

Episode 98: Why Your Speakers Bail On Your Summit & How It is actually your fault!

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Dr. Mark T. Wade: Hey summit hosts, Dr. Mark T. Wade, founder of Virtual Summits Software and your host on the Virtual Summit Podcast. And we are in store for another rocking episode today. We're going to get into some details that's probably plaguing a lot of some of those out there. And that's the, why did the speaker not show up? They told me they were going to speak on my summit and then they didn't. And you know, spoiler alert, it was probably your fault. So we're going to dig into that. So that does not happen to you. And a couple other really cool things because I've got today with me, legendary Jodi Graham with us. How are you doing today, Jodi?

Jodi Graham: I'm great. Thank you for that amazing intro.

Dr. Mark: Well, an amazing intro for an amazing woman. We're going to have some fun on this episode. So summit hosts, stay tuned. We're going to rock and roll. Jodi, I would love for you to just let our summit host know a little bit more about yourself before we dive into all of this amazing goodness that we're going to jump into.

Jodi: Yeah, for sure. So, Hey everyone. I'm Jodi. I'm a productivity coach. I work with online business owners who feel like they're stuck in their business and not moving forward because of shiny object syndrome and distractions. So I help them get focused so they can focus on the right stuff and focus on growing their business faster.

Dr. Mark: Wow. Like that sounds like something that all of us summit hosts could probably use a little information on, which is why I'm super excited to dive into that, but we're not going to get into that right away. We're going to talk about a couple of things that I think are super fundamental and super important for most summit hosts. And honestly are a couple of topics that I hear from summit speakers regularly on why they don't like summits. So I'm really excited for you, Jodi, to share some of your experiences and insights with us. Now before we jump into that actual specific topic, I'd love for you to give the summit hosts a little bit of the overview of the couple, kind of summits you've spoken on what your experience has been. So we can kind of set the scene before we jump into the topic

Jodi: For sure. So overall, I've had an amazing experience speaking at online summits. I've spoken at a few, um, and I just think they're so amazing for everyone. They have so much to offer for the speaker who can grow their audience and you'll offer their freebie and grow their email list. Um, and then for the hosts to also, you know, just grow their audience and grow that know, like, trust factor with their, their existing audience and they make a little money. And then also for the attendees obviously because they can either attend usually for free, right or a very low cost and they get so much value. There's just a ton of videos, speaker and presentations, freebies to download and so much valuable content and learning they can take away for just very little or no investment on their part.

Dr. Mark: This is why we love summits and I called them a collaborative marketing strategy for that very reason right there. Now they're not always collaborative. Right? Well sometimes we have great experiences because some summits are very well run and some aren't. So let's start with the positive spectrum here. The two that you, the couple that you had spoken on that you had really great experiences. Kind of give us one or two things that like talk about your favorite one and what really stood out afterwards when you walked away from that. Like you had a positive feeling and what, what was that and why?

Jodi: I'm thinking about the one I think that had the most positive experience for me. I walked away feeling really good just because everything had gone so smoothly. Um, because everything was organized up front so it hadn't gone well. I had gotten so many, uh, new subscribers on my email list, so it's much more potential, um, you know, to reach out to people and connect with people that way. It was mind blowing how many people I got signed up and just the host was just through the whole process, including afterwards. So just kind and generous and um, just speaking highly, you know, of me and the other speakers and just really brought everyone together. It felt like we were all brought together even though it was online and we were all in different places. Um, it just felt really connected that way just because it went so smoothly and everyone was super engaged.

Dr. Mark: That's a strategic partnership happening right there. So let's dive into that a little bit. With like maybe one specific example of something that hosts did that made you feel collab, like, brought together, made you feel included? Like what, what was one thing that kind of stands out?

Jodi: Uh, the thing that stands out most? Um, I think it would be her intro. I guess like how she spoke us each, like she spoke highly of each of us, of each of us speakers, um, prior to our presentations. So it wasn't just like our presentation and just us speaking. She connected with us first and spoke about us, didn't just, you know, leave us I guess on our own and to speak ourselves up. So her, cause she has a lot, like a huge audience and she's really highly respected. So to have her speaking about each of us really I think brought us all together again, that it gave her audience that know, like, trust factor for each of the speakers. Um, yeah, I think that was the best thing she did.

Dr. Mark: And that's, I mean that's super powerful for a speaker to get that, especially from, you know, even somebody that's like at an influencer level. So did she, I'm just curious and I'm going to, I'd like to keep digging into this to see kind of how it, how it was, but that process when you were interviewed, I'm assuming it was like a traditional Q and A style interview, kind of like this, um, what, what was kind of the format like there was, there is like a, uh, email follow up letting you know, like when to come on. Like kind of talk us through that process because this was a good experience. So this is, we're, we're trying to see what were some of those takeaways we can do. What was that process getting up to the interview when you got on the interview? Was there any pre-interview chat? Like kind of just talk us through that actual moment.

Jodi: Right. So there was, there were a lot of emails prior. I'm just letting me know what to expect and brainstorming a few talking points. So we knew a starting point of what we'd

be talking about was sort of the direction that we'd be going. So there was a lot of emails upfront about giving clarity like that. And then, uh, prior, you know, we just got on the phone after that, or sorry, online on Zoom. And uh, it was really because her emails upfront were so clear and had all the information we needed. We basically just got right into it when we got on Zoom. So we were ready to go, you know, we just said, Hey, how's it going? And then just got into it and we all, I had already felt really familiar. Like it felt like we knew each other already just because of all the emails and all the communication and stuff we had had prior. Um, and then afterwards, yeah, it was, there wasn't much afterwards to be honest, once the summit was done. But there were a couple of follow up emails about how many new signups in total, she seemed like the most popular videos who had the most affiliate sales, um, and that kind of thing. So just some, some stats and information for us all, which was nice to know.

Dr. Mark: I think that's super important right there because one of the things I've seen out of the hundreds of summits that I've been involved in is most of the hosts look at the interview as the end. So like everything's about get the interview, get the interview, get the interview. Once the interview is over, then it's kinda like ghost town or you know, once the interview's over, then the next thing is promote, promote, promote. But then after it's over, it's like, you know, I always like to say like if you look at it like a relationship, it's like you take somebody out on a date, you really will them, you're really interested and then boom, they're just gone. Right. So I like that even some of the best summits out there still are kind of missing that post summit follow up. Like, and I think that is where a lot of the real value is to keep that relationship going. Because maybe there's opportunity for a partner webinar or promoting a launch or you know, something else but back and forth. So I love, this is why I like digging in and getting like the real specific details there.

Jodi: Yeah. And it was reassuring too, right, to know like, Oh, it was a successful summit. So it made me feel good about choosing to be part of the summit.

Dr. Mark: Oh yeah. That, that is one of the big keys right there is as a speaker and a lot of people who are people who are involved in the summit. If the summit hosts, if you don't follow with your speakers after the summit, everybody's just assuming it was bad summit that it didn't do well. So just let them know. Even if you don't want to share numbers, just follow up in like, this was great. And like you just said, Jodi, like what was the most, you know, you could, you could just be like, this was the most popular interview. This was the most engaged speaker or whatnot. I mean, you can find statistics other than how many leads or sales. So you have this, well, let's, um, actually what was one of the most helpful things out of that for you to prepare for your, for your, your interview with them. You said there was a lot of great clarity in, in, in emails. What was like the one thing that, that you can, if you can remember that was like, okay, this, that was the most helpful for you?

Jodi: Uh, yeah, that's a good question. I think, um, obviously knowing when and where to show up was helpful, but besides that obvious, uh, information, I think just the talking points. Um, and then like the length, you know, so I knew approximately like how much I should say when she would ask me a question. I guess, cause I knew about how much more we had to talk about and how long we had. Um, so that was helpful. So I didn't, I

guess ramble, which I can do sometimes. I didn't, you know, just give like a one sentence answer because I was afraid whatever. I'm going over time. So just having that clarity of like, okay, this is some things we're going to touch on and we're going to be about 30 minutes or whatever.

Dr. Mark: I love that, like it. So with the brainstorm aspect of that and like talk us through that and you just, so it was primarily through email you were saying, but like did she provide you with the talking points or does she ask you kind of kinda how did that back and forth actually go?

Jodi: Right. So she, uh, initially, well when I applied actually I said I'm a productivity coach so I can talk about ABC, like productivity in general. So then she replied saying, you know, uh, she would love me to speak at the summit and she gave me, I think just one topic, like an overarching topic. So a little bit more specific, um, than productivity. I can't even remember what it was right now, but something about how to like your time, I think, um, more efficiently. So then from there, so she's like, let me know if that's okay and get back to me with what, you know, more specifics. So then I was the one to say, okay, regarding time management I can talk about these five different broken down topics. Um, which she was totally fine with. And then she sent me back sort of the main talking points cause she wanted to add in her own, you know, questions and her own angles. So it was kind of like that just a few times back and forth just, and we were always on the same page. Basically. I said I can speak about productivity. She said, how about time management? I said okay and center my talking points and she just added in a few other things she wanted to touch on too.

Dr. Mark: Um, with, I want to circle back to something you were talking about because it's an, it's an area where both hosts and speakers I think could have some clarity. You said you had applied for the summit, which is I think phenomenal that you were able to apply. Cause most of them it hosts don't even put anything out there. So the, the aspect, I'm like, there's so many speakers that would like to speak on summit and almost every summit host is struggling to get speakers, but there's this huge void. Why are we not helping us out helping that, like solving this. Um, so what was that process like? How did you find out about the summit and then kind of talk us through the application process?

Jodi: Yeah, sure. I probably heard about it in a Facebook group. I spend a lot of time in a lot of Facebook groups. Um, so someone probably mentioned it on a comment thread somewhere and I was like, Oh, this sounds cool. So then I would've, you know, I checked out her website and it looked really great. Like she's doing great stuff. So I believe her application was easily filled out online. I think it was just a, like an online, um, I don't know if it was a fill, I don't think it was a fillable PDF. I think it was like a tight form or job form or something like that. An online sort of survey. Um, just to fill in my info. So it was super, super easy. And then that's how we connected.

Dr. Mark: And then so you filled out the type form like which is like here's who I am, this is what I've done, you know, like life story, boom, boom, boom. And then what was kind of the follow up process with that? Like how did, I mean you talked about the brainstorm aspect or was it just as simple as like, okay cool, you're in, let's rock and roll or was there a little bit a back and forth or something that happened through that?

Jodi: Yeah, there was one more step to the process we did, she did reach out to me after getting my application and we did hop on Zoom really quickly for an initial just chit chat, but it wasn't, it was more just to get to know each other. It wasn't strategizing for the summit, it was just for her I think to get a feel for me if I, you know, was competent to speak on video and like at her summit and stuff like that. So, yeah, we had like a 15 minute Zoom chat and then at the end, you know, she was like, Hey, great. So if you want to still speak, let's do this, you know? So, yeah.

Dr. Mark: Okay. I love this. So we've, we've just broken down that process almost in backward orders, but we can't all the way through that. So, um, that's super helpful. And I really liked this aspect, um, because I do think a lot of summit hosts, and I hear about it a lot from summit hosts are like, I need more speakers. I can't get enough speakers. But like, they're just doing these individual direct reach out versus, I mean, I have a live conference called Summit Fest Live. And one of the easiest ways I find speakers about it is I just post in my groups or on my pages. Like, Hey, anybody want to speak at this? So you could do the same thing for your summit to give kind of like people an op, like to even know it's there. So I love that Jodi. Now we've been like really happy and positive so far on this. I'd like to kind of take a little darker spin if we can. And um, just start off by talking about one of the negative experiences you've had. Maybe an overview, you can kind of paint the picture of like, like just take us from the beginning to the end and like tell us that story.

Jodi: Um, okay. Beginning to end. So there was an online summit that I thought sounded really great, uh, for my niche of productivity. And, um, so I reached out to the host, uh, via email and just said I'd love to speak, cause I know I knew it was coming up again. Um, the summit had been done a couple of times prior, like it's an annual thing, so I knew it was coming up. Uh, so she emailed back and said, yeah, sure, that'd be great. So I'm like, okay, great. And then this was way ahead of time, was a few months ahead before the summit was scheduled. So there were a few emails that I received with more details. Um, one email was to do a tech test, so it was a schedule, a tech test online to make sure all our tech things worked and we could hear and see each other fine before the summit, which was a great idea.

Jodi: Um, and then some emails like with the schedule of who was speaking when it was a one day thing. So who was speaking when and when I was speaking and I was put on like a, a panel discussion just on productivity. So, and then I think just a few other details about when and where and what was happening. Um, so that was great. And then I didn't really hear anything for quite a while and I was sort of waiting to hear like, okay, what's this panel about? Cause productivity is quite a big subject and a little unclear. I mean I can speak about it all day. Um, but I was hoping for some more details or whatever. Um, so yeah, I had reached out a couple of times I think to ask about that. Like should I brainstorm, you know, talking points like we were talking about with the other summits or what should I expect or what do I need to do?

Jodi: Is there anything I need to prepare, and I didn't hear back about those from those emails that I sent. So, um, yeah, it was a little getting a little uncomfortable at that point just because it's odd to not get any response, not even an auto response or we'll get back to you sooner or something. Um, and then my tech test date came and no one

showed up. So I was on Zoom and I had scheduled it online and there was a Zoom link and everything. They had like set that up beautifully, but I was on Zoom and no one came. So I was kind of like, okay, I don't think I'm going to do this because I'm feeling really uncomfortable at, I'm having no contact with anyone. Like, there's, they're not replying to my emails and they're not showing up for this tech test, which was their idea in the first place.

Jodi: Um, so I emailed, so I was really disappointed cause I was kind of excited to do this, but it just wasn't working out obviously. So I emailed them and said, look, I'm going to not do this now and here's my reasons. Like I've had emails going in answered and no one showed up for my tech test today. So, um, yeah, so I did get a reply to that with an, you know, an apology like, sorry about that. There was an emergency or something. I don't know. Um, so, uh, that was the end of that experience. So, you know, um, I, you know, I'm happy I pulled out because it just didn't feel right. Right. Like why it's silly to move forward with something just because you said you would, um, when it feels icky, when it doesn't feel good anymore. So that was the end of that.

Dr. Mark: No, I agree with you on that. And, uh, actually the, in the episode 97 we just had with Tad, he said something kind of funny. He said, um, you should always assume that your speakers, you should assume that your speakers are always all on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Treat them like that because if you do, you'll over-deliver and make sure they're taken care of. And I thought that was such a funny but like a good way. Like you can't just assume everything's kosher and cool and just, you know, run with it. And I think the reason I really wanted to dive into this is because I see this happen so much. Summit hosts has got a million things going on and I want to talk a little productivity here in a second as well, but summit hosts have millions of things going on and a lot of them are kind of newer and they're just getting into it and a summit is a pretty massive undertaking, but you cannot ignore or, um, neglect the speakers like in any way, shape or form. And you know, and what I want to like kind of ask about that is like how did that change your view of either this person or that summit from before to after?

Jodi: Oh yeah, it changed drastically just because from what I saw from previous summits, again, it just seems like such a good fit for me. So I was just assuming because it was fit my niche so well that it was amazing. But after my experience, it's, um, I mean, unfortunately I just feel like I guess that host wasn't experienced enough or she hasn't had enough practice, um, in order to like, I dunno, prepare, you know, uh, bang in summit and I didn't attend the summit. So I can't really say an opinion about how the summit actually presented that day. But, um, uh, I'm assuming things were a little chaotic probably. Um, and stressful because there was just that lack of communication and lack of planning ahead of time.

Dr. Mark: Yeah. And this is so, so, so important. I mean, and the reason why I wanted you to answer that is because what's happening, you know, you summit hosts listening to this, you're not just losing a speaker, you're actually affecting a relationship. And I did an entire episode on this episode 84 that says, Hey list grabbers, stop exploiting your speakers. And we actually talk about this. How that right there is almost worse than having never contacted or never had like asked to have somebody on the summit because you actually go from them having either a neutral or potentially positive view of

you to a negative view because you've let them down, you've let that relationship down. So I think this is so, so important. Please hear that summit hosts that go over like make sure you're prepared and plan and give yourself enough time and help if you need it to take care of your speakers because it's not just, they didn't speak on your summit, you're actually affecting the relationship of the way that person thinks of you afterwards.

Dr. Mark: So Jodi, thank you for like, you know, just letting, like, I know you're a positive person, you don't like to like focus or look at the negative, but this is something that summit hosts need to hear. So go ahead.

Jodi: It happens.

Dr. Mark: It does happen. And, and I think that's actually a good point there. It's okay if you drop the ball, we all dropped the ball, but as soon as you drop the ball, pick it up, take responsibility for it, reach out and say I'm sorry, it won't happen again. And then over deliver. So I love that. What actually, let's kind of look at that. Let's say, you know, by the time the tech, the tech no-show happened, you know, that's when you kinda decided like, okay, I'm uncomfortable with this. I'm going to like pull out, I'm not doing it. What could they have done to salvage that relationship and bring you back in?

Jodi: Hmm, that's a good question. Um, I never really thought about it because the email that I received again after that was, you know, just sorry for the mishap. I understand. Um, so I never really thought about what could they have done to rectify this. Um, I think, I guess what they could have done, like that was a nice email to get. Like they did take some responsibility, they did apologize and then in addition, you know, offered to reschedule it. Um, and then answered my emails, my other emails that I had sent, uh, so, you know, gone back in their inbox and searched for them and answered them. You like all in I guess one email just saying, okay, I found your emails, here's your answers and let's, you know, so sorry, let's reschedule. Like I guess that's all they could have done and that would have made me feel more comfortable. Like, okay, now they're putting in some effort and they're acknowledging me.

Dr. Mark: So that's, that's important to note. And you know, again, if you drop the ball, it's okay just to step up and take responsibility for it. So let's kind of like with the last bit of this, uh, episode we have left here, let's kind of look at, you know, being a productivity coach over there and having seen, you know, both positive and negative aspects of summits that you've spoken on. Like maybe could you walk us, uh, or give the summit hosts, um, let, let's start with one kind of key foundational aspect when it comes to productivity that they should be thinking of right before they ever start on their summit. Like let's say I'm okay, I'm ready to do a summit. What should I be thinking of from a productivity standpoint to ensure my success?

Jodi: Uh, for sure planning ahead. And I know that sounds vague, so I'll try to give some examples of what that means. So like you said before, they even start thinking about like teasing it or promoting it or actually doing it and booking people. Like, before we do anything, like make a plan. So I feel like the best place to start with that, if it's your first summit, obviously you're you, that's why you would be wanting to make a plan and get

organized ahead of time. The best thing to do is like attend some summits yourself online. Like there's tons, right? So let's find a few to go to and they're free, you know, like most of them are free, not all. Um, just most of them have that free option so you don't have to pay anything. You can just go in and see how it's structured and see how many speakers they have each day, how they've, I guess themed the days if they've done that.

Jodi: Um, the emails they send out, right? Like watch their email funnel, all that stuff. Like just look at it. It's like market research. Like how are other people doing it? And then actually talking to people, right, who have hosted summits. Like you can simply post in a Facebook group and say who's hosted a summit? And you'll get a ton of comments and people who have I'm sure. And then just ask if they're happy, you know, I'm sure they would be happy to just have a quick chat, you know, and maybe do them a favor and return like to be whatever it collaborative. But uh, that's a great place to start because then that gets the ideas flowing and it gets you familiar with, okay, this kind of stuff has to be done and it's just a good starting point, right. Rather than trying to guess at what you need to do and where to start. Um, and like think of some great questions to ask those summit hosts when you're talking one on one to, right, like, where did you start? What challenges did you have? You know, like just pick their brain that way and have them reflect on how their posting experience had gone.

Dr. Mark: Yeah. So good. And they need, I mean, that is like a foundational, if you're, and I see this too, too often, too frequently that we, and it's cool. It's normal. We get inspired. We're like, Oh yes, I'm going to do a summit. This is going to be awesome. I know I had my very first summit was the exact same way, like, I'm going to do this. I had no idea what I was jumping into. And you know, luckily it was a success, but I see a lot of them that don't end that way. And as simple as like you just said, I love that the market research, there's so much like so many out there, just check them out, see how they run, see what you love about it, what you don't love about it. And you know, there's a lot of summit groups out there as well.

Dr. Mark: You got resources like this podcast, et cetera. So yeah, do your research in advance. Awesome. So as we wrap this up, I like to ask, you know, what was as, as a summit speaker. Okay. And, and, and for our hosts that are listening to this, like what's one tip or suggestion or strategy maybe that you could give them that would help them when they're trying to get a speaker, whether it's to get them to speak or maybe provide that great impression or even, you know, any, anything along the lines that are going to kind of help our summit hosts have a better, uh, experience when they're working with their speakers.

Jodi: Right? So outreach to speakers. I'd say make it as easy as possible. Like even as a speaker, if you really want to speak at a summit, if it gets too complicated or convoluted or confusing, um, that can turn people off, right? Like people don't have time to try and figure out what you need them to do or your process. So like just having that simple online form they can fill out and any information you need, you know, you can get it in a form, right? If you need a picture, if you need a link gives you just need info, it can all be put in like jot form or type form kind of thing. Or, and just make that super easy. So all

they have to do is click on a link and fill it out and done. Um, yeah, cause again, as soon as it gets too convoluted, people will just drop out.

Dr. Mark: So good. Well this has been absolutely foundationally and just fantastic all around, all around the board. I appreciate having you here with us, Jodi. Um, I know our summit hosts are like, I want to go consume more of Jodi. Where can I find her? How can I get access to her? So please let everybody know like where you're hanging out and the best way to kind of get in touch with you.

Jodi: Yeah, for sure. My website's really easy, JodiGraham.com and Jodi is spelled with an I and J-O-D-I, so you'll find all my freebies there and just more information about me and how you can work with me one on one and also on Instagram and Facebook at JodiGrahamCoach, one word.

Dr. Mark: Love it. Thank you so much for being here with us today, Jodi.

Jodi: Thanks Mark. This was awesome.

Dr. Mark: And thank you all you summit hosts for listening and spending this time with Jodi and I. I'm Dr. Mark T. Wade, your host here on virtual summit podcast. Remember, your message matters, so go out and make an impact and don't forget to go check out all these amazing goodies that we've just talked about here over in the show notes podcast.virtualsummits.com/098. This was episode 98 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 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.