

Episode 163: How To Create Engagement With A Summit Launch Party

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Dr. Mark T. Wade: Hey, summit hosts. Dr. Mark T. Wade here, founder of Virtual Summits Software and your host on the Virtual Summit Podcast. And we are in for a treat today. I am so excited for this episode. We've got legendary Nicole Ware with us today. Nicole, thanks for hanging out with us.

Nicole Ware: Oh my goodness. Thank you so much for letting me be on your podcast. It's awesome. Thank you.

Dr. Mark: Well, I am honored and we are going to have some fun. We've got this, I can't wait to dive into some of the, uh, the strategies and techniques we've just been talking about. But before we get into those summit gems and goodies, Nicole, I'd love for you to take a moment and tell the audience just a little bit more about yourself.

Nicole: Well, yes, my name is Nicole Ware as Mark said. I run Fempreneuronline.com I'm a virtual summit producer. I mostly work with female founders. I'm essentially grow their lists with virtual summits. And I had been following Mark your podcast for a while. I've been following you. I went to the Summit Fest, which I absolutely love. So I just, I love learning from people and helping people grow, uh, grow their audience with virtual summits. I love it. So much fun.

Dr. Mark: Well, it was an absolute pleasure having you at Summit Fest Live. We had a little bit of fun there. Did we not?

Nicole: It was insane. I mean, you know, I tell people what happened, they're like, really? You did that?

Dr. Mark: Yeah. Those who know my personality, you know, we gotta have a business, but we've got to have a little fun too. So as you're there and looking forward to seeing you at the next one, once we're all out of the house, uh, that'll be great. And maybe even having you, uh, teach some of the sessions there. So.

Nicole: Hey, you never know, right?

Dr. Mark: You never know. Well, Nicole, um, you've got some pretty cool stuff going on over here. Why don't we start with kind of your journey. You've, uh, you're now you've got the Fempreneur and you're helping people as a summit producer, kind of walk through a little bit of what you do, kind of your, maybe your summit, quote unquote philosophy, if you will, and what you're doing over there.

Nicole: Yeah, so essentially my philosophy on summits is really about growing your business, um, to new heights with the engagement and collaborations that you get with your speakers. I'm all about collaborating. I'm all about really kind of making awesome with someone who, you know, maybe know a little bit more about something than you do,

um, but really engage in asking the questions that you have. So being very curious and asking questions that you may have to, uh, the speaker and just really creating, uh, interviews and, and engaging with your speaker, uh, um, in the, in the best way possible to get the best content to get the most knowledge out of your, um, your, your, your interaction with them. So, um, my philosophy, again, it's really about the collaboration. It's about, uh, knowledge growing, growing your knowledge with someone else who's an expert in that field.

Dr. Mark: I love that. And what is the summit? It's, it's sessions with speakers. So we have to have some great content coming from those speakers. Absolutely important there. So Nicole, with, with your kind of strategy, if you will, or one of your, your special, unique, um, aspects of what you do with your summits in your clients. Let's jump into that because it's a pretty interesting one. Let's talk about the Facebook engagement strategy.

Nicole: Yeah. Yeah. So I did this with a client of mine, Tasha on Beautiful Home, Beautiful Life. And uh, it was an amazing summit at, uh, it featured 30 plus speakers. Uh, it was about home decor organization, which is very different on a lot of summits out there. A lot of summits are either business or you know, those sort of things. But it, it really kind of brought together just real people trying to do organization and we wanted to come up with something engaging with that group of people. And it was obviously Facebook, uh, in a Facebook group and we brought together in a matter of a week, about 6,000, uh, people. Um, now the entire total attendance was a lot more, but 6,000 people in a Facebook group in a week is pretty cool. And not only that, they were super engaged. That's what made me so excited about it.

Nicole: Um, and if I could just start, you know, with the, uh, the launch party and kind of how we did, going up to the actual, uh, summit, we had what we called a launch party. So the day before the actual summit went live, uh, we had the host in there. She went live. It was super engaging fun. She was talking to everybody. We made a big to do about it. Hey, we're giving away prizes, make sure you're there. Um, and it was pretty much her explaining what the week was going to be about answering questions, but then again giving a little bit of content to give him a little bit a taste of what the week was going to be about. It was, it was actually pretty cool and people set their clock by it. I think she was maybe like two, two minutes late or something. People like, is it happening? You know, what's going on? Um, but it builds that anticipation for the actual events. Having that summit lunch party. And again, when you have 6,000 people like in a group at once, they're about whatever it is that you are about to do.

Dr. Mark: That is amazing. I love that. So to clarify then here, this the launch party, this was with the attendees. So there were 6,000 people waiting to get into the group and then they hit go and then boom, you got this big party happen.

Nicole: Absolutely. So you know where we open it up. So it was almost like dumping a bunch of people out into the group and not only that, Facebook was like, what's going on? They started to just promote the group and an, you know, and then promoting the group. You're promoting your summit. So people get in the sub and the actual group, they're now like, what is the summit? They're interested in that. So getting a bunch of people interested in the Facebook group, pushing them there, having them wait and building

anticipation, dumping them in, and I hate to say dumping them, but dumping them in the group and then saying, Hey, let's have a party. That's exactly what the, what the strategy was all about.

Dr. Mark: Love that. That is. Oh, so cool. Well let's, let's, let's keep moving forward with the strategy. So obviously engagement was the name of the game. You kicked it off with this launch party. What else did you do? What other kind of, uh, strategies or actions did you do with the group or even outside the group with the, for engagement?

Nicole: Well, we absolutely encourage speakers to get in there. We wanted speakers to start posting things. So post things about themselves, maybe introduce themselves. You'd be surprised by how just seeing a speaker in a group, they're almost like a celebrity. There are a lot of attendees there. We're so excited about hearing from them and they would ask a question thinking one of us would respond and here's the speaker themselves. You know, someone Jennifer Maker, she's like a huge person in the crafts right now. And having her say something to an attendee. I mean, they went, I can't believe you reply to me. It's really cool having your speakers really get involved in the group. Asking questions. You know, even some of them were doing honestly market research, you know, what would you like? Would you like this or this at? I mean, that's actually really a benefit for a speaker to be able to get that interaction with people who are engaging with their session.

Dr. Mark: I love this. So let's talk about the market research. Well, uh, give us an example of one of, uh, one of these ideas and what, what, what's the point of it?

Nicole: Well, so for instance, uh, one of my friends, Megan, she does productivity. She asks a question, what, uh, what is challenging for you, you know, with organization. And she got honestly probably about 50 responses. So if you are a productivity coach and now you're a group that's interacting with you and only that, but then they're also going and watching your video. So your video views as a speaker, your video views are going up as a whole. Sure. Excited because again, your video views are going up, people are engaging in your content, but then you're using that research, which she did use that research for another course that she ended up doing on the backend. Um, so I mean it's the market research for speakers alone and it's, you know, really great info for the host as well, but you're able to then have future products. So it really helps not only the host but the speakers as well.

Dr. Mark: This is incredible. I mean if you're trying to get information even for a host, you know, sitting there watching the information coming back for a host, this is great too because the more engaged the audience, the better the summit. So like how did you convince or talk to your speakers about this or was this just something they naturally did or how did you kind of guide them into actually being involved and engaged in the group to create this?

Nicole: Honestly, it was really natural. I think one or two got in there and just kind of introduced themselves and I think they were kind of timid to do it. And then we went into the speaker Facebook group cause we did have a speaker Facebook group where we can engage with them and we told them, go. Go in that group, ask questions, engage with

them. They are hungry to have you. They are hungry to learn things from you there. They want that interaction with you because at the end, the beginning, it really was interaction between the host and the attendees and the Facebook manager and the attendees. And then once the speakers got in there, it, it really kind of exploded. Um, so definitely, uh, it was organic, but then it was also a little bit of a push like, Hey, go in there and involve yourself. And a lot of them were super excited to do that.

Dr. Mark: That is amazing. I mean, having speakers engaged like that, that's only going to increase the engagement of the audience, which increases the overall success of the summit. I'm loving this. Well let's keep, let's keep in talking. Let's keep talking. This strategy that you use for engagement, what other aspects did you incorporate throughout the summit or in the group? Either one.

Nicole: Yeah. So I will say this, there's nothing like a good giveaway. People love themselves some free. So, so if you come in with some great products that very closely align with what you are talking about in your sessions, it really works out well. So for this particular summit, it obviously was an organized organizations on it. We had gift cards to the container store. Hello, everyone loves the container store. Um, so having them, you know, give us these gift cards, um, to participate in the summit. People were, you know, we had posts. So my um, my Facebook community manager, she literally had posted that said, I want you to post a picture of your, your closet just as it is. And then I want you to go in there and tell me what you want to do to your closet. People were like, Oh, let me go. For a gift card.

Nicole: It was like \$100. We are going to absolutely show you our closet and disarray. And there were long posts. I mean, people were putting long posts, they were interacting, people were interacting with each other's posts, like men that you're a closet looks great compared to mine and they would post a picture of their closet. So having not only just these giveaways but also having people posts in the group surrounding the giveaway, like what would you do with this giveaway? How would this change your life? And you'd be surprised. I mean, a lot of people, it became a little bit more emotional than I thought it was going to be, especially in the posts and the people talking to each other. Um, about the situation. It really became even, you know, beyond the giveaway. But it does boost the engagement quite a bit. If you can have a few select, uh, products to give away. Very closely related to the sessions.

Dr. Mark: Let's dive into that a little bit. What was a couple, maybe one or two things that you actually gave away? Was it just like gift cards or products? And is this again to the, the audience, the attendees or to the speakers?

Nicole: To the attendees? So, uh, we gave away several gift cards, so about 10 container store gift cards. Uh, we gave away like \$500 for a Target gift card. Um, we also gave away, we had an amazing partner who actually gave us a suite of, um, uh, Hoover products, so vacuum cleaners and a carpet cleaner, but it was actually a whole package. So about two people got about, I think they stole, not stole, but they, they went away with \$1,000 worth of products of actual products to clean their home, organize their home. Um, so actual physical products, I mean, that's insane. If you can give those things away and not just gift cards, it makes it even more of an extraordinary gift from people.

Dr. Mark: And this is just, I mean it's so powerful and you've got people that they're going to be more engaged and paying more attention because they're hoping to get one of those gifts. And I love the, the gift cards cause they're easy. They're quick. And it sounds like you, you know, you were making sure that the, the, the gift that was being given away was right on point with the audience, which is super important. And on top of that, like you just said, a physical gift, I mean that's phenomenal. People are going to be so super excited for that. And I love that you mentioned you had a partner that helped with that. So that's, this is a great idea for people to have sponsor. What does, what, what could your sponsor donate or give away even just as a one off? It doesn't have to be for every, uh, attendee. So amazing there. Well Nicole, let's keep digging into these, the strategies. So you use this, uh, the, this kind of giveaway and the it for market research as well as engagement. This was with the audience, uh, with the speakers. You, you had a separate speaker group that you're going into and in communicating, did you have any, any kind of special way of kind of amping up the speakers or keeping them in the know from the day to day? How did, how did you kind of pump up those speakers?

Nicole: Well, we would talk to them a little bit more about, uh, what was going on in the group was what was the climate. So we would say this stuff like, Hey, um, you're, you know, they're really interested in this particular subject. So they're really interested in, uh, organizing. Can somebody go in there and talk about this a little bit more? Um, we would send them screenshots of some of the comments we were getting in the Facebook group, I mean like people, their lives were actually being impacted. Like, we're so happy this is happening. We love this speaker. We'd love sending those little messages. It's like we love this speaker and that speaker be like, Oh, and they would engage more because you know, to see a Facebook post that directly names you and names your session and what they got out of it, I mean point by point by point, it gets that speaker who there especially, they're talking about super excited. And then also it reminds them, Hey, people are really listening to these sessions. It's not just something that you did and then you know, it's over. We really want you to go in there and engage with the, uh, with the audience and they're super invested in you. So go in there, you know, here's, you know, here's these great comments. Go in there and let them know that you appreciate it. So.

Dr. Mark: That is so good. Uh, yeah, just ma, just letting the speakers know inside of the group. I think that right there let like almost not even be like, Hey, you have to go post, but like, Hey, they're really wanting to learn about this. And the speakers. Like, Oh, I want my name out there. I'll jump in. Let me, let me talk about that. I kind kinda liked that you're almost using a little bit of reverse psychology right there by not being like, Hey, you know, Samantha, you have to go in and post this or you should go in and post it. I saw, I really liked that. And then of course the social proof by putting the screen captures there. That is just crazy. Well let's, let's keep going. Cause this wasn't the only activities, uh, that you had on this. You had a, um, I believe a scavenger hunt of sorts, right? Like talk us through, talk us through that strategy that you've used.

Nicole: So for a scavenger hunt, it was, it was again, more about engagement. Uh, some of them were about giveaways, but it really was more about the engagement piece of it. So meaning, you know, for instance, go in your house and find a junkie drawer and tell us what that junkie drawer means to you. Now again, this, most people are listening

probably, well this is home decor. How does that fit with me? Um, but you can always say, you know, especially if it's like business or home office, take a picture of your home office and discuss what, you know, what your home office means to you, what do you want to change? You'll be surprised by all of the, you know, emotions and feelings that people will start to share and not only share but engage with each other. I totally feel that way just from a scavenger hunt.

Nicole: Show me your junky drawer. It turns into almost like a little bit of a therapy session for the group. And when they see that it's okay to share, it's okay to put, you know, a pictures of, of their, of their belongings and things that matter to them. It's super important. One, one scavenger hunt thing. We had them post a picture of your favorite share, all the stores that came just from poster picture of your favorite chair. Find this, find that in your house. It was really actually really powerful. Uh, and I think, uh, improved engagement in the middle of the engagement, but emotional attachment. So the group people became very much more emotionally attached to the group when they started sharing things about themselves.

Dr. Mark: That is 1000% correct. I mean, if you can get an attendee to take an action, it's kind of like whether there's a psychological, um, uh, trigger called the foot in door method. So if you can get them to do one action, it gets them more engaged and then they're more open to doing the next action. Now if you can get them to take a big action like that, a posting something, I mean this, this affects them in multiple ways. One, they feel like they belong. They're a part of it. Like they're actually participating in some, you know, some of our summer hosts right now might be thinking, well, not everybody's going to going to put, you know, post this or do that, you know, and that's okay. The ones who do are going to be your most engaged and qualified, uh, your audience. But then additionally, you know, not only are they more engaged, but when they're seeing, like they've taken an action, they see somebody else take that same action. And now they're contributing or commenting back and forth. They're now creating community. And that is so, so powerful. I love that. Any other kind of factors, maybe, maybe things that, uh, with these strategies that you learn, maybe any kind of mistakes or challenges or friction points that you had to overcome when, when creating these engagement strategies?

Nicole: Well, for sure you have to be, uh, on the lookout for people that's going to come in the group and want to try to sell themselves. I'm not talking about speed speakers, I'm just talking to other people. Um, which was funny because the community unity, Oh, they called it out very quickly. I can't tell you how many posts, Oh, this is a, you know, this is not appropriate poster that I got for people trying to sell themselves. So you gotta be on the lookout for that. And the, again, my community took care of it. So that's why I love the fact that the community bonded so quickly. Um, I would also say that you have to be on the lookout for people who uh, who don't necessarily read, if that's the right way to say it, but people who ask the same question. So having a blanketed answer for frequently asked questions is super important.

Nicole: You can't expect to be able to go to your email and read it or even just look at the thread. You have to answer every question and it should really be a set answer for every time they ask the same question. And then also, um, having a dedicated community

manager helped us out with those issues. So Taryn, who's my, uh, Facebook community manager, she went in every single day and engaged with as many people but it came overwhelmed where so many people engaging. But you know, she definitely went in and answered every single question she possibly could. Um, so I would absolutely recommend if you don't have one with a large group like that you should.

Dr. Mark: I can only imagine, I mean, that could be overwhelmed. 6,000 people right in there communicating, engaging. That's, that's just incredible. While we're, we're starting to come on the back end of this episode, Nicole, I want to jump into kind of any additional stress like, well, let's even paint it like this. You've, you've obviously spent a lot of time learning, studying and producing summits. Uh, uh, what was, what's something that you've been seeing that you've seen out there in the summit world that maybe isn't the summit hosts aren't doing correct or, or that we should be improving?

Nicole: Ooh, okay. So I've seen this trend where people are requiring certain things, like you're required to have this many email subscribers. You're required to promote this much. And I'm not sure where it's coming from, but it's really sounding most to word. I don't wanna say sleazy. I dunno. Like it's, it's, it's sounding a little nerve wracking. It's also when people are not pitching, um, to that particular speaker. Like for that speaker, they are doing blanketed email, so their speakers, it's nothing that is catered to that speaker. It's really getting sleazy with that. And I caution you to do blanket emails. I caution you not to put all these requirements on your speakers because you really want it to be an organic collaboration, organic relationship, build up that trust between you and the speaker and they will promote for you. They will, you know, do everything that you, that you like for them to do. Build up that trust. And that's what this summit that I did was about. My host was incredibly close and not completely close, but she knew they trusted her. Um, she trusted them if they wanted to promote, they would and most of them did. So, you know, be a little bit more cautious how you guys are approaching your speakers. Be a little bit more cautious in what you're requiring. I think that's my, my big thing right now for hosts.

Dr. Mark: That is so true and it's so important we're seeing this out there. Um, and those are usually fallen into that kind of list grabber category, right? Openness, scrape those lists of those speakers. So don't be one of those lists grabbers. Um, any, any kind of other insights, uh, for our summit hosts, things you've seen when you were working with other summit hosts. Maybe, you know, uh, misconceptions or, or you know, advice you would want to give them as they're getting ready to start their summit journey.

Nicole: It's okay to not do everything in a month as, especially now I'm seeing a lot of hosts who are, well, I'm going to do a summit. It's going to be ready in a month. Be very careful with your timing. Um, you know, I know most people will teach at least 90 days. Um, really be careful with your timing. It's okay for it to be three months. It's okay for that process. Give yourself time. Don't rush the process. Do not rush the process. Um, you want the best results for you and for your speakers. Always think about your speakers as well. You want the best results for everyone. So don't rush this process at all.

Dr. Mark: So true. Such powerful advise right there. Hopefully everybody is not only listening to that, but writing that down and I'm sure they're also thinking, Mark, where is Nicole

hanging out at? How can I get in touch with her? So why don't you share the best way to get in touch with you, Nicole, and where you're hanging out at.

Nicole: Well, uh, Fempreneuronline.com is my website, uh, and also IG, Fempreneuronline, uh, is my handle. Um, so you can get me at either one of those places.

Dr. Mark: Absolutely. Well, Nicole, thank you so much for being here. I will let you leave us with one parting piece of wisdom.

Nicole: Let's see. Parting piece of wisdom. I want you to treat your summit like it is a, I want you to treat your summit like it's an a very, excuse me. I want you to, I'm sorry Mark. Um, I want, I want you to treat your summit, um, as a, as a launch pad for your business. I want you guys to, you use your summit to impact. There it is. I want you to use your summits to impact your audience and give them massive value.

Dr. Mark: Oh, so true. So powerful right there. Use that summit to impact that audience and create value and it's one of the most powerful ways. Nicole, thank you so much for coming on and sharing all these amazing summit gems and goodies with us. I appreciate you.

Nicole: Thank you so much Mark.

Dr. Mark: And thank you all you summit hosts for spending this time with Nicole and I am Dr. Mark T. Wade, your host here on the virtual summit podcast. You can check out all of these amazing goodies and get access to know Nicole over at the show notes at podcast.virtualsummits.com/163 and just remember your message matters. So go out there and make an impact in the world and we'll see you on the next episode.

Dr. Mark: Now I want to end this episode by saying to all the summit hosts listening right now, I believe in you and you can do this. Summits are by far one of the most powerful ways to quickly grow your list, launch your platform, make it more money, and most importantly, make an impact in the world, even if you're just getting started. So don't get caught up in analysis paralysis because the world needs to hear your message, and there are people who are waiting for you to help them just get started because imperfect action is always better than no action. Thank you and see you on the next episode.