

Episode 68: How Aweber Went Beyond The Podcast With A One-Day Summit!

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Speaker: Brandon Olson

Dr. Mark T. Wade: Hey summit hosts. Dr. Mark T. Wade here, founder of Virtual Summit Software, and we're going to be talking about how a top email marketing company is leading the way through hosting a One-Day Summit. I've got legendary Brandon Olson here with me, marketing communications manager for Aweber who's helping small business owners accelerate their growth using powerfully simple email marketing tools. Brandon, we are so fortunate and I am extremely excited to have you here with us on the show.

Brandon Olson: Thanks Mark. I'm pumped to be here and thank you for having me.

Dr. Mark: Absolutely. Now, I cannot wait to dig into what you and Aweber has been doing with this One-Day Summit. Now. Before we do that though, why don't you just tell our audience just a little bit about yourself?

Brandon: Yeah, absolutely. So, um, my background is in PR and communications, social media. I've been doing that for the past, you know, 14, 15 years and uh, touched a lot of different areas of marketing. Uh, so I have a pretty good breadth of knowledge on, on what marketing is and, and the various things you can do with it. But for Aweber, I head up our social media and our PR efforts, so I'm out there at events, um, promoting us on social media, getting the team involved. Um, so I do a lot of sort of awareness building awareness for the brand and what we do as well as kind of engaging the, not only our audience, but our, our team to really also kind of empower them to do the same thing,

Dr. Mark: Which I, I find absolutely fascinating, especially, you know, the fact that you were able to take this idea, kind of put it out there and then they just let you kind of roll with it. And we're gonna we're gonna jump into the actual, let's go ahead and go with that right now. Why don't you tell our summit hosts, uh, a little bit about the, the summit you put on and kind of how you came up with the idea, how you got to that point.

Brandon: Yeah, absolutely. So the summit we have is called the Beyond The Podcast Virtual Summit. We're actually in our second year, so it's going to be next week, September 18th. I know, I'm not sure when you're gonna air this, but September 18th. So if you, if you catch it, uh, but we'll also be having it on recorded. So if you do catch it later on, you can still sign up, get the recordings. But the whole premise and Beyond The Podcast summit is really to allow, uh, to empower podcasters to, you know, grow, monetize and connect with their, with their, with their listeners. We've been in the podcasting space, you know, really active, uh, in that community for a long, long time, probably five or six years now. And the thing we hear over and over and over again is that podcasters are struggling to understand how they can grow and connect with their audiences more and really monetize or build revenue around their podcasts.

Brandon: And, and so that's the whole goal of this summit, Beyond The Podcast, I'm going to teach them how to go Beyond The Podcast to grow, to monetize, and to really connect on a deeper level with their listeners. So we started it last year, right before Podcast

Movement, which is one of the world's largest podcasts conferences out there. Um, and we did it sort of as a way to kind of springboard us into the conference. So really create some dialogue and some buzz and some conversations at the event. And it worked really, really well. I mean, people would be about, we're talking about the summit and you're like, Oh, you guys hosted that summit. That was really cool. So it gave us a lot of opportunities to have conversations with people. Um, both, the other thing that we kinda didn't really expect is that, you know, it generated a really great audience of podcasters.

Brandon: You'd go back to who we can continue to educate and engage with podcast specific content. And so going into, uh, the summit this year, um, we decided let's take a little different approach here. Obviously Podcast Movement's already passed. Um, so what's our goal or objectives with this summit, to your summit, um, with that, is it, is it really to build thought leadership, uh, authority in the space? Is it to drive sales or leads for us? Uh, so we really took a different approach there. Um, you know, last year we ended up with about 2000 registrants. Um, and so this year we're really going after, um, a larger group of podcasters as well and we're taking a different approach. What we're going to be tying it closer to, into our, our, our business goals. So obviously our business goals is to get people to try our software, uh, to really use email marketing, uh, specifically podcasters.

Brandon: And so, um, the summit is going to talk about a lot of different ways that you can grow and monetize your podcast. One of those obviously being email marketing. And we teach that, you know, some of the best and most successful podcasters out there are the ones who are leveraging email marketing in their business. So, you know, we are making a closer tie to our product and our service and what we do for podcasters throughout the summit. And also afterwards. Uh, and one of the ways we're going to do that is we're going to do the summit, which is about a four hour summit with six speakers. Um, but after the conference we're going to be holding servant encore webinar where we're going to invite people back to learn how they can do a lot of the things that they heard in the summit. Um, how they can leverage email marketing to really grow and, and monetize. So that's where we're going to be talking more about our product, how they can use it to grow. And so, um, you know, we're hoping that that has a stronger tie to kind of what we do as a company.

Dr. Mark: I love that having an interactive component afterwards at the end it increases the engagement and then also gives them what we kind of call like an edutainment. It allows them to actually be a participant versus just a passive viewer. So I really, I really liked that. So I've got some questions. I've been over here writing down, questions popping up, all kinds of things I want to kind of dig into. So first off, like I, I love the fact obviously that you, that you and Aweber ran a One-Day Summit. I'm a big proponent of the One-Day Summit. We created that around seven years ago. I'd love to know why you decided to do a One-Day Summit over, for example, a multi-day summit.

Brandon: Yeah, that's a good question. Um, and we did ask ourselves that. I mean, initially it was really okay, uh, we've got a lot of other projects and things going on and what could we do? Um, so thought, well, we could easily do sort of a one day, you know, and at the time, last year's was only four speakers, so it really was, it wasn't a real heavy lift. At

least we didn't think it would be. Um, uh, there was a lot more to it than, than we, that we learned as we went on. But we stuck with a One-Day Summit initially because, um, of, of various, you know, things that were happening, projects that were going on, uh, we just didn't have the bandwidth to really do more than one day and we thought it was a really quick and easy way that we could kind of springboard us into the, into that event.

Brandon: Um, and going into this year, I actually wanted to, I actually consider doing like a two day event, um, and the team, you know, I talked with the team here at Aweber and, and uh, you know, the feedback was, you know, if you think about the audience there, they're probably not going to want to sit through two days worth of content. They, you know, doing a one day, you know, multiple, yes, 4 to 6 speakers. It's perfect amount of, of time and, and content to really give them, you know, actionable tips that they can use. And so we've made that decision again to stick with a One-Day Summit. Um, and we did expand the number of speakers obviously, but we kept it to one day because we wanted people to, to really have that one day, to focus in, uh, to learn that some of these actionable, practical, practical tips, um, that they can apply to their podcasts. And, um, you know, so far we've seen some really great results and you know, the feedback that we're getting so far. So it's been really good.

Dr. Mark: Well, I, I can only imagine that it's going to be amazing results there. You guys put on everything you guys do is, is high quality and well run. So I'd like to actually look at the last summit, the first one you got, you ran, who did you have on the summit and kind of how did you choose who you were going to have on there?

Brandon: Yeah. Um, a lot of the deliberation there. Um, so, you know, we wanted to make sure we had, uh, a variety of speakers and different, um, sort of different achievement levels. So, you know, you've got the huge podcast who's out there. Um, and we did have John Lee Dumas, Amy Porterfield too. Like the biggest podcasters out there that we, that we know really well. But then we also had some sort of, uh, you know, individuals who maybe weren't as big and well known, like Mark Asquith and Jessica Kupferman. Um, so we looked at sort of how large their audiences were. Um, but also we also looked at kind of what, what their areas of expertise and strengths, you know, Mark Asquith for example, he's amazing at building community, Jessica Kupferman as well. Uh, whereas, you know, Amy Porterfield, she does amazing stuff with social media.

Brandon: So we talked about social media and podcasting and how you can use those two together. And then John Lee Dumas is just, you know, he's, he's just, you know, huge and has a ton to offer, been doing his podcast for, for so long. So we looked at, um, you know, influence and prominence. Uh, but also we wanted to make sure that they were, they could speak on a variety of, of topics or range of topics. So that was really important to us. We didn't want to just get headliner after headliner because you know, to be honest, you know, they, they may not go as deep. Uh, as let's say, you know, someone who's, you know, Mark Asquith or Jessica Kupferman who can really kind of dive deeper, uh, into, you know, topics like that. Uh, and then we approached it the same this year. Uh, so this year we, we went after a couple of big names, uh, like Cathy Heller who's got the number 41 top business podcasts out there on iTunes.

Brandon: Um, you know, Harry Duran, Dave Jackson is kind of the grandfather of podcasting, bringing back Mark Asquith because we felt, um, an importance to kind of bring some continuity from last year to this year. So we brought up back Mark, uh, Mark again, who's a great customer, a great, a great advocate for us as well. Tracy Deforge who's kind of a, uh, she's, she's focuses a lot on the research and the insights behind podcasting. And then lastly, Andrea Jones, who's like all about social media and how you can use social media to promote and really build your, your podcast. So we tried to also kind of replicate what we did last year this year by having a variety of topics, variety of strengths and also kind of, um, sort of achievement levels. And we wanted the kind of that range because we wanted our listeners and our viewers too, to really feel like they could attain those things.

Brandon: Right. Um, it's hard to think, okay, I can't really be like John Lee Dumas or you know, how do I get there? But when you've got someone who's on their way there, you know, where it, it feels a little more real to be able to, okay, I can achieve that, you know, and, and I can, I can aspire to become like, you know, Kathy or, or some of these really big names, but at least give them some, some sort of milestones where they can, where they can kind of aspire to be. So maybe not, you know, not making it so lofty, but really making it a real attainable goal for them.

Dr. Mark: Yeah. I'm a big proponent of that. We typically teach, you know, it's good to have one or two of the bigger names to teach and also to solidify some of the other speakers. But a lot of the times those, those speakers, those experts that are still in the trenches working hard, building their business, they've got the most, you know, kind of up-to-date best information. So I really like that now. When you were doing, like when you chose the topic, like the actual topic, cause you could've gone almost anywhere with this and especially even under the umbrella of podcasting, you know, when you were choosing the topic, what were some of the, like what was the process you went through to kind of narrow it down and kind of work us through that?

Brandon: Yeah, so I mean, high level the topic is, is really kind of going Beyond The Podcast, learning how to do that in order to grow and in order to monetize your podcast. Um, I think initially the first year, um, you know, as we kind of brainstorm kind of what's our, what's our focus, what do we call this thing, um, you know, Beyond The Podcast kind of made sense for us because, you know, we're an email marketing company, we're not a podcasting company, so we're teaching podcasters how they can use other tools like, you know, marketing to go Beyond The Podcast and deepen those relationships and to create other touch points with your listeners. Um, so the, the name Beyond The Podcast made total sense and we could, you know, once we have that established, we can talk about, okay, yeah, you can use email marketing and podcasting to really deepen and build a stronger connection with your listeners.

Brandon: Because let's be honest, your podcast listeners are very passive. You know, they're listening, they're consuming, they're enjoying it, but you really don't have, uh, uh, a one to one relationship yet with them. You don't know who they are. They're kind of this faceless audience. And so, you know, having a way to kind of build a new connection, new touch point with them through email, through social media, allows you to deepen that connection with them, that those relationships with them. So that's kind of how we

began to think about, think about that topic. Okay. We're talking about going Beyond The Podcast. Um, you know, why that's important, uh, to deepen those relationships and those connections. Because ultimately once you're have that relationship with your, with your listener at that level, then you can start, you know, getting the, getting them to take action, you know, you know, inviting them into your community, you know, having them buy your products and services so you've gotta be able to build that connection and, and further that relationship.

Brandon: Um, so that's kinda how we approached it. And last year it was really more so about, you know, building community, how to build ways, you know, find ways to connect with your audience. This year we kind of took a little different route and we're focusing more on growing your podcasts, um, and monetizing your podcast. Yeah, we'll touch on connecting with your listeners and building relationships because that's a means to do that and it means to grow your podcast and monetize. Um, but we want it to be very specific and very, uh, you know, very upfront like, okay, you have a goal as a podcaster to grow and to make money. Like, let's be honest, you want to make money, whether it's through your podcasts or whether it's, you know, through your business in other ways, you, you know, that's what you're in it for. And so we want it to be very blatant about that. You know, this is a podcast to help you grow and generate revenue. Um, I think last year it wasn't as clear cut. I was about connecting and building relationships and that's all important, but we wanted it to really call out the fact that this is really about you growing and, and building revenue as a business. Thinking of yourself, thinking of yourself less as a podcaster and more as a business with a podcast that helps. It helps you reach your, your audience.

Dr. Mark: Yeah. And it's, it's very common. You know, the first summit is, you know, a learning experience. We do it. We, you know, get some success. We realized some things that we could have done better. We implement those changes and it continues to grow and get better. And we're going to dive into a couple of those questions here in a second, but I figured since we have, you know, such a great email marketing mind here with us who has run a summit and with these, this topic of podcasting, a lot of the same touch points work as well for summit hosts. So based off of last, the last summit, your first summit that you ran, what were a couple of those kind of key fundamental takeaways from the, some, uh, from the summit that maybe some of our summit hosts could implement into their email marketing campaigns for their summits or you know, some of those strategies that maybe they could help use their summits to be more successful as well?

Brandon: Yeah, so, um, that's a great question. And we thought, obviously as an email marketing company, we thought through this and had a really strong strategy there. Um, but the, you know, the, someone signs up for your virtual summit, you can't just kind of like, you know, not touch them again until they, until the summit comes, you gotta have a really strong nurture sequence. Um, you know, follow up emails to them to help keep them engaged, keep them, keep them coming back, um, to get them excited, get them pumped. So, you know, it's really important to have that, you know, and it doesn't have to be an automated series. You can have a single automated email that says, Hey, thanks for signing up. You know, here's where to go to, to, to continue to get engaged. And in our, in our example, we, we actually created a Facebook group, um, where when you signed up for the summit, excuse me, um, you were able to join that Facebook

group and, and start, you know, interacting with other attendees, registrants, even, you know, the hosts and the speakers as well.

Brandon: So we made that a, uh, you know, we saw that as an important thing so that they could continue to get engaged in the content, get excited about it. So you know, your email strategy has got to keep them coming back. You know, you don't, you can't just let them go. Um, so have that single email that says, Hey, welcome for signing up and then have multiple emails scheduled, you know, leading up to the conference to get them engaged. Remind if you've got, you know, new speakers to add or new sponsors that you want to highlight, you know, find things that you can do, things that you can engage them with leading up to the conference or to the event so that you don't lose that spark, that excitement that, you know, when they first sign up there, they're pumped, they're, they want to, they want to get that content right away.

Brandon: So you've got to keep that excitement going, keep them engaged. And then you also have to have a really strong follow up sequence after that summit. So if your goal, like in our case is to drive sales and to get people to sign up for whatever the service or the product do you have, you have to have a really strong email game. Um, you know, with that audience. So your summit comes, it goes, what's your plan after that? You've gotta have a strong a series of emails that it's going to continue to engage them. And whether that's bringing them back to webinars or you know, bringing them into a community or, you know, some other way, other, other content you might provide them, you've got to have those things planned out in advance. Um, otherwise your summit just kind of is, it's a great event, but you know, it's not really gonna produce results for your business.

Brandon: And, and that's why it's so important to, you know, go into it with, you know, a plan and figure out what is your goal. You know, you got to start there. What's my goal with this summit? Is it just to be a thought leader? Is it just, is it to drive sales for my business? Um, from there that's going to dictate kind of how you approach your, your emails pre and post event during an event. Uh, and so on. One of the thing I'll add too is that, you know, even during an event you can leverage email to get people coming back. So, you know, they may have missed that first email saying, Hey, we're going live tomorrow, but if you have a couple emails or you know, two or three emails set up to go out, you know, you know, right at the start or you know, halfway through it and maybe right before it ends, you know, those who kind of missed that, that initial announcement or you know, for some reason didn't see it, they can, they can continue to come back into that. Um, and you can highlight any of the different speakers that are happening at different times. Um, we chose to kind of, uh, keep the fairly light during the conference. We have two emails, one at the beginning, one halfway point. Um, but that's important here to get people coming into your, into your summit who have registered.

Dr. Mark: And that's so great. And I'm actually going to keep going deeper with you on this topic. Before I do, I just wanted to ask, was your Facebook group, was that a popup group or did you ha, are you, have you let it keep going and are nurturing it and having ongoing communications management, et cetera?

Brandon: Yeah, it's, it's remained there. So, um, we, we've invited the people from this year into that group as well. And I'll be honest, I don't think we did a really good job of keeping

that, keeping that audience engaged. Um, you know, when they, last year when they first joined, it was a really engaged audience and we didn't have a really strong plan to keep that community going. Um, and so that's, that's, uh, one thing that we learned from last year as to is to do a better job of how about have a plan to continue to engage these, that community, uh, throughout the year if you're using it for another summit coming up. Um, so we, we didn't treat it as a pop up. We kept it open and kept it going. Um, you know, definitely not as engaged as it should have been. Um, and so this time around, we're actually developing a different approach to keeping that community engaged throughout the year.

Brandon: Um, you know, with new content, it can be Facebook lives with, you know, members of the community or if we want to bring in some, uh, some of the, you know, past speakers or you know, other experts, you know, into the groups to have some dialogue and provide additional content and, and training and education for them. So, um, so yeah, you know, if you do, I guess for those listening, if you're doing a virtual summit, you decide you want a Facebook group, um, and you want to keep that going, just make sure you have a plan to keep them engaged. Otherwise it kind of goes, it goes cold and it's hard to reengage them and reignite them. So.

Dr. Mark: Yeah, that's so true. And I mean either way is great if you want to do a pop up group just for the summit. I mean we do so many summits over here that a lot of times it's clear this is a pop up for the summit and then afterwards it's still there but we don't monitor it or, or regulator or anything after that. And then we have our bigger summits, which are annual that we keep going and I agree completely with your brand and make sure you map out some kind of a plan. It doesn't have to be super intense. Like Brandon was just saying, they're throwing some Facebook lives, bring some people and get the community engaged. Now, what I'd like to ask with this summit, because you're in the process of having this summit go out and it's more on the monetization aspect. What were some of those, and again, because there's a huge crossover between podcasters and summit hosts like myself on both. So what is maybe one or two of those monetization tips. You can give us a little taster of the summit that some hosts could use with their email marketing campaigns.

Brandon: Yeah, so I think with, um, you know, with podcasters or there's a lot of ways that you can monetize, obviously the, uh, the, the ways that most podcasts are, is think is Patreon and you know, just getting donations from, from your listeners. Um, but really, you know, it comes down to having something to, to sell, to offer, whether that's a product or a service and, you know, you can, if you don't know what those products are, those services are that. So puts them, put some thought into that. Um, it doesn't have to, you know, require a ton of time. You know, you can be an affiliate for example, and you know, sell affiliate programs. And get affiliate commissions that way. Um, but you can also take your existing content and package it into a product and sell that to your, to your audience. Um, you know, memberships are also another great thing.

Brandon: So a lot of podcasters will create sort of memberships and invite their listeners into that to become a member, to get, you know, exclusive bonus episodes, things of that nature. Um, so there's a lot of ways you can go with, uh, productizing or monetizing your podcast, but really comes down to having something, uh, that you can sell, whether

that's a product or service, um, that would, you know, that your listeners would really find value in. And, um, you know, like I said, a lot of a lot of businesses yeah. And podcasters included, you know, they think of that and it kind of overwhelms them. They think, Oh man, I don't know what I'm going to offer a product and it's gonna take me months to create a product. It really doesn't have to be that difficult. You know, you can package a lot of the stuff that you've already created into a different format.

Brandon: Um, and offer that as a product and, and kind of see that, see how that goes. Um, you know, you shouldn't spend months and months and months developing a product. Get something out there, you know, test it out, see what people are if they're gonna react to this things and then adjust, you know, get something out there though, because otherwise you're, you're going to go months and months creating a product and you don't really know if it's going to have legs a, so get something small at there, see how your audience reacts to it. And if they love it, then you can keep going down that road and build bigger products and build bigger programs around it.

Dr. Mark: Yeah. You, you, you've just mentioned several like amazing gems here. So I want to unpackage those a little bit for our listeners. Like again, we talk a lot about the post summit profits strategies. One of the biggest mistakes summit hosts make is not having anything to go to after that. But you've, you've also identified that some summit hosts or some entrepreneurs in general, we'll spend months and months creating a course or a program and not have an audience to sell it to. So I, I'm a big firm believer that the audience you can generate from the summit, but then you can use the summit, like you were just saying, Brandon, is to package something together to sell. We talk about how you can actually take your summit, use the outline of the summit to create a course and almost repackage the information. Of course not using the exact stuff from the summit or we actually have one of our frameworks with our One-Day Summit is how you can use a One-Day Summit to generate a specific audience to then direct towards affiliate traffic.

Dr. Mark: So without creating any products. So I just wanted to reiterate what Brandon was saying here because there's so many ways that you can monetize from a summit either before and, or after. So this is great. Like, let's keep going in this area with the co since we have, you know, Aweber represented right here, what are some, and I, and honestly Brandon, I probably get if not daily, at least multiple times a week, emails from aspiring summit hosts saying, Hey Mark, can I see your summit email copy? Can I say, what are you putting out there with your email? So since we have you here, can you give us some, some email, no no's, like, make sure you're not doing this or this in your email. Uh, just to kind of help us avoid some failures.

Brandon: Yeah, absolutely. Um, well number one, you kind of make sure that, we sometimes you do this, we don't see this a lot, but you know, you talk, you mentioned kind of bait and switch earlier on, but, um, you know, be careful not to do that with your emails. You know what you promised somebody in a subject line, make sure that that's, that's what you're delivering. Um, so that's really important. Um, you know, make sure you're real clear and straight forward with your emails. Nobody likes big long blocks of text, you know, that are, that are hard to read, that hard to skim. People like short, um, easy to read emails and so get to the point really quickly. Um, so it's, it's hard to say because,

you know, the normal answer is it depends. Um, but you know, generally speaking, you know, people like to get to the point, they like to know what is what it is you're trying to tell them and what it is they want you to do.

Brandon: Um, so try and get to the point quickly. Um, if you can do that without having to go through a big long story or narrative, um, you know, that's, that's, that's the best way to do it. Um, but if it's a brand new audience and you really kinda have to sell them on the, the idea or, or sell them on the value of there, then it might take a little bit longer to kind of get to that point. Um, but if they know you, they, they know what you're all about, they know what you offer, get to that point real quickly. Because if it's a strong community that you have, um, they're gonna, they're gonna react. You know, as soon as you say, I want you to do this, they're going to go do it. But if it's a community that you've got to kind of warm up and engage, um, you know, you've got to spell that value out for them.

Brandon: You know, really highlight those pain points that they're, that they're struggling with or challenges and how this summit, uh, or how this podcast or how this webinar or whatever it is that you're doing is going to help them solve that problem and, uh, be valuable to them. So, um, really spell out that pain point. I mean, I was listening to a podcast that, uh, Pat Flynn and Michael Stelzner were having the other day and, uh, Pat was talking about his, his new book. Um, and the way that he comes up with the titles for his book is really he, he asks his customers, you know, what are you struggling with, what's your challenge? And then he restates that right in the title. So people they know what their struggles are and you just have to understand what those are and reiterate back to them that, I know this is what you're struggling with and this product or this service or this summit or this podcast is centered or aimed at helping you achieve that or helping you solve that.

Brandon: So, um, getting back to your question about emails that kind of went on a tangent there. Um, you know, with, with emails, your emails need to spell that out. You know, what, what is it that you're trying to do? What value are you gonna provide them? Um, and why should they care? Um, yeah, those are, those are a couple ideas on what you could do with your emails. And, uh, as far as no-nos, you know, there's, you know, there's a number of words that you should kind of avoid, you know, uh, that, that would put you in the spam filter. You know, things like, you know, cheap and free and, and, you know, money and dollar signs and things that, things of that nature. Um, but really kind of focus in on what the value is. Uh, for, for your listener or your watcher.

Dr. Mark: Wow. That is such great information. Um, and I need to go back to my email marketing campaigns and probably do a little, uh, some updates on that as well. So as we start to round out this, uh, this episode here, Brandon, I'd like to ask a couple, um, specific questions on your past summit was, were there any kind of success tips, things that after you've gone through it, you look back on it and you're like, okay, I need to make sure we do that again or more of that. Are there any of those that we can tell our listeners?

Brandon: Yeah. Um, so let me think here. Um, reflecting back on last year, um, that I think a lot of the things we carried over into this year were, were, were things that we learned that

were successful. Um, obviously the One-Day Summit worked really well. So we stick with the One-Day Summit. I'm having a small amount of speakers, not like, you know, 10, 12 speakers. Um, we felt that that was really valuable because it was enough information sort of concentrated, um, that allowed our listeners to really get a lot out of it in a short amount of time, a time. So keep it succinct. Um, I think, um, you know, making sure, so we used YouTube live last time and, uh, I had not actually heard about your software. So we went to check out your software as well. Um, but we use YouTube live because it was easy.

Brandon: It was something we could get up and running really quickly. And so we went that route. And so that was something that we did again this year because it was easy lift. We didn't have to do a whole lot, um, of, uh, you know, with that. Um, we also used Facebook ads last year to, to kind of reach a broader, a podcast audience and, uh, uh, we actually did, we're doing that again this year, but, um, we learned that our, that our, our targeting was a little off and so we refine that a little bit better and we're seeing much better results as a, as a result of that. Um, so we stuck with Facebook ads, obviously our email strategies there. We've kept that going. Um, I think we, we did adjust some things with our email strategy last year. We do a lot more emails this year. We didn't do as many emails leading up to the event, uh, but we're going to have a much different post event, um, email strategy than we did last year. Last year. We didn't do a whole lot. Uh, we did a few touch points after the event leading up to podcast movement. Um, but this year we're going to be doing a lot more post event to keep them engaged and to try and get them in as a, as a trial user of, of Aweber.

Dr. Mark: That's it. I mean that right there if you just kind of have surmounted all of it together. So I'm going to go from the other side at this point because most of our summit hosts, they jump in aspiring summit hosts, they've got a lot of ambition, excitement, motivation. Um, and sometimes we're a little naive. I say most of the most successful things I've done, if I would've known how difficult it was before I did it, I would've never done it. So sometimes being a little naive is good, but what were maybe some of those one or two just unexpected challenges that you did not foresee that we can pass over to our summit hosts? Maybe help get them a little bit more prepared?

Brandon: Yeah, I think, um, one of the things that we didn't foresee was really the technical side of producing the summit. Um, so we did all ours pre-recorded interviews with art, with our, with our guests. And uh, we, we did kind of portrayed it as a live summit on the day of the summit, but we did it all pre-recorded. Um, and we were surprised by some of the technical challenges. Uh, I think, uh, you know, we used Zoom to do our recordings and um, you know, I don't think we had upgraded the, the account and so like 45 minutes hit and we're like, Oh no, it'll put a little, little warning signs. As you know, your, your, your call is gonna end soon. So, you know, that was something we changed, you know, really quickly right after that. Um, so just make sure you kind of do your due diligence to know the technical requirements behind the, the, the interviews that you're doing.

Brandon: Um, we actually went through and mapped out, okay, here's all, here's like a checklist of the things we need to make sure are, are, are on or you know, settings or this, you know, and, and so on and so forth. So that we knew exactly what we should be doing

and, and tried to avoid as many surprises as we could, even though we did get a couple surprises in the, in the actual moment. Um, so that was, you know, probably more so on the technical side, just kind of understanding what that is. Um, we did have some sponsors too last year. Uh, we had three sponsors this year. We've got I think eight. Um, and last year I think what we learned with sponsors, you can get people in and they're free sponsorships. Like, like we, they were in kind, so we didn't charge anybody for sponsors.

Brandon: And we did the same thing this year just in kind because we want them to really promote. Um, and we didn't, we didn't do a good job of really engaging our sponsors the first year and getting them helping promote the event. This year we took a little different approach with that and really got very specific on what we wanted them to do and what we expected them to do and in turn what we would be offering them as a sponsor and how we can incorporate them into the content and to the summit. So, um, that was a, a thing, an oversight. I think the last year is like figuring out how can we really leverage the sponsors in a better way. And also give them, you know, value in being a sponsor. You know, they're doing a fee and you're doing a favor getting the word out about the summit. What can we do to really kind of return that favor, provide them some value as well. So that was something that kind of caught us off guard a little bit last year and this year. Um, you know, we took a different approach with that.

Dr. Mark: And I think those are all very common challenges that most of us experienced. I mean, that's one of the whole reasons the Virtual Summit Software was invented. And I've gotten my little pre-interview checklist right here as you were just talking about. So I totally feel you on each of those in all of those in. And those are great insights for all of our summit hosts listening in right now. Hopefully you wrote those down or go back and re listen to this episode so you make sure you avoid those aspects and you can have the same kind of success that Brandon and Aweber had. Brandon, I just have to say thank you again for your time, your energy, your insights and wisdom. It's been an absolute pleasure having you here with us today.

Brandon: Awesome. Thanks so much, Mark.

Dr. Mark: Absolutely. So thanks again Brandon. Thanks Aweber love the One-Day Summit you guys are running and thank you to all you summit hosts for spending this time with me and Brandon. I'm Dr. Mark T. Wade, founder of Virtual Summit Software. And just remember your message matters. Uh, make sure you head over to the show notes over podcast.virtualsummits.com/068 so you can get links to Brandon's summit and all the other amazing resources like Aweber that we've been talking about and we will 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 more money, and most importantly, [00:37:30] 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.