

Episode 114: Kick your webinar to the curb and run a Virtual Summit!

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Dr. Mark T. Wade: Hey summit hosts, Dr. Mark T. Wade here, founder of the Virtual Summits Software and your host on the virtual summit podcast. I am so excited for today's episode and you should be excited too because we got legendary Tammy Grable Woodford with us today? Tammy thanks for being here.

Tammy Grable Woodford: So excited to be here. Thank you.

Dr. Mark: Oh man. I'm excited too because we're going to be getting into, um, a topic, I'm going to even call it a philosophical topic, but it's going to be a topic that I think, you know, it may ruffle some of you or some of you right now that are listening may ruffle some feathers, but I think a lot of you are going to be like, preach on brother, preach on and Tammy is going to take us down that path and she's gonna light up, light it up for us and give us some summit gems. Now before we do that though, uh, Tammy, I would love for you to take a second and kind of tell our audience just a little bit more about yourself so they have some context before we go and start foresting the new path, the new way.

Tammy: I love it. Well, I again, I'm Tammy Grable Woodford. I am a business consultant, a leadership coach, motivational speaker, author, and really just all around overly enthusiastic, positive person. My past, I have over 25 years executive experience and I had a life I thought was one that I absolutely loved. I'd settled into a job I loved. I had a 20 year marriage I thought was fantastic. I had run for state representative and then a few months after all of that and, and to finish my master's, my executive MBA at the University of Washington. And a few months after that I was diagnosed with stage three B breast cancer. And so everything sort of what I thought was the truth was fertile rainforest of my life had, had just kind of turned to ashes and was carpet bombed around me. And so I worked very hard to get back up into six figures and back into an executive position.

Tammy: And my resume looked crazy because I had taken part time position so I could have surgery and heal and do all of these things. And so if you looked at a year and a half, there were all of these jumps. As I made my way back into the executive role and got there and realized I was miserable, absolutely miserable. And so decided, you know what, I'm gonna take that masters. I'm to take that 25 years of leadership experience. I am going to launch my own business and I'm going to help entrepreneurs just like you find your entrepreneurial spirit and build a solid plan for taking you from ideation to successful creation and monetization.

Dr. Mark: Well, I am so honored and humbled to have you here with me and with us. Uh, and I'm excited that you're no longer in those corporate positions because now we have you out here blazing the trail, blazing the path with the rest of us. So Tammy, I'd love to start off now like with with your summit, I'd like let us know a little bit more of what was it,

what was it about, what was kind of the goal or the target and then we're going to start kicking the tires and diving into that.

Tammy: Awesome. So the summit, it's Launch Your Vision 2020 and the summit is targeted towards entrepreneurs who are just getting started or those entrepreneurs that are looking to scale. You know, right now we're in this really exciting market space where a lot of people have kind of woken up and said, Hey, I can do my own thing. And then you have a lot of entrepreneurial thought leaders who are out there saying, yes you can. But what I find has been missing for a lot of people is that basic structure of business. They have the idea, they have the, some of the processes, but they bypass a lot of those, what you might call old school but proven methodologies that kind of take you through that business plan process of identifying your market, understanding your niche, understanding your target, putting together a sales plan, budgeting like the basic kind of not so sexy parts of business that are required for success. And when you don't have that, what you have are people who are just kinda kind of begging for somebody to buy their business or you know, feel like they're harassing family or worse having their spirit crushed. And so the summit is really targeted for those folks that are like, Hey, I've got this idea and I am going to make this happen. And they're looking for the tools and strategies, the value, actionable content that's going to take them there.

Dr. Mark: Love it. So if we dig down into it, what's the goal? What was the goal of the summit? Is it like when you decided, actually let's take two steps back. How did you decide you were going to run a summit? Like why did you say, okay, I'm going to do a summit?

Tammy: So there were two things. One is that I'm in a rural area and I am out in this digital forest where in some ways it's overwhelming. A lot of folks are like, everybody's a customer and we both know that's not true, right? Like there was an Instagram story sometime mid last year, somebody with 3 million followers couldn't sell \$36 in t-shirts. Right? Okay. That is like your perfect case study on why it is that you need to understand who you're targeting. So I'm sitting here trying to solve that problem. Now webinars have been for myself. Webinars have been the thing, right? It's been the bomb since, I dunno, it's been a couple of years. I even attend them. We all have last one I attended quite frankly Mark, it felt like an hour's worth of begging. Like you could tell that the person had a sales goal, which is great because they had a sales goal, but you could tell they were going to keep repeating the same sentences until they got to that goal. And it just felt so deflating. And so to me it was like, you know, there is got to be a better way, a way where we can actually exchange value for time and build relationships in the process and get back to kind of some of those old school, if you want to call it that processes that are more authentic and engagement and allow for relationship building. And so I kind of wandered around the marketplace, the internet forest and found virtual summits. And thought, you know what, let's do this. Let's give it a try.

Dr. Mark: I love that. So let's dig into this concept for a minute. Since we're, we're, we're on this. If we're talking webinars, we're in our pre-interview chat. You know, you gave me some strong opinions on how you feel about that. Like, like when you're looking at a webinar and a summit, let's kind of compare these, like, break it down into what you're loving about summits and what you don't love about webinars maybe, and kind of just paint that picture for us.

Tammey: I think that, you know, frankly, the webinar there, the, the process is so known now, right? You know, it's a pho live webinar for the most part. Sometimes it is live, but most of the time it isn't so right out the gate, if we're trying to build a relationship, it's not built on, um, truth inauthentic at the gate, right? There's always the pitch that you're gonna learn something, but it's so rare that you have a winner that is going to provide you any kind of actionable content. It might do a great job of transactional selling where they're saying to you, Hey, here's the idea, here's the problem and we can solve it and here's a little bit of a tease. But if you really want any meat, if you really want anything at all, you're going to have to pay for that. Um, the, the answer, what I love about summits is that it is that conference approach. When you pay to go to a conference, you expect to walk away with some actionable content. You expect to walk away with some inspiration and motivation. And so I think for me the biggest difference between the two is that the webinar feels as though it's about the entrepreneur or the host. The summit feels like it's actually about the attendee. And that brings so much more richness with it. And it's fun. It's just fun.

Dr. Mark: Yeah. And I completely agree. We've been, we've been talking about that for a while. It kind of feels like, you know, there's the whole, the three secrets we, we like to say are there, is what they call it, you know, on the webinars, the three secrets. But he never actually get the answer to it. Versus you got to give the information in Summit's as you've just said, Tammey is know, like and trust. It's all about building a relationship and then the monetization strategy comes after. And I agree, I firmly, firmly believe we're going to see a big shift. And you and I were both talking about this moving forward is summits increasing and webinars are just going to start to decrease. Um, so if we, if we kind of flip this back around towards your summit, then we're looking at like maybe you know, the aspect you had in mind of how you viewed webinars and maybe these other strategies out there and you're thinking, okay, I'm going to go build out my summit. So how were you trying to set up your summit in a way to make it different and to achieve the goals that you were trying to achieve?

Tammey: You know what's interesting about that is one of the things I love, and I forgot to mention this when I talked about summits before, is that you end up with a virtual swag bag, right? And which is way more green than the swag bag you get at a conference and actually a lot more purposeful than some of the stuff that you get at a conference, which is really cool. So when it came to looking at, I don't know how to be different and how to get it, how to target it and focus, it really was kind of a challenge for me to find a lot of competition in that space at this time. And so when you start researching virtual summits, it's still a little bit of the Wild West. There's not a ton out there. Um, you have to get pretty targeted niche down to find some comparable ones, which I think is a great problem, right? Like takes care of imposter syndrome right there. But it's such an opportunity because of that. And so really looking at looking at my target market and saying, what value can I bring? What kinds of people and speakers can I bring in that will bring value and doing as much research as I could. But truly Mark, it's, it feels a little untapped at this point in time, which really excites me. I look at that and I'm thinking this is going to be an amazing year, um, because I will be doing more than one.

Dr. Mark: Yeah. I actually just released an episode, um, my solo episode saying, you know, are summits doomed or going to boom in 2020 and I firmly believe this year is going to be

the year of the summit. So I'm on board with you on that. So let's kinda, let's at the aspect of your summit, as far as in general with summits. What's the benefit of running to something? Like why were you like even maybe the summits you've attend, well not necessarily the ones you've attended. What was the benefits that you were looking for with running this summit? Of course we know we're going to build an audience, but there's more to it than just that.

Tamme: So of course you think too well as any entrepreneur, right? We're always looking for how can we identify our target market? How can we speak to those who need our services? How can we continue to list build? Because in this era of social media, you can have the best and most popular group on Facebook and or any social media platform and tomorrow it could be gone. So the only thing you own is that list, right? So how do you protect yourself as an entrepreneur and speak to the right people? And so of course thinking about a summit that was sort of in the back of my mind is that's what this will be for my business. That is the goal for my business. What I found is that it actually, I ended up creating my own sort of amazing entrepreneurial mastermind group because you have these amazing speakers and entrepreneurs tend to be such giving supportive, positive thinking, energetic people that it has given me boosts in my business that I wasn't expecting because of the nature of just getting together.

Tamme: So we created a Speaker's Lounge Facebook group, which has been the most amazing thing. So you have your A-listers and your C-listers, everybody getting together for virtual coffee, everybody sharing idea, everybody crossposting, everybody friending everybody. And so it's sort of magnifying the impact and I'm telling you there are things, I know I can do better at this with the next one, but just looking at how amazing that has been with this one, that has been one of the biggest benefits for my business and if you think about it, because face it, you and I both know it's not going to be event ticket sales that are going to be like the boom, right? That's not the boon in your business. It is going to be excellent messaging and all of the works that you do with the audience that you have, but you also with all of those speakers now have a network of people that you can refer business to and who will refer business to you because you're building those authentic relationships and I hadn't thought about that until probably a week and a half in and I was like, wow, this is magic. This is amazing.

Dr. Mark: Yeah, two of the biggest non-tangible return on investments is one the speaker relationships that you create and foster. So strategic partnerships. And two the opportunities that come in. Every single person that I know that has hosted a summit has then been asked to speak on other summits or on podcasts or even physical stages. So absolutely love that. So let's look at it. Let's switch gears a little bit. Let's kind of take a right turn here and look at this. When you were jumping into you doing your summit, okay, you've met, you'd never run a summit before, and I think you'd actually told me you'd never even ran a webinar before, right? Am I right there? Okay. So when it comes from a technical aspect, you haven't done a whole lot of either of those. So what did you feel like kind of going into it? You talk to yourself, I'm going to do a summit, and then you're like, wait, how do I do it? Like talk us through what was going through your mind and what you decided to do?

Tamme: So I had been, I have been a speaker on in a couple of summits, which has been fantastic and so I had that experience with the summits prior. There was so much work for the host and I'm not well I'm an entrepreneur. No one who's an entrepreneur is gonna ever shy away from work. Right? Like we are the rebels that are just going to make it happen no matter what. Okay. I'm also wise enough to know that there are smart people like yourself who have said, Hey, there is a better way. And so I went searching for a tool and I am so glad I did because having a platform, even though there were still elements and you know every platform is going to be different, I still had to figure out where I was going to host my video. I still had to figure out my recording.

Tamme: I still had to figure out my intro and outros and all of that stuff. Having a tool where I didn't have to code speaker pages, where I didn't have to code talk pages, where I didn't have to code schedules or you know, carts or any of that stuff. Having all of that done and then having the speakers able to, and this was huge for me too. Not every speaker will do it and not everyone is um, tech friendly. Right. I mean that's just how it, even people who are entrepreneurs and working in the digital world, not everybody has that same level of passion for technology. Having the ability though for them to update their own information. And then for me to just audit it has been absolutely amazing. And then being able to choose to prerecord, put those talks up and view that and see what it's going to look like or it actually opens has been amazing as well.

Tamme: So for me, finding a platform, I could have done it without it, but I, you know, I have, I have clients, I have other things to do and I even want to sleep sometimes. So that was not the option for me. The option for me was to find an expert or a tool in the field where I could utilize that to my advantage. Saved myself some time, get a professional looking summit up and running, learn the things I need to know from sales and marketing and all of that aspect of it and, and run and just run. And it has been absolutely amazing. It's been such a good experience. It's incredible.

Dr. Mark: And I just love hearing this because I still, I and sometimes I'm like you people now you have no idea how good it is. Yeah, I was still remember my first summit with that I created a. It was seven different pieces of software. 26 plugins took me over a hundred hours to build it and still look like a third grader had built it. So, um, the, the fact now that we have these tools, like the Virtual Summits Software and the other ones that are out there makes it, and that was the whole point is to make it easy and simple to host a summit because summits are powerful and they are beneficial as you've just been talking about Tamme. So I love that.

Tamme: They are, and I have to tell you in one of my masterminds, obviously not having to do with my summit. Um, I have a partner who, or um, an acquaintance who started at the same time I did and she attended a webinar, she bought a kit. So she's going through that process of that step by step process of building and plugins and the whole bit I am going to be launched and done and she is still working on getting kind of getting started to be honest. And so it's just so much worth that investment. Yes, any new technology is risky, but guess what? It's risky to code this thing yourself. So find a platform, embrace that platform, learn it, run with it. You will thank yourself because you will have multiple summits done in the year versus getting ready to get started to get going halfway through the year.

Dr. Mark: I agree completely and yes, and I'm loving this and I'm loving that we talked about the tack. Okay. So we've, we've taken that and most of the people, most of our summit hosts listening in here, they know like not going to build it out on my own anyways. Like that's not gonna happen. So they, they're, they're on that board on that bandwagon with us. But what I want to do is I'm going to throw a curve ball at you here as well. What is something that our summit hosts need to know that maybe they don't know, they haven't run their summit yet. What is something that they need to know or that that you feel that maybe you've gone through in your experience here that they should know?

Tammy: I'm going to say think big so and think outside your circle of influence. I think that, and this is probably more sales training than anything else, you need to have an A-Lister or two. And even if you're A-Lister isn't going to be somebody who's going to promote it to the degree that your B or your C Lister will. You still have the opportunity to do that promotion yourself, tag those A-listers, tag their companies and you're still able to get the benefit if you're doing it. And so really think big at the same time, don't have an entire cast of A-listers because you don't want that competition. You want a couple, you want to have them elevated, you want to have them excited to participate. You want to definitely ask everybody to give a giveaway for attendees, to give a freebie. Like you want to fill that swag bag and to create a little competition so you get some social sharing going because some of the exclusive offers and some of the prize giveaways are so good that they want to make sure that they're getting those entries to win.

Tammy: So you really want to take advantage of that, that viral element and face it an A-Lister giveaway is going to bring more than a B or a C potentially. Now I'm not saying value, I'm saying perception, right? Those are two totally different things and, and I don't want a B or a C lister sort of feel like, Oh, I shouldn't try because that's not the case. You're on your way to A, keep going. Right? And one of the ways you do that is continue to elevate yourself with those folks, which is kind of another magical part of a summit.

Dr. Mark: Well, let's, let's dive into this actually a little bit. This'll be a, this will be a good topic is what is one of the, what is one or two things that you've done that has been working for you to help kind of climb that ladder as you've said, or get into like that B or even A lister area to get them onto your summit. What's, what's something that's been working for you?

Tammy: I just ask. So, you know, make your target list right and make sure your target list is going to relate to the audience that you're, you know, and to the topic of your summit. Right? And so, you know, it's, I'm one of those, I'll just ask, I will shoot a LinkedIn message to a CEO of a big company and I'll know it's an assistant reading it, but you know, why not, I'll do it. And so make that target list, make sure that you send those messages, make sure that you follow up, make sure that you find out who you can follow up with and make sure that you are polished in that process. Definitely. You know, it's all sort of like how does it, it all comes back to value, right? And so when you're looking at your A's or B's and your C's and everybody being amazing and truly, you know, one of the best things we did, I did was create a Speaker's Lounge Facebook group because you get all of these people in the same room and nobody, and I think this is more of an entrepreneurial thing.

Tammy: You don't have that sort of seniority kind of attitude. As an entrepreneur, as an entrepreneur, you're just so busy having fun and doing stuff you love and living an intentional life, a joy filled life that you're like, bring everybody along. Let's all go. Right? So it's such a great environment. So you have, you see belief barriers of your B and your C guests being broken just by having exposure to those A-listers and being like wow. So they are approachable, they are real people. And, and that really is it, right? It's just a matter of making that list, working it, bring in value, being consistent, being joyful and um, you know, don't put all your eggs in one basket and have that's the person I'm going to get. You know, if you end up with three or four or five people that are A-listers, that's a good problem to have. Right? So I love that.

Dr. Mark: Yeah. Great strategy there. And now let's, as we start to round out this episode, what I'd like to do now, is there something that you've used or even a way, or maybe it's even a mindset to kind of help keep yourself on schedule because I know a lot of summit hosts, they dive into it and there's a lot of things that maybe they haven't thought of before or didn't anticipate and they can get behind schedule very quick. Have you done something that you've found that has kind of helped you to either stay organized or just kind of stay on track?

Tammy: Definitely. So I do use an online project management tool and I happen to love Hive, but seriously there's Airtable, there's Asana, there's any of those, right? And I also, right now use a little bit of paper because I find myself, you know, writing notes all the time because this with my first summit, right? I'm learning, I'm still in the ideation process a little myself. And then I do use, um, the 90X Planner and I love that thing. It's a 90 day planner and it has you goal focused and, and so if you look at goal setting in general, and I'll just say this, no matter what tool you use, if you say to yourself, what is my ultimate goal? If your goal is to launch a summit, what are your action goals that you need to get done to launch that summit?

Tammy: And then what are your sub action goals that you need to do to get and launch that summit. And then once you start doing that, get it scheduled and map it out whether you're using, I've got my calendars behind me, whether it's a whiteboard, whether it's a paper planner, whether it's you know, an online tool or whether you're kind of an in between with all of them. Because I do disconnect. I make it a goal to disconnect sometimes from tech. Just make sure that you're mapping it out. The worst thing you could do for yourself. This type of a project that has so many spinning plates not track your progress and not have a plan because you do not want to get to the day of the summit. Realize you didn't record, you didn't test, you didn't do that. There's something that goes haywire on that day. We have, I've been amazed at the number of registrants that we've gotten. I think that was the other thing I didn't expect. Right. And it continues to climb and so without a plan, I can't even imagine. That makes my heart kind of flutter. Just thinking about not having to plan.

Dr. Mark: Yeah, just kind of going into it blind. I mean, I couldn't imagine either myself. Now this has just been absolutely incredible. Tammy, I appreciate you so much and I know our audience, our summit hosts are going, I appreciate Tammy too, but I want more. Tammy, where can I find her? Where she hanging out at? So why don't you let us know how we can get in touch with you after this episode and hang out with you more?

Tammey: Awesome. Well, you can obviously go to the website which is Taniant T-A-N-I-A-N-T.com. I'm sure you'll have a link to that and you can also find me on LinkedIn. It's Tammey Gribble Woodford and it is LinkedIn/in/TammeyGribbleWoodford. And you can also find me on Facebook and you can find it in my company page on Facebook and the of course the summit because we are going to be evergreen. I didn't do lifetime. That's the other thing Mark. I said I'm doing a year because maybe it's the uh, the cancer diagnosis in me that said, whose lifetime are we talking about? But I decided a year and here's the thing, any business tip and knowledge that anybody hands out today is probably got maybe a year at best anyway, so a year access. But you can check out the summit launch-your-vision-summit-2020.taniant.com/ and we'll have a link to that too probably. And I welcome any questions. If you are a summitter and you're just getting started, would love to talk to you and support you any way that I can and I appreciate you so much Mark. Thank you so much for having me on the show to talk about something that I, I didn't know I was so passionate about until I got started.

Dr. Mark: Oh, I love that. Thank you so much Tammey, and thank you all you summit hosts for tuning in here as well. Tammey, I'm going to let you kind of close us out here with one final parting piece of wisdom that you think our summit hosts they need to hear.

Tammey: Just do it. I know that sounds so simple, but as an entrepreneur, be bold, be brave, step into this space and if you've been someone who's had great success in webinars and you are starting to see that kind of, you know, change a little bit, embrace the summit and step into this new era, you can learn new things, we all can learn new things and it is so rewarding. Just do it.

Dr. Mark: Such great wisdom there. Thank you again Tammey. It's been an absolute pleasure.

Tammey: Thank you.

Dr. Mark: Thank you all you summit hosts for tuning in with Tammey and I. I'm Dr. Mark T. Wade, your host here on the Virtual Summit Podcast, and just remember your message matters, so go out and make an impact in the world. Don't forget to check out all of these goodies that Tammey just talked about, links to her and everything we've just discussed on this episode over in the show notes at podcast.virtualsummits.com/114 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 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.