

Episode 147: Selecting Your Summit Topic, Name & title.

Publish Date: May 21, 2020

Speaker: Dr. Mark T. Wade

One of the most challenging aspects for a Summit Host is narrowing down their summit idea into a powerful summit name & title. Most don't even know the difference. Yet this one single aspect could be the cause of success or the demise of your summit. So let's get super clear on it right now.

This is for some of us an easy exercise and for others, well not so easy. This depends on how close to the topic you are and how far "in the weeds" you go.

First let's clarify a few things before we jump into it.

We have a Summit Name, a summit Title, and a summit subtitle. Also your summit topic is another way of saying what is the overview of what you are doing your summit on. It's not necessarily a separate item.

Once you identify your topic the title, and name can be more apparent and easier to create.

The summit name is not as tricky as the rest. It truly just needs to be clear, and catchy. Don't get too caught up on this, because most people are going to be focused on the title. You want it to sound kind of cool, interesting, and or give you a little authority, i.e. calling it something prestigious.

What you don't want to do is go crazy with it and call it something completely off the wall, or confusing. Now some hosts get away with it, but I wouldn't recommend risking it.

Go clear, fun and powerful. Something that resonates with you.

The topic on the other hand is important. One of the simplest ways to create your topic is to use the following.

Here are a few formulas you can use:

1. Problem + Avatar
2. Solution + Avatar
3. Or even Avatar + Problem = Solution.

A few examples.

Brain Based Solutions for chronic pain for healthcare professionals

Proven Email Copy Strategies For Summit Hosts

Life Coaches failing to convert leads are missing this one key component.

It needs to create curiosity, interest, and be specific for who it is for and either have the problem or the solution (or both) in it.

You want it to grab your avatar and let them know, “HEY, this is for you, because it’s what you are struggling with, and I can help you with it.”

The title can’t be too long or it gets confusing. So make sure you keep to around 25 – 30 words or less. If you could get it to 10-15 that is clear. Just make sure it’s not 100 words long because ain’t nobody got time for that. ;)

Then the summit subtitle is where you expand on the topic. If they’ve made it this far they are now curious and interested. So you can expand more on the actual problem and whom it is for.

This is not a paragraph, it’s a subtitle. So don’t go crazy here, keep it simple, just expand more on either why the problem matters, or the ways you’ll be solving the problem.

Ok, now that we’ve kind of cleared up some of the jargon let’s get into the tactics for the first part, which is selecting a topic.

So to start with your summit topic it is based on the following items:

1. Post Summit Goal
2. Problem Your Solution Solves
3. Who is the Avatar
4. Use their Words

We ALWAYS need to start with the END IN MIND!

Let’s dissect this.

1. Post Summit Goal

What this means is why are you doing the summit to begin with? You probably have a course, membership, mastermind, certification or coaching program. Something that you are hoping to sell to the audience after the summit.

After all a summit is the most powerful way to build an engaged audience and create know like and trust, to allow you to monetize with your post summit profit strategy.

So we have to start with the end goal. What are we selling afterwards? Otherwise why do a summit if you aren't going to take this audience further in your customer journey.

I know you probably have a LOT of things you could sell. Pick ONE! Focus on one for now.

So now that you've decided what that goal or "thing" is that you are going to sell we can move to the next step.

2. Problem Your Solution Solves

So your "thing" that you are selling, that is a "solution". It solves a problem (or series of problems). Otherwise why would anyone pay for it? If you are in healthcare your solution may be weight loss. If you are in marketing your solution may be "generating leads" or "increasing sales".

So if the thing you sell is the solution the next step is to identify the "PROBLEM".

This is the MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE WHOLE THING!!!!

The problem.

This is what is going to attract the right audience to your summit and then ensure they are the ones who will buy your "solution".

If you are thinking right now, "Wait, I'm confused, are you talking about the summit or my course".

I'm talking about your course/membership/coaching/etc. We have to identify this before we ever determine our Summit Topic.

So now pick a few of the problems your "thing" solves.

Now try to narrow it down to the most important one.

Hint if you don't know just pick one. It's going to be ok! ;)

Ok, you have selected a problem that your "thing" solves. Now we can move on to the avatar.

3. Who is the Avatar

Now technically you could have done this from the start. This could be step one. And for many of you it will be. You may already have your avatar figured out. So you just

need to go through and pick the best problem for that avatar. Cool, you're good. Keep moving along.

However, you could do it this way too. (Because so of you won't really have your avatar actually figured out anyways...) Yeah I know truth can hurt sometimes.

So for the rest of us (and those coming to terms) we need to determine our avatar.

The good news is even if you are starting from scratch or think you already know this is still a very good time to re-evaluate it.

Because the problem you selected may have a specific avatar who may be different (or a subset) of your main avatar.

So here you look at that problem you selected and decide, who would most likely have this problem?

I recommend asking yourself, "Are you sure?" about 3 or 4 times. Once you start to feel confident move along.

If you are still scratching your head, then list out the avatars.

Next you can ask either of these two questions:

- Who do you like most?
- Who do you think is best?

And whoever pops in to your mind GO WITH IT!! That is the right answer.

Don't second-guess yourself. You can't get this wrong here at this point. As long as that avatar has that problem, and will align with your solution you are good.

So go with who you think is best, or whom you like best. Either option is fine.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

One key take away here is that just by focusing on one specific person, doesn't mean you won't attract the others. You will. If you target 45 y/o women who want to jump higher (I was watching sports, just go with it) then you'll also end up attracting dudes who want to jump higher too. You'll also get some younger and probably even older women in the summit as well.

When they see how specific you are they will know that you know what you are talking about and they'll want to know too.

What you don't want to do is talk to both/all/everyone. Because then they go, "Nah, he/she doesn't know what they are talking about".

Because it won't be specific. So pick one already!!!! ;)

Also you'll learn a lot about all of this as you host your summit. You'll figure out if this demographic was the best avatar or not from those on the summit. Then you can update it for your programs and/or next summit.

Now the last piece is:

4. Use their Words

Look you are the expert. You spend all day every day thinking, talking and playing around in this space. Your audience/avatar, not so much.

Meaning they are not going to use the same terminology you do.

And this is important. So when deciding what to call it, or the title you need to use their lingo.

Easiest way to figure this out is send out an email to your tribe, or post in a Facebook group.

Keep it simple, just ask them about the problem, and look at how they respond. That is the lingo they are using to describe the problem.

So use it!

If you don't have an email audience, or somehow live under a rock and don't have Facebook, then you can try comment fishing.

I know sounds silly, but it simply means find things that are on the topic you are looking at and read the comments.

It's actually quite powerful.

One of the easiest places is to find a book that talks about this problem or topic and go to amazon and read the comments under the book.

Or you can search YouTube for the problem or topic and then read the comments on the video. You could use this same tactic on blogs too.

Main thing is to just do a little research on the lingo and terminology your avatar is using.

Where It Gets Sticky:

When it comes to creating your summit idea & choosing your summit topic many summit hosts have a challenge with this. It typically comes down to one of two challenges.

1. Not Knowing Your Avatar

2. Over Thinking The Topic

Both of these problems can be solved in one phrase!

“CHOOSE ONE AND STICK WITH IT”

Now I get you may not love that answer, but it's the truth. Overthinking this aspect will increase the complexity 100 fold. Typically your first reaction or initial feeling is the best one. It's good to write it down and just stick with it. Don't keep coming back and questioning it.

And if you do find yourself constantly second guessing your topic, then I suggest using the Summit Topic Mind Map to help calm those thoughts and keep your topic clear.

But first let's talk about those two common challenges.

1. Not Knowing Your Avatar

The first is a tough one to solve in any way other than spending more time trying to learn who your avatar is and what they want.

Some simple ways to do this are:

- To poll your audience
- Look at your top selling products
- Hop on a call with a few customers
- Look at the most common questions you get

People get stuck in the demographic aspect of their avatars. Yes it is important to choose if the avatar is male or female, age and overall background of your avatar, but it's not the end of the world if it's slightly off.

Meaning go with your gut. If you can get the information great. Use it, and do some deductive reasoning to select the best fit.

But know that in most instances you can't really mess this up. Meaning if you choose male, and it should have been female, well your summit is still going to do fine. It will just have females instead of males. Which you may not see as a bad thing.

What I'm trying to say is just because your demographics are not perfect, doesn't mean your summit won't crush it. Because if you build everything based on the demographics & avatar you have, your summit will still be successful.

The only way this really can go wrong is if you don't choose ANYONE! Or if you choose more than one avatar.

Because then the message gets confusing and isn't specific.

So pick an avatar and stick with him... or her ...or him... ok just pick already! ;)

Now to the second challenge:

2. Over Thinking The Topic

This one is very common from all summit hosts, even myself. When you are so close to a topic it becomes difficult to see a clear answer.

One of the best and easiest ways to get past this is by getting feedback from someone. They don't need to be a summit expert; they don't need to know your topic, avatar or anything really.

They just need to hear you talk about the topic, the problem and the avatar and they will have an idea. My suggestion is to go with that idea.

Sometimes the best (and easiest) solution is ANY solution. So listen to them and go with it.

The other option is the Summit Topic Mind Map. If you feel you have a good idea on one topic, but you keep second-guessing yourself then you'll want to use this strategy.

Take that main topic. That is going to be our focus. Now every time a separate idea comes up, or a topic you second-guess yourself with, then write out in one of the bubbles.

Here's how it works. Most items that pop up are correct. They could be your main topic. Now before you get huffy and puffy, note that I said they could be. But the topic you already choose is most like the best one.

Here's the thing, all the other ideas that are popping up are most likely sub topics. Meaning they fit under the main topic.

But still they can be distracting. So here is how you use the Summit Topic Mind Map.

You keep your main topic & idea in the center. Remembering where the end goal is that we are trying to go with this summit.

Now every time you get another idea you write in the side bubbles. These are not the main topic they are typically situations or scenarios that can also impact your avatar.

They don't take over, they are a part of. What these become are stories, and talking points for your summit.

These relate to the main topic. So write them down. Then think about a specific moment or scenario or situation where this other issue happens.

Write down that moment or situation. Use that to relate to your avatar when you are talking throughout your summit.

Tell that story in your email copy, or in your social media posts.

Those now add structure, substance and validity to your main topic.

This is what I meant by they are like subtopics.

They are all important but they don't have to take you away from the main topic you've selected. Instead they strengthen it.

So write them down, and see how they relate to the main topic, and then identify a story or situation that captures that.

If you do this you are not only going to have an amazing summit topic, but you are going to crush it.

Then you take your summit topic and determine your summit name, title and subtitle to represent this topic to your avatar. Keeping in mind that main problem that you selected.

Ok, I think I've probably exhausted this topic. But it's the most common challenge for summit hosts.

Lets channel that energy and focus into this and get moving forward with the other items we need to tackle.

Just remember, you got this. There is no real right or wrong answer. It's all about being clear and specific. Doing that will allow you to achieve success on your summit.

Use the Summit Topic Mind Map when you start to get confused or distracted and together we are going to build you one amazing summit masterpiece.

I'll link to the summit Topic mind map in the show notes over at podcast.virtualsummits.com/147

Don't forget to check out all the resources over at virtualsummits.com

Having a clear and powerful summit topic, name & title are crucial to the success of your summit. And now you have the insights to make that happen.

Remember your message matters and you have an impact to make in this world. So go out there and get started.

And I'll see you on the next episode.

HERE IS THE LINK TO THE SUMMIT TOPIC MIND MAP:

Summit Topic Mind Map
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/m4e2ui6hw7pfmzy/5-SummitMindMap-Blue.pdf?dl=0>