

Episode 194: How To Get Continuing Education Credits On A Summit

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Speaker: Blair Thielemier

Dr. Mark T. Wade:

Hey summit hosts, Dr. Mark T. Wade here, founder of Virtual Summits Software and your host here on the Virtual Summit Podcast. Well, we are in for a treat on this episode. I can't wait to dig into this. We're going to be talking about a new topic that we have not discussed before. Um, that's going to be super important, especially for any of our professionals out there. Um, so we're going to dive into that and all of that's going to be possible because we have legendary Blair Thielemier with us right now. Um, Blair, before we jump into all of this summit goodness, I'd love for you to just take a few moments and tell our summer hosts a little bit more about yourself.

Blair Thielemier:

Yeah. Thank you so much for having me. So I am an MTM consultant pharmacist. I have been, uh, building summit since 2017 that aligned with my business, the Pharmapreneur Academy, and it's been something that's really helped to position me as a thought leader in the pharmacy industry and something that has helped me to spread my message and really help to change the perception of what pharmacists can do. So that's, that's my core message.

Dr. Mark:

Absolutely love that. And the name Pharmapreneur. That's awesome. Love the creativity behind that. Well, let's dig into it. Let's start off first. Tell us about some of these summits. Give us an idea of what, what were the summits you've run? What were they about? Like tell us kind of give us the overview.

Blair:

Yeah. So you mentioned, you know, Pharmapreneur Academy. We've just trademarked that name actually. So I'm very excited about that, but the, the idea behind it was to inspire pharmacists to start thinking more like entrepreneurs. So entrepreneurs are very innovative. They look for trends, they shift their business model. They're not stuck in the same business models. They're not afraid to test and try things out. And that was really where I wanted to go with that first summit. So our first Elevate Pharmacy Virtual Summit was created in 2017. And basically what I wanted to do was interview pharmacists who were breaking the mold of traditional pharmacies. So, you know, as a, as a chiropractor, I know that you you've probably kind of had a similar background. There's so much more that we can do with our training and with our knowledge than, than what most pharmacists are doing.

Blair:

So we have knowledge of biochemistry and physiology, and we can understand not only how medications work in the body, but also how non-pharmacological interventions like herbs and nutrition and epigenetics and genetic testing can factor into a person's overall health. That's something that hasn't been mainstream. You know, it's, it's kind of blending the more natural holistic approach with allopathic modern medicine. So those were the types of pharmacists that were doing innovative things with their degrees, the non-traditional pharmacist, then I really wanted to talk to. And so it started just as me wanting to have conversations about really cool things that were happening in pharmacy to kind of get the word out of these other business models, these innovative pharmacists who were looking at the space and trying out new things really kind of not divorcing themselves from medications and

pharmacological interventions, but diversifying their offerings into business models that were more focused on clinical services. Then being tied just to dispensing of a product

Dr. Mark:

Yeah. And I think that is so, you know, unique in for forward thinking that kind of have that at that time and bring it to light to where it is now. Um, I do kind of want to actually dive into that a little bit because we have, you know, a variety of different listeners here as our summit hosts and aspiring some, a host and some of them are in niche industries and fields that, you know, sometimes, and I hear this a lot from some of them that, well, I, you know, I don't think a summit would work in my industry or you know, people don't know what a virtual summit is and I'm sure you ran into a little bit of that when you were getting started. So talk to us maybe about either some of the challenges that you thought you had or would have, or that you did have around that and how you overcame them.

Blair:

Yeah. So, you know, in 2017 it was, I had no idea whether or not it would work because I had those fears as well. Is it too niche? Is, is that, uh, is that even a thing to be too niche? And, and in my experience, if it's something that you're interested in, chances are other people are interested in it as well. So everything I've done in my business stemmed from this is where I was at this point in my life, at this point in my career journey or my health journey, a lot of what I would I talk about and use myself as a Guinea pig is something that, that other people are interested in hearing about as well. So, you know, I've done the genetic tests on myself and all of those things. So those are, those are fun to get to experiment and get to, to talk about.

Blair:

I, you know, I definitely think that you can do tests to see if, um, you know, if other people would be interested in your summit topic, um, that that can be very easily done with webinars and Facebook lives and, and that type of thing to assess the interest of your target market, of your audience. So it's really what we did in, in 2017. Uh, we ran some Facebook ads. I primarily, I used LinkedIn mostly, um, because I am in a professional industry and there are a lot of pharmacists using LinkedIn right now for connecting, looking for opportunities. And so that first year I think we ended up, we probably registered around a thousand attendees for that first summit. And to me that was just proving the concept that there were other pharmacists out there who were interested in getting outside of their bubble and hearing what other ideas people had in the industry and what other visions we've had for where we could, where we can take the profession. So, um, you know, it, it was something that I was concerned about as well, but I think it's relatively low risk to, to be able to invest, uh, you know, a little bit of time and energy and resources into something that could potentially provide a very big return. And now five years later, I'm still doing summits, if that tells you anything.

Dr. Mark:

Yeah. Well, I agree with you on that one. Summits are the most powerful online marketing strategy there is. And I love seeing these, these use cases of them in such powerful ways, in, in such a variety of different kind of niches. I know we, a lot of professionals, like health professionals, but to also see it in like the pharmaceutical industry and, or, you know, these places where I think some people just assume that it wouldn't necessarily work so, so well. And I actually think in my opinion, from what I've seen is a lot of times those industries are the ones that it works the best for them because they haven't seen a lot of those. Um, and it is new and novel. So I want to come at this now, um, with our main topic, um, and

talk about the something creative that you did on your summit that I think is, is very powerful, very impressive, especially for your audience members who were benefiting from this. Um, and it's getting the CE, getting the continuing education credits on your summit. So first off I know we've got some listeners who are like, what is that Mark? So kind of break that down. What is that why that's important to your audience and then w what you did with it?

Blair:

Well, a lot of professional licenses require something called CE. So that's stands for continuing education. Teachers, pharmacists, chiropractors, doctors, nurses, a lot of professional licenses require you to obtain a certain amount of hours, either annually or bi-annually. And it was for me, something that just sweeten the deal, you know, it was an additional incentive to come. Not only because the, the things we were talking about, the, the business practices and the stories and the experiences of these pharmacists who were creating these new business models, new practice models, there were so interesting being able to add CE to that gave it, I think, an additional level of credibility. So that was something that was really important to me. So the process was basically to be accredited, um, for continuing education hours for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. Basically what we needed to do to get that accreditation was to come up with a title for each of the interview sessions we did to come up with three to five objectives for each interview, and then to come up with three to five continuing education questions to assess their knowledge of what they learned before and after the interview session.

Blair:

So again, that's been something that for me, really pushed me to make sure that each interview session I was doing was pertinent. It was, uh, you know, knowledge based. There were objective. So it wouldn't go too far off on a tangent so that people could listen to it and then feel like, Oh, I learned something and now I can go apply it. So that was, that was the, you know, the things that have come out of it. And I think our, our attendees really appreciate that because it's very different than sitting through a clinical talk about how to manage diabetes. And that's, that's really kind of what we're used to is talking about the drugs as pharmacists, but that is almost the complete opposite of, of what I do, because really focus on non-pharmacological interventions and clinical opportunities that pharmacists can have to improve their patient's outcomes that don't have anything to do with the medications, even maybe even mitigating some of the side effects of the medication. So I took a really different angle on the continuing education part of it, and it was a gamble, but it really, it paid off. And I think it lent that additional level of credibility.

Dr. Mark:

Yeah, it's, uh, it's more than just credibility. I mean, you've done something here. I don't think I've heard of anybody else in a summit doing this. Um, I've, I've heard of it in other areas and other ways with live streams and things like that, but you know, how you actually approach this with a summit is very unique. And I think powerful, and I think it's actually an avenue that should be expanded and more, more people should be considering doing this because it solves a problem for the people who matter, our audiences. It makes it easy and gives them knowledge with something that they're looking for. And for everybody who's not in a professional industry, I think this is still relevant in the sense of what's valuable. What's a benefit? What's, what's helpful for your audience. That's not normal that you can do to, you know, it may take a little more time or energy, you know, I'm sure it, wasn't simple or easy for Blair over there, but, you know, but at the end of the day, your audience is going to love you for that. So, um, with that Blair, can you kind of break down the sunset summaries a little bit more and, and talk us

through that. And it, because there was some specifications, I know this is going to be a niche topic for a lot of our audience members, but I really want to dissect it. So anybody else in the professional spaces may understand how they could do something similar with it?

Blair:

Yeah. There's actually two different ways that I accredited my CE. So the first couple of years we were partnered with a national pharmacy organization and they were able to, as a partner, to do two things to accredit our CE, and to also bring in vendors and exhibitors who wanted to sponsor our summit. Since then, we've moved away from that a little bit as we're more aligning it with, with my business, my, my primary business, the Pharmapreneur Academy. So now the Elevate Pharmacy Virtual Summit aligns more with my business. And because we did that, what we did instead this year to accredit the CE is go through an independent accrediting body. So we, we actually paid the independent accrediting body to, to go through and help us get CE credit. When you're talking about accreditation, there are certain guidelines and criteria you have to make sure that you're meeting. You can't make false claims. You can't, uh, speak commercially about a certain product or you can't, you know, promote businesses, um, or promote any particular product in a CE, in an accredited CE.

Blair:

Because on my interview sessions, I wanted people to be able to talk about the platforms they were using, the things they were selling. They, you know, the tools they recommended. I wanted them to feel free to, to give their opinions on what worked best for them. So we actually shifted this year to something called sunset summaries and what that was. We had a five day summit in April, 2020. We had five interviews sessions each day. And then at the end of each day, I would hop on a live Zoom call and basically summarize everything that happened throughout that day for, for people that maybe missed those interviews. And they wanted to hear me give a short summary of each of the interviews and then go back and decide which ones they wanted to watch. That was a really great, um, great additional offering for them that they could say.

Blair:

You know, I, I really, I, I was more interested in just these two interviews, but after hearing Blair talk about them, now I've got to go back and watch all five of them. Like I, I heard that over and over. So it was, it was nice to be able to, to offer our attendees that plus we could accredit it. There was an hour and a half of CE available night. I was able because I was the one giving the CE at the, those sunset summaries. I was able to make sure that it met all the criteria for accreditation and that we didn't cross any of those, uh, lines for making sure that we were offering, um, you know, specified guidelines operating within those guidelines. Um, another thing is it really forced me to break down what do I want people to walk away from each day during the summit?

Blair:

So day one, for example, we, we started with marketing and talking to your ideal audience day two of the summit, we talked about, what does it look like for a pharmacist to work in a physician's office? Because that's another business model that we're exploring. More and more physicians, offices are hiring consultant pharmacists to come in and work on a collaborative team. What does that look like? How does that provide a good financial return on investment for the physician? And then each day was a little bit different iteration on that, that theme of what can pharmacists do outside the traditional pharmacy model. So having those sunset CE summaries forced me to make sure that each of those days

sessions stayed on track and that attendees were able to get what they needed out, get their question answered. It also had the added benefit of people got used to seeing my face, hearing my voice and seeing me as the expert on the topic apart from just being the interviewer. So it was almost like I was the subject matter expert in the CE summaries, the sunset summaries versus just being the summit host where all I'm doing is asking the question and the other person is a subject matter expert.

Dr. Mark:

When you were doing these summaries. Like let's kind of talk about, cause I think this could be relevant for everyone. I'm a big fan of summaries. Um, I do them in all of our summits. We call them super summaries. Uh, the sun summaries is very similar. I love that. Um, but let's talk through that. If, if somebody was, you know, how did you, how did you plan this out when you were going through your summit to be able to be prepared, to be able to do a summary? Um, because then anybody that's running a summit could do a summary on their summit, whether it's for CE or just to, to really add that kind of extra value on their summit. So kind of break us down how you, cause it's not easy and you don't want to just wing it. Um, so how did you kind of plan and prep for that? And what advice could you give other summit hosts who are thinking about doing something similar?

Blair:

I absolutely think that other summit hosts should do this. I think that it, for me, it's definitely the thing that I feel has had the biggest impact on me personally, being seen as a subject matter expert in the, the business side of the industry. So I do pre-interviews with all, all of our guest experts and we try to make those very tactical. Each day we'd pick a theme, like I said, the, the first day was marketing and finding your target audience. So we pick that theme. I have pre interview questions set up with each of our, our five guests for each day. And then from those, uh, from those five interviews, I try to pull out one or two key takeaways from each of those interviews. So basically what I'm talking about on the summary is the key takeaways from each of those interviews and then how I would recommend applying whatever those key takeaways are to your business or your situation.

Blair:

So for example, we had someone come in to talk about sales. How does sales apply to pharmacists at all from the sales guest expert? I would give specific examples. So say, uh, on the pharmacist, I own my own pharmacy. I'm standing in the middle of Blair's Pharmacy and you know, Dr. Mark Wade comes in and he's asking about CBD, it's new on the market. Uh, you know, it's not something we particularly learned about in school. So you're asking about CBD. So basically what I would give them was a scenario like that. And here's how I would apply those sales skills to showing you how CBD could help with whatever problems. So maybe starting out with the question, well, what, why are you interested in taking CBD? What types of symptoms have you heard that it treats? What, what, what is your biggest complaint right now? You know, always identifying the patient's chief complaint.

Blair:

So thinking about it in just a little bit different way of, okay, let me, let me ask you questions in order to assess which of these products is the best for, or maybe none of these products are best for you. Maybe you're, you know, maybe you're a better fit for taking magnesium at nighttime to help you sleep instead of a CBD tincture, or maybe you're interested in a CBD topical for, you know, a bad shoulder. That's what my husband uses a roll on. And, and it works really well. So no matter what it is, when someone comes in your pharmacy and ask a question to take that knowledge of what the sales trainer talked

about and apply it to stuff we do every single day and how to work that into your workflow. So that was an example of what I talked about for her summary and try to give industry specific ideas for how to integrate that into your practice model.

Dr. Mark:

And I love how, I mean, you put a lot of attention into that. A lot of detail I've seen people, you know, not nearly put that much attention to detail into the summaries and I can just see how, how much that would over deliver. I mean, one of our things that we really try to do is, you know, on our side of things, we talk about the importance of, you know, creating binge-worthy summits or edutainment style summits, essentially making them different and better than just the normal educational style summits that are out there. Um, not, not that the educational part of it's not important. It's just, there's gotta be a little extra flavor in there. And I think this here is also, you know, audience specific. What's something they need or want listening to their needs or wants and then providing it for them. So I love that. Now we've only got a few minutes left, but I'd love to touch on another aspect of it. Um, which we just briefly mentioned, which is the things you've created from your summit. So even after the summit using your summit as an asset to then create even more assets. So kind of talk us through a few of the, um, a few of the things you've created and how those have been beneficial for you.

Blair:

Yeah. So these, these are the, uh, byproducts that, that have come from the summits. You know, we've got books, we've got workbooks, we've got special trainings. We've got, uh, you know, we're, we're about to do a launch that's basically end of the year, get your CE, you know, you can purchase all of the recordings from our April, 2020 summit and be able to, to get that CE and before the end of the year. So we're, we're offering a special and it's not additional work. You know, it's, it's things that we can, we can bundle together. As long as your summit is aligned with your business, whether it's speaking or coaching or a membership site or an online course, there's so many opportunities to leverage what you do with a virtual summit into new offerings. It just, it helps you, it helps to position you as an expert in your space and a thought leader in your space, no matter what space that is.

Blair:

And with a bit of creativity, it really, for me has been the thing that sets us apart from anything else in the industry, whether that's a national organization coming to us for advice, you know, during COVID of how to take their in-person conference online to even offer a virtual ticket. So I've had state and pharmacy organizations contact me saying, you know, we normally have a trade show and that's just not going to happen this year with the pandemic. How do we, how do we shift? How do we still, you know, give something of value to our members, to, you know, be able to showcase our vendors, to create trade shows and conferences that provide education and provide, um, you know, exposure for our vendor partners. So there's so many opportunities that have come from it. I probably wouldn't even be able to sit down and write a list out for you. But, you know, in a nutshell, I started doing it five years ago and in April, 2021 will be our fifth annual virtual summit. And it's almost to the point to where it's its own brand and could be its own business if I wanted it to be. But right now it's, it's worked out best for me to keep it aligned and keep it as part of the overall, uh, Pharmapreneur Academy brand.

Dr. Mark:

I love that. That is so great. Well, Blair, this has been absolutely phenomenal. I mean, such incredible information. I know, uh, I've been taking notes over here as well as you've been talking. I'm sure the

audience has been taking notes. So this is amazing. I hope they implement, you know, as much of this as humanly possible, it will increase their summits, which will help all of us running summits. Now I know a lot of them are saying like, wait, Mark, I need some more Blair in my life. So let them know what's the best way to get in touch with you and uh, where are you hanging out at?

Blair:

Mostly on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is the best place to find me. Blair Thielemier, little bit hard to spell it, but you can look for me through LinkedIn. There's there's not a whole lot of Blairs on there, luckily, but, um, you know, I, I hang out there. I also have Facebook and Instagram as well, but primarily everything's going to be happening on LinkedIn or at <https://pharmapreneuracademy.com>. You can get on there and join our newsletter. If you're a pharmacist or just interested in connecting with me and you'll be automatically added to our newsletter list and you can reply to any of those emails to get in contact with me, ask me any questions you have about membership sites or virtual summits or speaking, or, uh, you know, any of the above.

Dr. Mark:

Amazing. We'll make sure all of those links and information are in the show notes as well. So Blair, thank you so much for spending this time, your energy and your wisdom with us today.

Blair:

Thank you so much for having me.

Dr. Mark:

Absolutely. And thank you all you summit hosts for hanging out with Blair and I. I'm Dr. Mark T. Wade, your host here on the Virtual Summit Podcast and remember your message matters. And one of the most powerful ways to get that message out to the world is with a virtual summit. Be sure to check out the show notes over episode 194, and we'll see you on the next episode.

Dr. Mark:

Now, I want 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, 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. 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.