running a business like this. So, that's more of a connection point. It's more of a nurture, but it's my secondary nurture.

If my emails aren't getting done, if my emails aren't good, if my emails need improvement, I'm working on that first. The little joke I always use is like, that's the homework that we have to get done before we get to go out to play. Social media is the going out to play.

So, I hope that this was a helpful follow up on last week's episode, talking some smack about social. I hope it gives you a little bit more clear of a direction of how you could divide your time. I'm curious what's come up for you or maybe if there's some different action you're going to take after listening to this. But I would love if you hit reply to any of my emails. I read all your responses. And if you're on Instagram, of course, you can DM me, @samvanderwielen.

But I'm just so curious what you think about maybe splitting your time like this, if you've been feeling this way. I don't know if it's just me who's been feeling this about social, maybe me who's also a little concerned about where things are headed with generative AI and oversaturation of content, especially on social media platforms. So, I'm just very curious what you think and what's coming up with you. So, after this little plane goes, I'll leave you with some of the sights and sounds - no. No sights. I'll leave you with some of the sounds of the North Shore of Long Island like I did last week. It's so beautiful out today, so enjoy the birds, enjoy the sound of the water and the wind.

Thanks so much for listening to the On Your Terms podcast. Make sure to follow on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you like to listen to podcasts. You can also check out all of our podcast episodes, show notes, links, and more at samvanderwielen.com/podcast. You can learn more about legally protecting your business and take my free legal workshop, Five

Steps to Legally Protect and Grow Your Online Business, at samvanderwielen.com. And to stay connected and follow along, follow me on Instagram, @samvanderwielen, and send me a DM to say hi.

Just remember that although I am a attorney, I am not your attorney and I am not offering you legal advice in today's episode. This episode and all of my episodes are informational and educational only. It is not a substitute for seeking out your own advice from your own lawyer. And please keep in mind that I can't offer you legal advice. I don't ever offer any legal services. But I think I offer some pretty good information.