

AFFILIATE LAUNCHES MADE SIMPLE with Matt McWilliams

How to Run an Online Summit (And Get the Most From Your Affiliates)

Online summits are all the rage these days. I wholeheartedly believe they are one of the single best ways to significantly grow your list, connect with influencers, make a huge splash in the market, and...make a lot of money in the process.



Are Summits Dead?

There is a lot of talk in the online marketing community about summits right now. The big question is: Are summits dead?

The short answer is no. In fact, they keep getting bigger and bigger.

In the past year, we've run summits with 30,200, 12,300, and 31,400 registrations...just from affiliates alone.

And yet, I keep hearing the same question: Are summits dead?

[shareable]Online summits are not dead. In fact, they are getting bigger and bigger.[/shareable]

I believe this stems from the fact that online marketers are hyper-aware about the market. They see a new summit announced every other day. To them, it seems they are everywhere and therefore the market is saturated.

But the reality is this:

Most people have never *heard* of a summit, let alone been to one.

So, no, they are not dead...not even close.

Below I'll share how to absolutely ROCK your online summit. I'll also share what *not* to do in your summit. I'll also share a way you can get instant access to a recent live training I did for my \$1000 students on summits.

[callout]Throughout the post below I offer a way to get access to free training on online summits. It's more than one hour long and offers my best thinking on summits. If you want to skip right to the training, click here.[/callout]

Before You Plan Your Summit

Before you plan a thing for your summit, the first thing you must do is get clear on the purpose of the summit.

Clarity of purpose simply means you know your #1 objective. You must have a single primary objective that trumps all others. You cannot have two or three. Only one.

Here are five potential primary objectives:

- List growth
- Impact on your community
- Making a splash in the market
- Connecting with influencers
- Making money (selling products)

There is nothing wrong with any of those objectives. My favorite is the last one, so this post and my training focuses on how to maximize sales. But, all of them are great reasons to run an online summit.

Online Summit Mistakes (What Not to Do)

When I first started running online summits, I did not have a playbook. In fact, I had virtually no clue what I was doing.

But, like I tend to do, I jumped off the cliff and built an airplane on the way down. (h/t to Reid Hoffman for that phrase).

Here are the eight big mistakes we've made that you should definitely avoid.

1. Starting promotion too early.

We've started promotion as early as 30 days prior to the start of the summit. This was a huge mistake.

In any launch (product, book, summit), there is an initial spike in optins, followed by a lull, and then a "deadline spike" at the end.



When you start too early, this lull can last weeks, which kills any momentum you have. Additionally, people who register weeks in advance are less likely to actually show up for the summit.

In my free training, I share the **7-10-4 Formula™**, which shows you exactly how to time your summit for maximum registrations and show up rates. **Get it here.**

2. Not focusing on your #1 purpose.

Whatever your #1 purpose is, you must focus on that.

All too often, I see summit organizers say that sales are #1 only to shift their focus a half dozen times. This leads to confusion and chaos and usually results in achieving none of the possible objectives.

3. Not engaging optins prior to the summit.

This mistake looks like this:



Come to my summit!



Nothing for days



Where is everyone?

If you don't engage optins early and often, they aren't going to show up.

Constant communication is key to a successful summit. I show you how to do it in this free training.

4. Running affiliate contests just like a product launch.

While summits should be run like a product launch (especially if sales is your #1 purpose), affiliate contests should not.

In a product launch, you inherently have more opportunities to get affiliates involved. Usually you have 5 or more pieces of pre-launch content plus webinars. With a summit, you really only have one event. So keeping interest levels high is difficult.

Typically, this results in a very boring affiliate contest. There is very little movement in the top affiliates. Whoever leads after day one ends up leading the entire time...BORING!

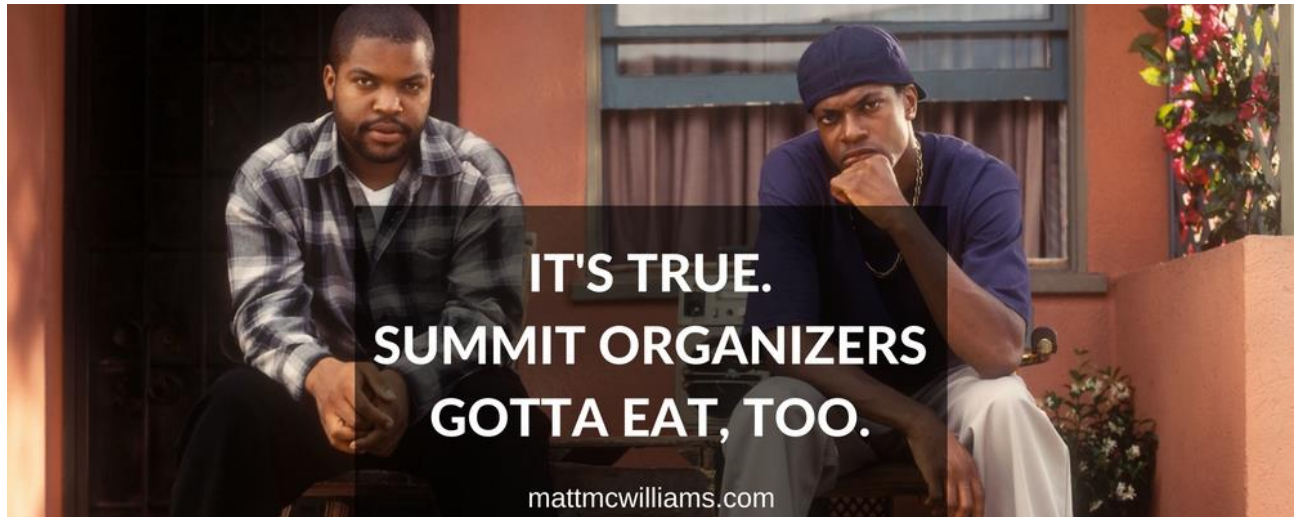
I share the solution in this free training. This single change reinvigorated a dying summit and energized affiliates beyond our wildest dreams.

[callout]RELATED POST: [How to Use Affiliate Leaderboards to Increase Sales](#)[/callout]

5. Not upselling early enough.

Most summits I've seen are very hesitant to upsell early.

I get that...selling can be hard. No one wants to offend people or appear like they are a scam artist. But summit organizers need to eat too.



Make sure you are upselling early and often (without being annoying).

6. Getting only big name speakers (who don't promote).

The age old question asks:

If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?

The same is true for online summits. You can have the greatest lineup in the world, but if they aren't promoting the event, it's not much use (unless your #1 priority is connecting with influencers).

In my free training, I share my proven **10-80-10 Formula™** for crafting the perfect speaker lineup. It shows you exactly what kinds of speakers to get and how to get people to actually promote your summit.

7. Not making it clear that promotion is expected (and WHEN it's expected).

The biggest mistake we made early on was getting a lot of great speakers lined up and then surprising them with an expectation to promote the summit. That simply does not work.

When you are talking to prospective speakers, you need to make it clear that you expect them to promote it. You also need to make it clear *when* you expect them to promote it.

8. Not using the summit as Pre-Launch Content.

In a typical product launch (a la Jeff Walker's Product Launch Formula), you have a lot of PLC (Pre-Launch Content). It might look this:



Day 1 - eBook



Days 3-9 - Video Series



Day 11 - Webinar

This is then followed by an open cart-close cart sales funnel.

The PLC operates as a warmup and an opportunity to get optins. It builds rapport with the audience, provides value, and establishes authority. It's a proven formula.

And yet, people tend to forget that a summit can operate the same way. Think about what a summit does:

- **It builds rapport.** You're in front of the audience every day for a week-plus.
- **It provides value.** Massive value, in fact. They are getting the best information from some of the best minds.
- **It establishes authority.** YOU are the one who got all these people together, so you must know your stuff.

Summits function as great PLC. Remember this and transition to the open cart-close cart sequence at the end.

[callout]If you want to see a summit in action, one of the best ways is to register as an affiliate for one of ours. Register for Ray Edwards' Copywriting Success Summit and/or Ron Friedman's Peak Work Performance Summit. Both will be huge and exemplify what we teach.[/callout]

There you have it. I've shared WHY you want to host a summit and eight of the biggest mistakes people make when running them (I've made all eight personally).

So, what are the best practices to counter these mistakes? I share them all in this free video training.

I recently hosted this training for my 7-Figure Affiliate Launch students but decided to open this one session up to the public. Just click here to get the free training (more than an hour long).