

## Episode 95: Improve Your Summit Productivity Management Or ELSE!

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Speaker: Dr. Frank Buck

Dr. Mark T. Wade: Hey summit hosts, Dr. Mark T. Wade here, founder of Virtual Summit Software and your host here on the Virtual Summit Podcast and oh my gosh, I'm so excited for today's episode. We are going to be talking about something not just important, but absolutely fundamentally, foundationally important and probably one of the most important aspects of your summit and I cannot wait to dive into it and I'm not going to reveal the secret yet. I'm just super excited to have legendary Dr. Frank Buck here with me. How you doing today, Dr. Frank?

Dr. Frank Buck: Mark, it is a pleasure to speak with you. Thanks for having me.

Dr. Mark: Oh my gosh, Frank, I am so excited to have you on here with us cause we're going to be talking about some pretty cool stuff. Um, now before we reveal the secret, like Dr. Frank here has been a speaker on multiple summits and you know, he's got that experience there. But as we were talking in our pre-interview chat, like he unveiled a little bit of his background, a little bit of a secret, you know, that a special sauce that he has. And I said hold it right there. That's where we're going with this. Now before we jump into that, Frank, let's give the audience, our summit hosts just a little bit of an understanding where we're coming from here. You could tell him just a little bit more about yourself.

Dr. Frank: Absolutely. I come from the, uh, education is my background. I started as a band director. After a dozen years I decided I want to run the whole school. So became an assistant principal, then a principal, then a central office administrator. And then in 2009, I retired from public education to give a second career, kind of a, a chance to gain some legs in secret and go, uh, I'm now in the organization time management productivity space. I've written three books. I do a weekly newspaper column in the local paper. I speak, uh, literally all over the world now helping people find a better way to work and play by giving them systems to keep them on top of the, the paper in their lives. But more and more the digital aspects, getting email empty, keeping up with the all the various to do use in a system rather than sticky notes all around the computer or monitor.

Dr. Mark: Oh my gosh, you give me a little anxiety over there. I am so far away from inbox zero. It's not even funny, but that's why I am so excited to chat with you here and one man. Talk about an overachiever, Frank. I thought I've done some stuff in my life. You are crushing it over there. So super excited to have you here with us. Um, what I'd love to do, to start off, to kind of ease our way into this is I'd love for you to kind of tell our summit hosts about the most recent summer that you kind of spoke on your part of, just give an overview of what that was and kind of the role you played in that.

Dr. Frank: Well, in, in October of 2019, I was part of something called Productivity Summit 2019, which the website is still up, [productivitysummit.org](http://productivitysummit.org). The, the brains behind. He was a guy by the name of Ray Sidney-Smith out of New York. Ray and I have done a lot of projects together, but this is something that he had put together really over couple of years that he wanted to do. Uh, this summit was one that was live, scary. Let me tell

you. Well, there's, there's safety and being able to record it beforehand and know everything's going to work. But it was live. Uh, I was a speaker and then I was also responsible for sort of helping behind the scenes, being a facilitator for other sessions. So I was the guy in those sessions pressing record and stop and hopefully doing all that. It's the right time.

Dr. Frank: Uh, that particular one, we had four different sessions going on at any one time. It, it, it was literally like going to a conference only I didn't get on an airplane. So there was a keynote, there were various sessions, four different sessions happening at the same time, so people could choose which one they wanted to go in. They could ask questions in the chat throughout and then the moderator at the end. So they would feed those to me if it was my session or I was speaking them to someone else, if I was the moderator. So live Q and A, there was an exhibit hall. And then of course, you know, when you go to a conference and you're networking with other people, there was even a networking session where we're all in this huge Zoom room together, talking to each other and then breaking off into small groups for a few minutes, coming back, going back to another small group. Wonderful experience, lots of moving parts. Uh, but it was a really a joy to be a part of, especially after it was over. It was that big relief that it was over and it went well. Mmm. A lot of anxious moments going into it. Yep. There's so many things could have gone wrong but it didn't.

Dr. Mark: I can only imagine. I, we really stay clear usually of live summits because of not just the technical potential for technical nightmare, speaker no shows and, uh, just the amount of stress. But when you can pull it off, which it sounds like you and Ray, we'll have to get Ray, if you're listening, Ray, come find us. We want you on the podcast. We'll have to get him over here as well. But you guys, sounds like you guys and everybody else who joined in kind of crushed it. Um, what I would like to know a little bit is, um, kinda how like the timeline of that. Like how did, when did you kind of get involved, how long was the prep? Like what did you do to actually prepare for this? Um, from your perspective. And I know if we get Ray on here, we'll go from his as well.

Dr. Frank: Yeah. I want to say about four or five months out. Uh, Ray had actually nailed down the date. Yeah, this is going to be it. He had already begun to have certain speakers in mind. And of course, you know, even before he claimed the dag, he says, Frank, give me an idea of what your calendar looks like. There were certain people in particular he wanted, so he was trying to work around those calendars, but at the end, uh, to put out feelers to people who were sort of big in the productivity space, some who accepted some who did not, so needed to have more people in mind. Uh, and then to also have several backup speakers. They were actually people that dropped out the week of. And I think we had, I know at least one that there was some problem the day of with them not showing up. Uh, so there was someone else who was ready, had their topic, everything ready to go. They was able to jump in and feel that,

Dr. Mark: Whoa, that's okay. Take, take two steps back here. Take us to that moment. Walk us through that. Like as if we were there with you, what was happening, what was going on and how, what was, how was that person ready and what, what happened?

Dr. Frank: Right. Well, in addition to, to Ray, they were, I think four other people that sort of helped him with the organization of it and who served as facilitators. So one of those people who was doing a session anyway also had, and another session with a PowerPoint ready to go so that if something happen. She just gets slide right into that slot. And even though we were different parts of the country, I'm here, I'm from Alabama, which your listeners are probably wondering, which Southern state is Frank from. So it's Alabama. Uh, you can tell from the accent, but you know, Ray's in New York, I'm in Alabama, the others are in various parts of the country. So we're communicating behind the scenes just through, through chat on telegram. We just had a little, uh, a room for the speakers, a room for the facilitators, the behind the folks.

Dr. Frank: So, you know, we're sending messages back and forth like, you know, Hey, it's five minutes to show time for a certain session and the speaker's not own, you know, they're not in the Zoom room. Anybody got a cell phone number for them? That sort of thing. So there was a lot of behind the scenes as far as what, what was working, what wasn't working, being able to say, uh, you know, Hey, two minutes to show time and so-and-so's here, we're ready. You know, room number two is ready to go. Mmm. Yeah. Very, very much like you'd say behind the scenes at any live concert, live speech, live lecture, um, anything where there are lots of people in the audience and that one person, you're kind of counting on them too, present it the right time.

Dr. Mark: That is a lot of pressure there. So what's like looking back at it from your perspective, what was one of the biggest successes out of that whole summit?

Dr. Frank: The biggest success was how all of these different people in various parts of the country or literally around the world felt a part of a community because we're able to ask questions live in the chat and people answer other people's questions. Much as if you were in a um, you know, a live conference that you could turn to the person next to you and ask a question and raise your hand and the speaker answers a question. And then to have a networking room where there's the screen full of little video cameras and people who had never met he who had never met each other, but we had one thing in common, we were interested in productivity. They here work all together and you leave having made friends, uh, gaining Twitter followers, following other people on Twitter, getting on each other's mailing list and starting to form a community where here, they say that, the rising tide lifts all the boats. We really felt like that.

Dr. Mark: That is, it's one of my favorite quotes right there. So I love that. Now going kind of back like what is one thing you know from your perspective that if you are going to do that different or if they were going to do a different, what you would change and don't say make it not live.

Dr. Frank: No, definitely not to make it, you know, going into it as, gosh, I sure wish we just, it was so much simpler. We just prerecorded all this stuff. And of course most summits, every other summit I've ever watched has been prerecorded. Um, I'll be honest, during the week leading up to the summit, I had set up all kinds of little practice sessions in a Zoom room, just where I had my laptop in the bathroom and my desktop here in my office and I'm going back and between one and the other, pretending I'm the guest on the laptop in the bathroom and I'm the host in here. I'm making sure I get the right buttons at the

right time. And believe me, I messed up, time and time again. As we got toward the end of the week, I started feeling a little bit better and then once we get that first session under our belt, and that one went okay. Then it was like, this is fun.

Dr. Frank: This I'm really glad that we did this. Um, I think if we had it to do all over again, it would be to really get those instructions. And sometimes it's so hard to do with a piece of software that you're familiar with that someone else's not quite familiar with too really get specific as far as what to click and what menu items you're going to see. You know, it's sort of like once you've done it, it's like, Oh yeah, yeah, sure. Why didn't I? But then to give that set of instructions to somebody else. Is it going to be understandable to someone else?

Dr. Mark: Oh man. The importance of, especially with that many moving parts, the importance of clarity and detail. I can imagine. Um, so in our, before we kind of switch over to the other aspect I want to talk about on this episode, we were chatting in the, our pre-interview chat kind of about like what's like, you know, you've seen a lot of summits out there, you've spoken on a lot of summits and it kind of asks you like, what's one of the worst aspects you think about summits? And I'd love for you to go ahead and talk about that at this point.

Dr. Frank: Correct. Especially the summits, the ones I've been a part of are saying have like falling into two times. One where it's a presentation, someone introduces you and then you're teaching a lesson. Uh, the other is more of the interview type thing. And with those interviews, keeping people interested because if you think about it, it's a conversation between two people. And this thing has got to be so interesting that not only are the two people involved in the conversation interested about it, but the people are interested in enough to eavesdrop and to eavesdrop for 30 minutes. You don't think he's thinking about that because that's really what one of those interviews is.

Dr. Mark: That is, that is hilarious. I love that you're like, the conversation has to be so juicy that somebody wants to eavesdrop on it for 30 minutes. I've never heard or thought of it like that. So excellent. No, no, I love that. And, and this is a hot topic right now. One for me anyways, that I'm constantly out there pushing. So Frank, when you said that, I was like, okay, like we got to bring that up because unfortunately a lot of the summits out there are, are literally boring interviews. And what does a summit at summit, it's made up of interviews. So if you just have a bunch of boring interviews, like who would want to listen to 40 boring interviews? Nobody. So.

Dr. Frank: Yeah. And it's so easy to tune out, you know, when, when you're at that, you know, thinking about the conferences that you've gone to live and you're in a session and people start to get up and leave. Well, there's a certain pressure to stay senior because you don't want to get up and walk out in front of everybody. But man, when you're in the summit, you can very quickly just, if it gets the least bit boring, you've probably got something on the other monitor that you were paying attention to anyway. You've all got, we've all got all those other options and if somebody of all the options is going to be listening to you, that's gotta be good.

Dr. Mark: That's got to be good. That is so true. I love that. So let's kind of switch up, switch our angles here. I'm obviously, we have a time management and productivity guru here, literally written the book. Um, I'd love to kinda pick your brains on this aspect because one aspect of running a summit and for a lot of our new summit hosts out there or aspiring summit hosts is it's, it's a project. It is a massive amount of managing different things that have to happen at a different variety of times. I have to be done by specific due dates and different times. So, um, and I think naiveness gets most of us through it because we don't know how difficult maybe it's going to be at the beginning. Um, but I would love to kind of give our summit hosts some good tactics to help prepare them to be able to produce a well-run summit. So, um, Frank, I'd love for you to kind of talk on some aspects of product management or kind of time and product management, some, some beneficial aspects that are, summit hosts can take and use towards their summit.

Dr. Frank: Right. Well, going back to that particular one that I've been talking about so much, the [productivitysummit.org](http://productivitysummit.org). Uh, again, Ray Sydney-Smith was the brains. And one of the things that Ray did was, that he used Trello to sort of bake the glue that brought everything together. So if you can imagine a Trello board with, we had four different tracks in the summit, four different sessions happening at the same time. So that Trello board were here, four different columns, one for each of those tracks. And as we started to nail down the various presenters, well, each of those presenters card and there was their picture on that card with all the back, uh, any, the, their bio, uh, what their topic was going to be, a checklist of things. Do we have the bio, do we have a title? Do we have this, do you know, do we have contact information for the day of so that all the information about particular person was there together.

Dr. Frank: And of course we're Trello. You can comment on a particular card. So different people who were organizing it and each of us had different parts of the puzzle. You could comment on that so that the right person got the right comment or the right question and could answer it about, uh, any particular, uh, so you could use Trello. Uh, you could use Evernote. I'm an Evernote certified consultants, so I really liked to use Evernote. A lot of different places. We could have done the same thing there where each speaker was a note in Evernote and a bio was collected or a headshot was collected. Just tag the note with what had been collected. You know, various ways that you could do it, but there are so many to do, so many little moving parts that if you start to look at them as individual tasks, it could be overwhelming. You've got to start to batch or group those tasks with what needs to be done in the way of social media, what needs to be done in the way of filling holes with speakers and work on groups of tasks at the same time instead of all those little league stands.

Dr. Mark: I mean, just trying to keep those all written out in all in one spot is, is super valuable as well. I mean, I know we help a lot of our students, um, with, with our programs, we have checklists and kind of like to do so they can kind of see that all in one area. Um, but it is a lot of moving pieces, especially if you're gonna have teammates on there, if you're going to have other people helping you with it. So in addition to that, maybe are there any other kind of golden gems like productivity management strategies or tips that you could give our summit hosts that would, uh, potentially apply to summits as well?

Dr. Frank: Yeah, you know, I think anything that can go wrong, will go wrong. Um, we literally had people cancel the week of and uh, I think there was one person the day of who just sort of didn't show up. So to have other people in mind that you could bring in and you know, for the day of, in a live situation, somebody else who's ready with like presentation, maybe someone who's doing a presentation anyway and has a second one up their sleeve that they can do if somebody cancels.

Dr. Mark: So you, you, you brought up a point there that I want to kind of circle around to. So with speakers, so we were just thinking of it, you know, about like how to run a live summit and the, the aspects that from your angle or perspective, but can you talk us actually what that process was like that if you're aware of it, of actually like kind of reaching out to the speakers and then preparing them because you're right, that's a big ask for a speaker too. They have to be available that day at that time and we all know life happens. Right. Um, so what was that kind of process like? Were there any, anything there that, um, that maybe you could tell us about that would help us if we ran the next summit?

Dr. Frank: Well, Ray is the one who reached out to the speakers. He, he developed a list. He did the reaching out, which we had numerous conversations along that. But he, he really sort of thought big. Uh, for example, one of the people he was even considering reaching out to it was David Allen, author of Getting Things Done. Well that's, that would have been a pretty big, but I, I don't know if he actually wound up reaching out to David. Mmm. He has a good relationship with David. He is someone that he's talked to in the past. So really going for the best people that you can get. So that, you see Mark, not a week goes by that I don't have an opportunity to sign up to watch a summit. Yeah. On social media, on, on, uh, um, email marketing, you know, you name it.

Dr. Frank: Somebody got a summit going for it. And whether or not I signed up has a lot to do with when I look at the speakers, do I see names that I know and if I see at least two where I'm going, yeah, then I'll go ahead and sign up for that summit and watch people that I've never heard of. Sometimes there's some serendipity there. I don't know that person, but boy, I need to get to know more about them. So, uh, with so much competition out there, you need to have people with some name recognition and actually even if you're small, it would not hurt to you to think I can't get that person. They're not going to do. Ask. The worst thing that can happen is if they say no and they're not on your summit, well they weren't going to be, if you don't ask, I can guarantee you they're not going to be on there. And even if it's a no, if you do the same summit the next year, no may change to yes. If this one went well and you try it again and again. Yup. You wear them out. And especially again, especially summit was successful.

Dr. Mark: Wear those speakers down. Eventually they're going to give in. You said you went from like what band director to assistant principal to principal to eventually just going to take over the world. Frank, I love this. This is amazing. Now as we start to kind of round out the interview here, uh, this episode, um, I'd like to actually kind of go back to your perspective as a speaker, right? Because you've spoken on summits and I'd like to kind of pick your brain a little bit on what stands out to you when you're being asked to speak on a summit. Actually I'd like to take two steps back. Um, you come from a niche

or an industry that like, I mean, summits aren't like the online marketing strategies are probably not the most common, you know, things you guys are learning necessarily hidden in marketing strategy. So I'd love to kind of go back to when you first were introduced to summits and how, how you decided or why you decided to actually speak on it.

Dr. Frank: Well, I think all of us who speak, who write, we want to get our name out there, we want to be known. Yeah. There are so many people that how a good message, the problem is very noisy environment and the online space is extremely noisy. Some way standing out. So the opportunity to get in front of people who don't know me. So the people who are on my email list, they hear from me every week.

Dr. Frank: They read my blog posts, they watch the videos, they listen to the podcasts, you know, okay, they know me. But to get introduced to somebody else and the summit is a way for that to happen. So that after the event's over, some people who've never heard of me go, I hadn't missed anything. I didn't know him before and I really don't care about what he has to say now. But for a segment of people that say something he said resonated with me, I bet there's something else a little deeper down. I'm going to go over, I'm going to visit this website, I'm going to get on his mailing list, follow Twitter, whatever it might be. So it is the opportunity to get known. If for people who don't know you already.

Dr. Mark: So powerful. Um, with that, like that opportunity to, I mean, awareness, authority, influence, all of that. So what about some um, tips for our fellow summit speakers that are listening in? Like if they're wanting to get on more summits or even like maybe once when they're on a summit, like you have any kind of tips or suggestions you can give them to help them be just a little bit more successful.

Dr. Frank: First of all, if you're interested in being on summits, let other people know that you're interested on being on summits. You know, yeah. Once you own one or two? The, you know, the invitation start to come. In fact, my invitation to come here today. I'm not sure what put me on your radar, but I have a feeling it was because of another summit that I had appeared on. So if I'm putting together a summit and I'm starting to, you know, brainstorm, who can I invite?

Dr. Frank: Who have I seen before? Who has done well? Who would probably be a yes, because I don't want to call people who are going to say no. I'd like to start off knowing about people who are interested in being on it. So if you let other people know, and those people know other people pretty soon, you know, well they signed their there six degrees of connection, a just six degrees of separation between you and anybody else on the planet. You're going to know somebody who knows somebody, he's doing a summit. So let people know, let people know what you can do. Not just I want to be on the summit, but here's the thing that makes me a little bit different from everybody else in the world. Here's what I have to. And if you can articulate that, the doors open for you.

Dr. Mark: Absolutely. Providing that value, letting them know how you're different and special. And like you said, we don't resonate with everybody, but when the ones we do

resonate, those become our raving fans, our tribe. I love this. So Frank, you've been a phenomenal guest here, giving us a lot of fun as well as some really great information. Um, I kinda put it with this will kind of round out with this and you have any kind of parting tips or pieces of wisdom that you would give our summit hosts when it comes to hosting their next summit.

Dr. Frank: Do it. There's so many things in life where, you know, I had an idea and I didn't act on it and then somebody else did and it was successful. I got ya. I thought about that. Why didn't I do it? So the best time to do it is now before the field gets even more crowded. I think that it already is. The first one is it's not going to be perfect. So go ahead and make the mistakes because there are going to be some things that are good. You're going to learn from that. And then the second one is going to be better and the third one's going to be, you know? Hmm. You're going to be glad you did it. Go ahead in and do it. Yeah. Jump in the water.

Dr. Mark: So good. Thank you so much Frank. Now I know a lot of our audience here, our summit hosts are like, how can I follow up with Frank? How can I get on his Twitter, his mailing list? So we'd love for you to let all of our summit hosts know where they can find you hanging out.

Dr. Frank: Okay. Come over to my website, FrankBuck.org, not .com, but .org. FrankBuck.org. That's my website. I've been blogging for like over 15 years. So if you're interested in organization time management, there's going to be plenty of stuff that you're going to like, but the biggie is on that home page right under my picture, click to get on my mailing list. You'll hear from me every Tuesday, uh, with little tips, but I think you'll like, you'll always be able to keep up with my blog with what has posted new. Something's new. You're going to know about it, something new on YouTube and you're going to know about it. Plus they're going to be two free gifts that you're going to get. First of all when you get on the mailing list, I'm going to send you what's basically the first chapter of my book is going to show you how to get your desk clear once and for all. Make the paper go away and hop back up exactly when you need it. And then the second gift is going to come a couple of days later and it's an ebook that I put together on remember the milk digital task list with exactly how I've got things set up and the methodology I use to help that thing just run my life so that I don't have to keep up with all this stuff and have sticky notes everywhere. I just look at remember the milk and there's what I need to do today.

Dr. Mark: Oh, that is absolutely amazing. Make sure you all go over and grab that and I think Frank here would be an amazing speaker on your next summit if you're looking for a productivity or time management expert. So. Thank you so much Frank for hanging out with us today. This has been an absolute blast.

Dr. Frank: Mark, thanks. It has been a pleasure.

Dr. Mark: And thank you all you summit hosts for tuning in to today's episode to listen to me and Frank chat back and forth. Remember your message matters. I'm Dr. Mark T. Wade, founder of Virtual Summits Software and your host here on the Virtual Summit Podcast.



You can get access to all of these goodies and more over on the show notes page at [podcast.virtualsummits.com/095](https://podcast.virtualsummits.com/095). 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, 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.