

# Angela Kelly Smith

## Stop Looking for Referrals with Donnie Boivin

The Marketing Chat Podcast ep. 066

Podcast Transcript

**Kelly Smith:** A little warning first, before we get started. We're gonna be cussing in this episode because my guest and I both like to say fuck. Today, I'm chatting with Donnie Boivin, co-host of the Growth Mode podcast and author of *F\*cked to Focused: Taking Your Business From Growth Mode to Ultimate Scale*. One of the things we discuss in this interview is that we all tend to learn better from people who have fucked up and learned from their mistakes than we do from people who have succeeded easily with not much struggle.

Donnie shares his stories in his book, on his podcast, and in this episode. I thought I'd share a story of my own real quick.

I've been podcasting with the Geek Girl Soup Podcast since January 2012. A couple of my friends threw that podcast together and invited me to join two months later. We were winging it and having a blast. A couple of months after that, I started a live podcast at Blog Talk Radio, where I interviewed a guest every week. I was interviewing women entrepreneurs about their entrepreneurial journey, what they had learned, what mistakes they had made, and what tips they could share. It was a ton of fun. Y'all know how much I love podcasting!

But I didn't have a clear plan around that show. I didn't have a goal. And I didn't have a system. Over the course of the year that I ran that show, I had a few guests just not show up. I was left hanging on the air, live, with listeners there waiting. I would make up some shit to talk about for 15 to 20 minutes. Then I'd end it. I never promoted myself or my business on that show. So essentially I was just promoting my guests.

I mean, what the hell was I doing? And, other than sending guests instructions for the interview and a reminder to show up--yes, I did do that--I didn't prepare questions or do much research on them. Oh my Lord. What was I thinking? I had listeners both live and for the replays. But, with those guests not showing up and with the randomness of how I ran it, it just got to be exhausting.

So, I ended it after about a year. What I learned was you've got to have a clear plan for a podcast. You've got to have a goal for your show. And you've got to have an excellent system in place to run it. I teach people how to start their own podcast. And I'm a good teacher because I've struggled through it.

I've fucked up. I've learned. And I've come back to do it right. I hope you enjoy this interview with Donnie Boivin. He gets real right from the start. And he's got so many great lessons for you.

At 40 years old, my guest Donnie Boivin discovered that he'd been living other people's dreams. For two decades, he mastered sales but made other people wealthy. Confident in his sales ability and local brand, Donnie jumped out on his own to chase his dream of speaking on stages and inspiring other people to go for their own business freedom.

But he quickly learned that he had an employee mindset, not a business owner's mindset, and ran his business straight into the ground. While struggling to find his footing and build his business, Donnie began to discover himself. Donnie's journey led him to build the Success Champion family of companies.

Welcome Donnie. I am so happy to have you here today.

**Donnie Boivin:** Ah, Kelly, my honor, girl. The few seconds we've already spent chatting, I'm pretty excited to be hanging out with you. I think we're gonna have a really damn good time. But yeah, if you're sensitive for this episode, guys, you may wanna put earmuffs on, because you're just gonna get the full version of me.

And as, as I tell people, I talk like I talk, and you're either gonna like it, or you're not. Either way, I'm good with it.

**Kelly Smith:** Exactly. Yeah. Yeah. I was telling Donnie before we started recording that, if y'all have been listening for a while, you know that these episodes are clean. There have been a couple where there's been a little bit of cussing, but yeah, this time we're just gonna go all out and be ourselves.

**Donnie Boivin:** That's the only way to be. Only way to.

**Kelly Smith:** Exactly. Fuck yeah. So let's talk about your background a little bit. In your book, you write about how you were in sales before you started your business mm-hmm and you knew sales really well. And when you went out on your own, you had a noncompete with the other company and the company that you left.

So, how did you do that when you left?

**Donnie Boivin:** I can tell you I didn't do it well at all. You know, I was not prepared to be told that I couldn't talk about sales, sales training, sales management, business development, anything in that regards, anywhere in the world.

And I actually try to....

**Kelly Smith:** I get that sense about you. You know, you don't tell Donnie Boivin no. Or you can't....

**Donnie Boivin:** That's usually a good surefire way to guarantee I'm gonna do it until you bring, you know, lawyers and things into go. I actually tried to fight it and my lawyers told me you're in Texas, you can beat in noncompete, just so you know that it's gonna cost you half a million dollars.

And by the time you're done trying to beat this thing, your non-compete is gonna be up anyways, you know. So it, I made the choice to come out as a success coach. And Kelly, I say it in the book. I have no fucking clue what a success coach is.

**Kelly Smith:** Right. Here's. Sorry, other success coaches out there.

**Donnie Boivin:** I know for me, I mean, it really, I, I started off, as I tell everybody, as a business whore that just said yes to whatever I could find.

And that meant I threw a crap-ton of money building courses, you know, learning things, trying to sell anything I could get my hands on, doing some half-ass coaching, and just being completely all over the map. And a lot of it is I knew sales. And now here I was in a spot that I wanted to be on stages and I wanted to be known. But, except for my little hometown, nobody knew who the hell I was.

So, I really found myself in a spot of, I just walked away from the greatest job I ever had, making the most money I'd ever had. And now I'm in a spot where I don't know what the hell my business is. Mm Well, six months of trying to do this and throw money at it, you know, I stood on the back porch, my farm with my wife, dead in the face and said, "Babe, we're about to lose everything we own."

And to really hit that one hard, my wife that Monday morning had to go cash in her 401k to legitimately save our farm. The mortgage was three months behind, and her Jeep had been repossessed. So she had to go get her Jeep back. And she looked at me in that moment and said, "Dude, get off your ass and go sell something."

What I realized, for me growing up is I never saw the CEOs of the companies I worked for. The only time I saw them, I, you know, sold a multimillion dollar deal, or we were

losing a multimillion dollar client. So, I had no idea what a CEO did. I thought they sat in the damn corner office and, I don't know, played solitaire all day.

I had no clue what the hell they did. But I started fighting, you know, calling, scratching, and figuring things out. But that, that, you know, first year of business was one of the scariest times in my life. Not knowing what the hell my business actually was and even worse, not even be able to tell people what I did, it led to a lot of interesting conversations.

**Kelly Smith:** That is so tough. I mean, I've worked with so many clients and experienced that myself. Having that dreaded question of, so what do you do? Uh, uh, life coaching and marketing coaching. Okay. Well, like what specifically? So like how do you help clients? Well, live better lives and market their, uh, businesses better?

**Donnie Boivin:** I think you just described 90% of the coaches in America.

**Kelly Smith:** Exactly. So like, how does that distinguish you from anyone else? And like, what is the client's specific problem? That is so hard for most people out there, you know. Especially working for yourself.

**Donnie Boivin:** I think most people. Well, I mean, a lot of it comes from people just haven't broken enough shit to figure out what their business actually is.

There's also a lot of desperation that plays into it because, you know, that first year or two in business, there's a lot of, I just need money, you know. I just need revenue coming in. So they're, you know, they business whore out a lot because they gotta get money coming from some direction, which I get. I'm totally, you know, empathetic towards.

But at some point you've gotta pick a direction in your business and go, this is what I do, because if you don't, my biggest thing that I think hurts people is, if you can't tell somebody what you do in five words or less, you're unreferable, right? Nobody outside of you can tell people what you do, which means they can't help introduce you to the people that would help you grow your business or potentially become clients.

Everybody says, you know, get your niche and focus and all that stuff so you can get your marketing right. For me, I could give a shit about the marketing getting right. I mean, it's important. But for me, it's all more important to get people to understand what you do so they can introduce you to the right damn people and you become referrable and change the story.

**Kelly Smith:** Yeah. And you're so right. Doing that in just a few words, as opposed to like a long form sales page. Or, you write in your book about someone saying, "Oh, just get me in front of them and then I can explain it." Okay. But then you also write in the book about, "Well, I don't even know who to put you in front of, if you can't tell me what you."

**Donnie Boivin:** For sure. And most people are, if they go beyond the five words, they're now pitching. It's no longer me trying to explain what I'm doing. It's now I'm trying to pitch you my services because they can't put it in a few quick words and it goes back to there's a lot of head trash with that because people are afraid that if I say I'm this, then I won't get this, or I won't get this and I won't get this. Or I won't, you know, get introduced to this person.

And that's all such a desperation mindset of coming from someplace a lack, that you've gotta be definitive so, so people, cause people wanna help. They really want to make the introductions. They really wanna get you to the right people. But when they don't know how to help you, they won't.

It makes it very hard to build a business.

**Kelly Smith:** That's so true. And you're right about that desperation and lack. It's like when most entrepreneurs start out, especially solo entrepreneurs, service-based businesses. When we start out, it's like, oh, my service is good for everyone. Anyone can use this, especially like with coaching, you know. But when we try to appeal to everyone, we appeal to no one.

**Donnie Boivin:** 100%, you know. And I think, and unfortunately I think everybody's gotta learn that the hard way. I think there's a lot of people that were like me and, you know, I just had such a desire to serve the world and get a message because, you know, I grew up into self-help stuff with Zig Zigler and Tony Robbins and, you know, go back to Jim Rohn and, and the likes of him.

I wanted to do that for others. I really thought that I would be able to motivate, inspire, help other people. And I wanted to do it on the scale and volume that they were doing. A couple things I didn't understand early on is one, nobody knew who the hell I was. Two, I hadn't figured out how to translate my life experiences into knowledge that other people needed to consume.

My life had been on a singular linear path of just sales. So I didn't have a lot of worldly experiences like you get building a business to be able to come back and teach tangible things to other people. I mean, yes, you can teach a lot in sales. There's a lot of things

you can teach inside of sales. But sales only spoke to a portion of the overall issue with people. And so not only did people not know who I was, I had no message. I had no platform. I had nothing that was definitive to say, "Hey, come follow me." I had to go get kicked my, my teeth kicked in, in the marketplace to go, all right, this is what I actually fucking do.

And in doing that, you know, allowed the world to lean in. But we all have this ego enough about we wanna help them save the world. And anytime you try and help and save the world, it's a surefire way to go broke.

**Kelly Smith:** Great point. And we really do need failures along the way, like you said, to get our teeth kicked in before we can truly help other people. Like people for whom something comes naturally I think don't teach it as well as people who had to really struggle to get it.

**Donnie Boivin:** 100% agree with that. I think unfortunately, and I don't, I mean, I piss some people off when I say this, and I'm okay with that, is I think for most people, they have to hit rock bottom before they actually make a change.

And I think the reason being is you gotta get to a place where you run out of excuses, because most of us lived a life of excuses, not even realizing we were. And you gotta get to a place where it's so bad that the desire to change is greater than a desire of staying where you are. And I mean, that was for me.

Standing on the back porch, looking at my wife, saying I'm about to lose anything, you know, I wasn't living up to my end of our marriage bargain of being a husband, taking care of her, provider, you know. Let alone, we had built a second house on a property for my mother-in-law, and she was gonna lose all her stuff, too.

And that became the catalyst for me to make a shift. And I think, unfortunately, a lot of people have not put themselves in a position where they could actually bet the farm, if you will. Yeah. Or potentially lose it all. And therefore they always maintain and their life continues to be this series of repetition, where it always comes back to the same spot.

And they always end up doing and, and being the same person because they've never gotten punched in the face hard enough. And they keep telling themselves, "Well, I'm gonna be better. I'm gonna make more money." And they're, and they're trying to affirmation their way through the thing. When it's, you know, you gotta go get punched in the damn face several times, then go, "Okay, maybe next time I'll duck." Then you duck and you get hit by the other fist, but you know, now you're starting to learn and [...] and move.

**Kelly Smith:** Oh, I love that. Affirmations can help with mindset, but action is what helps the most taking action. And even when it is a mindset thing, I still find action to help the most.

**Donnie Boivin:** You know, what's funny is I lived this journey for many, many years. So I'll use myself as the example. But you know, that first year in business, I'm like, you know, I need a blog cause a blog's gonna really help me get this business going.

So I started writing a blog and I'm like, holy crap, this blog's a ton of work. Jesus. I gotta write every freaking day. I gotta come up with new ideas. This is harder than I want to do. You know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna start a YouTube channel. I think a YouTube channel is gonna be the answer, right? So now I start a YouTube channel.

I go down that path. I start creating. I'm like, holy crap. This is a lot of work. Not only do I gotta set up a camera, now I gotta figure out what am I gonna say. Then it's gotta be edited. All right. This is more work than I thought it was gonna be. You know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna write a book. I think writing a book is gonna be the answer. That's gonna be the thing.

So I start writing a book and I'm getting through it. I'm like, oh my God, this is a lot of work trying to put all these chapters together, all this stuff. And I'm like, you know what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna start a podcast. Cause the podcast is gonna be the answer.

And what most people do like I did in that first year was is they get right up to the point of where they may actually start learning something and they pull the trigger saying this is too hard. This is too difficult. And they start over.

So their life is this series of this, this revolving circle that they always end up in the exact same place that they did success is found when you get to that point where most people would throw in the towel and say, "This is too hard" that you take one more step forward, but this time you go, "Okay, what have I learned up to this point? How do I apply that and keep pushing forward?" And because most people aren't willing to take that next step, they're not willing to risk it all, which means they're just gonna pick the next thing and start over.

So you see all the people with the perpetual jobs or the perpetual careers or whatever else. And they always end up where they started from, because they'll never fully commit to doing the thing. Mm-hmm And you've gotta fully commit beyond where the people would quit and keep pushing until you actually start evolving as a human being, evolving as a person, and ultimately liking the person that looks you back in the mirror.

And that's when all the magic happens. Yeah. But people don't want to get punched. No, you're right. They want the easy button.

**Kelly Smith:** Yeah. That's awesome. That's why we, you know, if you go look on Apple Podcasts, you see all these podcasts that haven't been updated in years or, right, you know, whatever. And, and there's no final episode, you know, it's not a limited series.

It's just, they ended. And that's fine. You know, podcasting is not for everyone. I teach people how to start a podcast and it's definitely hard for sure. And it's not for everyone. Blogging is absolutely great. You know, if you love writing, then write. If you love speaking, then podcasts. And if you'd rather be on video than do that. You have to do something..

**Donnie Boivin:** Sure. You have to create content 100%. I just think most people go into all of that stuff, believing whether they voice it or not in some form, they think that's the silver bullet. That's the magic thing that they need to do. They're not going into it to legitimately teach, help, coach, and mentor others.

They're going into it because they have to sell. So now that desperation carries into the content.

**Kelly Smith:** So true. You're right. They're going into it from that perspective of this is going to help me sell. This is gonna help me market my business. And they need, we need to do it more from the perspective of what am I giving, how am I contributing to my audience, to my ideal client, you know, to my followers? What valuable information am I sharing?

And do I love doing it?

**Donnie Boivin:** For sure. And what am I learning along the way? So I get better at the practice, you know? Yeah. Because people are looking at it from how do I generate revenue, which there's nothing wrong with that. But you need to look at it from, okay, if it's a revenue generation is the goal, what's the milestones and the parameters you're gonna put in place that allows you to get better at the craft so you can actually turn those listeners, those readers, those followers into a revenue source?

You gotta spend just as much time learning how to do that craft so it returns a revenue thing is as much as you spend the time learning how to do the craft itself.

And that's, the people want to, once again, they wanna show up and produce, but they don't wanna put the work in that actually turns it into a revenue producing activity.



**Kelly Smith:** Very true. So since we're talking about that, I'm gonna jump way ahead here. Talking about podcasting, you have your own podcast, the Growth Mode Podcast. Tell us a little about that.

**Donnie Boivin:** For sure. So it was actually my second podcast. Well, technically third, cause I did start one little tiny podcast. I made like seven episodes and I realized I'd launched the wrong show altogether. Then Success Champions, my first, and then we launched Growth Mode. Growth Mode came about because of how much I screwed up in the podcasting game. And most people do a podcast to interview other people and they may use it as a networking tool and the likes. And what we had to come to the realization is nobody wants to hear just your recorded Zoom conversations. So, when we launched Growth Mode, we're like, okay, what's the point?

What's the purpose? What are we accomplishing with the show? And we said, 100%, we're gonna teach people actually how to grow a business so they can scale. And then we went through and said, okay, what are the things you need to do to be able to grow business and in, you know, which led us through a whole ton of stuff from mindset to sales, to operations, systems, marketing, you know, the whole nine yards, and to bring all that to together. And then we had to produce it in a format that allowed people to be able to not only learn, but wrap their head around it.

So, you have me and Kevin, who's our COO of the company, who's introverted as hell, and me, who's loud, crazy, out there. Both of us veterans. And so we come at it from a lot of perspective of this is how he'd do it as an introvert. This is how I'd do it as an, as an extrovert.

But this is how we've also built the business, the systems. He's very much system operations. I'm very much bull in a China shop. Just do it my fucking way and figure it the hell out. So we talk a lot about all the things you need to be doing in business and laugh all the way through the thing and have a good time.

But it's really written for that small-business owner that's been a year or two in business, has gotten punched in the face several times, is now like, "Okay, there's gotta be a better fucking way of doing it."

Same way I wrote the book. It's that same target I'm going after, because I think for coaching to ultimately work, for a lot of people, I'm not a coach by any stretch of imagination, but for coaching to work for a lot of people, you gotta know the right questions to asked to get the benefits and results that you really need.

And until you've been punched in the face enough times, it's really hard to ask the right question. And so you're getting a bunch of advice from people that are meaning well and intending well, but you're gonna go through some hard learning processes trying to apply what they're teaching. So we're hoping Growth Mode continues to shortcut that process for a lot of people so they can come tune in each week and listen to Kevin and I's fuck up. Cuz we talk about 'em all the time. And I think that's where we found a lot of success is I'm just okay sharing everything I screw up out there. And because people keep leaning into the conversations. And it's been a lot of fun to put together and watch as many countries continue to pick it up and, and listen to the show.

**Kelly Smith:** That's awesome. I think people really do like and appreciate hearing about hosts' and mentors' fuckups. Because as we were talking about earlier about how people who have fucked up and failed teach better than people who have never fucked up or, or act like they haven't, I want to hear reality. If somebody's acting like or hiding their failures, it's not authentic, you know?

**Donnie Boivin:** When I first started teaching and trying to put out content. I really thought that if people knew how bad it was, that they would never do business with me.

And because why would anybody do a business with that much, that person who's about to lose a farm? Why would they, you know, have any desire. And interestingly enough, now I think people need to set some sort of boundaries on what they share. Cuz look, I don't give a shit what you had for breakfast just right for the record.

But the putting out content, that is your stories, your mishaps, your screw-ups, your fuckups, and the like, but done in a moment of, let me teach you what I've gone through, let me document through what I'm going through allows others to feel like they're sitting right beside you on the journey.

And if you take the book *F\*cked to Focused*, it's one of the greatest compliments I got back from a lot of people is people are like, "Dude, I felt like I, it was a conversation with you throughout the book." And that's how people need to look at how they're putting content out in the marketplace in general is, how do I tell this that people will lean into the story so they can actually learn the lesson that's supposed to be learned and not just read the words and not take action on it?

And that's where sharing the rawness of a lot of my story, always with a business twist on it has allowed us to build what we've built, Success Champions and everything. That you gotta do it from a, you're not sharing it to get empathy or apathy or right. You're sharing it so others can learn as part of it.

But you gotta teach what you learned going through that screw-up.

**Kelly Smith:** Exactly. I don't resonate as much with books where they don't give any inside information, where they don't tell their story. They may just say, "I'm sharing all of this from my 20, 30 years of experience." Okay, well, what is that experience?

"Well, I'll tell you the success."

**Donnie Boivin:** Yeah. Every time they do that, what I realize is they don't have 20, 30 years experience. I got year one repeated 20 or 30 times. They actually fucking involved. "Let me teach you my theories, because I don't actually know any of this crap," you know. That's what most of those guys and gals do.

It's like any book that you read that spends the first 12 hours on their story of who they are and what they've accomplished. I'm out. Cause you know, everything after it's just gonna be made up bullshit or theory.

**Kelly Smith:** Very true. Okay. So I'm glad you mentioned the title of your book because I brought up your book a few times and never said the title.

So, *F\*cked to Focused*, and the U is replaced with an asterisk: *F\*cked to Focused: Taking Your Business From Growth Mode to Ultimate Scale*. I love that title. So can you tell us a little bit about what it is about?

**Donnie Boivin:** So I wrote the book to me when I was going through the shit storm of building a business. What I realized is, in my darkest time, should I keep doing this business? I'm gonna lose everything. I really wish somebody would've tapped me on the shoulder and said, "You know what? You got this. Here's the next step. Here's what you need to do next. Here's the next direction you need to go."

Let's knock this out under the guise of "Dude, get off your ass and go sell something," you know? Yeah. And so the book, I wrote it to that Donnie that many years back and said, "All right, dude, let's go, let's figure this out. Let's build your vision. Let's figure out what you're selling. Let's figure out your business development strategy. Let's figure out all the things so you can actually grow a business."

And I didn't write it so people would create a bullshit marketing plan, their business plan-type thing. I wrote it as a guide so as they're going along and they screw up somewhere and they're like, "Okay, what am I doing here?"

If they can come back to the book and go, "Okay, this is what his journey was on this." But I also wrote it from, okay, this is my theory. This is my opinion. Try it, if it works for

you. Cool. If it doesn't cool. Go do your thing. But it was really written as let me share all the things that I fucked up all the way through it.

So you can grab it and hopefully apply some of the things and be able to start growing your business. Because now you know what's next and what you need to do. And man, it's done well. I'm extremely proud of how well it's done in the marketplace and the feedback and the reviews have been killer. I'm very grateful.

**Kelly Smith:** That's awesome. I read it over the weekend and just love it.. And so the fucked to focused I take to mean when you were fucking up your first business after leaving your sales job and how you had an employee mindset instead of a business owner's mindset, and then you know that moment on the farm with your wife, and then you finally got everything into gear and have created this successful business now, and you walk readers through these steps and suggestions that aren't like set in stone, but, "Here, try this and, and maybe it'll work for you."

And so there are a couple things I particularly love, like a Champion's Vision, creating a Champion's Vision. I just love that. Can you tell us a little about that?

**Donnie Boivin:** Yeah. What I realized, and this kind of goes back to a little bit to what do you sell and how do you show up, is I knew what I wanted to accomplish, but nobody else, and what I realized is I couldn't articulate it in a way that people would resonate and understand what I wanted to accomplish. So I had to come up with a vision that, one, I could tell others, two, that would get them to lean in and go, "Fuck, I wanna be a part of that journey."

And so, you know, I really figured this out when we decided to change how the world networks and create the new networking group groups and the versions and things we're doing with that and now created the fastest-growing networking organization on the planet, which is amazing. And just having a lot of fun with it.

But when you get that vision right, people will literally raise their hand and go, "I want to go on that journey with you. I want to actually help make that journey a thing." And the day I said, I want to change how the world networks, I was blown away by how many people went, "Ooh, me too. I'm looking for something better, something higher caliber, something that I can be a part of and do more of."

It was an instant transformation in what we were doing from a business and the number of people that quickly raised their hand and got involved and help us figure out different scenarios. And we launched five chapters within seven days. Wow. And it was all part of, I could finally articulate what I wanted to do in the marketplace.

And I think because people are unclear in what their overall vision is and the, and the vision isn't a selfish thing. This is a vision of how you want to impact the world. And it could be your immediate world around you. You know, for me, I wanted to go a lot bigger scale. And I think most people are looking to pay their bills or looking to make quick money. They're not thinking about what are they trying to accomplish for the long haul.

And once I figured that out and could articulate, man, the people that continue to lean in has been amazing. But it comes back to, you've gotta know really what you wanna do in life. And then you've got to be able to articulate it in a way that people are like, "Fuck, yeah, I want that too. Here, let me help you build that vision."

**Kelly Smith:** Yes, because we need help for sure. We can't do everything, especially when it comes to a vision and changing, quote, the world, and like you said, any part of our world.

It's not a one-person game. I love that phrase Champion's Vision. You know, it is heroic. Then we're dead in the water.

**Donnie Boivin:** Absolutely. And you know, this is why the book is written for people that have been in business for, you know, a year or two, because until you know what the business is, you're gonna struggle figuring out the vision.

You're gonna struggle who you sell to. You're gonna struggle saying what you sell. And I think that the part of the game is you gotta go fuck it up for a little while. So you come back and, you know the exact words to be asking, you know the exact questions so that this knowledge makes sense and you can start truly growing your business.

**Kelly Smith:** So your ideal client is a fuck-up who's ready to get focused?

**Donnie Boivin:** I've never actually put it that way, but yes, yes. I like it. I like it. Imagine saying that to the marketing person. Not exactly, but you know. I like, well, but I tell you, most of my clientele would a hundred percent resonate with the fuck-up, the Renegade, you know, we tend to get the rough around the edges. So, I'm good with that.

**Kelly Smith:** That's great. Okay. And so then in your book, you walk people through creating Champion Codes. Can you explain that please?

**Donnie Boivin:** So, I think oftentimes as we're running through business, is we never put any sort of boundaries, meaning this is what my company represents, this is how we're gonna show up, this is how I want people to explain this, this is how I make decisions.

We never give ourselves any sort of rules or guidelines to follow. We just shoot from the hip and see what happens and what's gonna work.

So I came up with the idea of giving ourselves, you know, the Champion's Codes, which was really related back to the Knights of the Round Table, fricking Knight's code, when a Knight's honor actually meant something.

I said, okay, if we're going to come up with a set of codes that we're gonna bounce everything off of, let's come up with things that we really want to live by, and that will drive a lot of our decisions and drive a lot of the things we do.

We worked for a while, but coming up with our codes and, you know, the first one, which was, show up as you. What we realized is we just hit the marketplace a lot more strong, a lot more valuable when we weren't one person during the day and a different person at night.

The funniest thing that people say is, they've seen my social content and they meet me in person. They're like, "Oh, my God, you sound like the same damn person." Good. I hope so.

You know, and then for us, our second one, which was huge, is family first. I want you to be at the kids' game. I want you to take vacation. If somebody's sick, get your ass there, and we'll figure out how to pick up the pieces. But family's home base for most people. So, when the family's not right, you're not right.

And then we did the other three, which is, you know, always be learning, go break shit, don't be a dick. A lot of 'em were written for me as a reminder of dude, this is how you need to be showing up. This is what you need to be doing. And the particular one that don't be a dick one I had to learn. I had to bring it in as an add-on after we had come up with them because I'd finding myself in situations and these other types of networking functions of people I didn't wanna be hanging out with and people that just weren't going big.

And I was getting frustrated, and my ego kept getting in the way and versus where I could actually help some of these damn people. So I had to put this in play to remind myself, dude, you were there once, you know? It's time to take a deep breath, speak to 'em in a way that they're gonna understand, and mentor 'em along.

But having this Champions Code has literally been like the out of bounds line on a football field for us, and has really guided us into a lot of things that we're doing. And

now we use it in all of our masterminds as the parameters of how the members are showing up.

We have added a question onto the end of the codes that we didn't include in the book. But the question we ask now at every meeting is where are you bullshitting yourself? That's why we added But that came from going through the codes and going, okay, how are we showing up?

And then all of a sudden where are you bullshitting yourself may end up becoming an additional code. And that's the cool thing. Everything we do is gonna evolve. There's gonna be an evolution of it. I heard Malcolm Gladwell in an interview and he said, every book he writes, it's done from a perception of how do I disprove the book before it?

And I thought that's a fascinating way to look at it. As amazing and awesome *Fucked to Focused* is and how much we're loving how far it's gone and how big it is, there will be an upgraded version of it at some point as we continue to scale and learn.

**Kelly Smith:** So the Champions Codes make me think of a vision and mission statement, but these are so much more fun. And they sound more effective. Well, because you're really committing to them.

**Donnie Boivin:** For sure. And this is why I don't use your traditional vision, mission statement, all that, because there's nothing to those. And nobody buys into those and nobody leans into 'em. They're just something that's thrown up on a board and you can go to almost every fortune 500 company in a world and say, okay, what's your company vision?

What's your company vision? What your core value? So we set out to, okay, how do we change that? How do we put this into something that people really wanna be a part of? And they're like, Ooh, you know, when you say things like, don't be a dick, they're like, okay, I can remember that one, you know?

So, they're really written for your company as a whole. You want people to think about it. I don't care if you're writing those codes for your entire team. Cause at some point you're the marketing team. Some point you're the sales team. Some point you're the finance team.

And you know, you've gotta remember how you're showing up in all those functions at all times. And eventually you may bring on teams and then when you bring on teams, you know, they need to fit this vision and these codes.

**Kelly Smith:** So let's talk about the business of your business. Y'all innovated how networking is done. I wanna hear about this. So, your company is called Success Champions.

**Donnie Boivin:** Yep. I never wanted to start networking groups. It was not a thing that I wanted to do. I had spent a good chunk of my sales career in networking of some sort or fashion. So I found networking originally when I sold commercial printing was getting my teeth kicked in and wasn't doing well, selling com commercial printing.

So I Googled other ways to sell. And I found what I thought was kind of an AA meeting for business professionals. BNI was my first style of networking, and I really learned in network and things there, but my clientele were of such a nature that, you know, we were doing 25 to 50 to a hundred thousand dollars jobs and, nothing against the BNI organization, but those people in there traditionally can't get you to that level of work or that level of introduction.

So I found the Chamber. While I sold commercial printing and the Chamber had a lot more access to the larger clientele. So I did that. Um, and at one point I ran 11 chapters for the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce here in Texas. Wow. And then. Um, when I got moved into sales training and started selling sales training, the Chamber wasn't necessarily having the high enough, you know, clientele that I could get to.

So I formed all my own networking groups. I was running 11 groups for the Chamber, six groups of my own. And all the while I wasn't making any money off of them except through referrals and introductions. So when I launched my company, I said, I'll never do networking because I don't wanna be the guy who teaches networking, cuz anybody who teaches networking, is just some broke asshole that doesn't know how to sell. And I'm not gonna be a associated with that.

I mean, think about it. Somebody's teaching networking. Go say hi to somebody, right? And collect a business card, follow up with them. There you go. You learn networking.

So what had happened was, I'd rented out a convention center to do our first Badass Business Summit and the pandemic hits. And we can't do the summits. We had speakers flying in from around the world. We'd sold out the event and now we couldn't do it. On that night, I literally looked at the team and said, guys, we're gonna be fine.

At that point, our business was completely online. We had two and a half years in and we were totally online and I said, we're gonna be fine.



The revenue's still gonna come through, but all these businesses are gonna be moving online and they're gonna have no idea how to do it. And they don't have a two and a half year runway. They got 30 days to figure this out. So like you do that night, I'm laying in bed 3:30 in the morning. I bolt the hell outta bed and went shit, scared the hell outta my wife.

She's like, what's the matter? I'm like, sorry, babe. Just got a business idea, and she's like, "Well, write that shit down and roll over would you?" And that morning I'm sitting over a cup of coffee with her and telling her I'm like, babe, I'm gonna launch networking groups, but I don't want to do it.

And she's like, "Why not?" And I said, I just don't wanna be the guy who's associated with networking cuz I can sell. I mean, I've sold hundreds of millions of dollars and I don't want be associated with that. And she looked at me and I'll just say it the way she did. She goes, "You realize you're a fucking idiot."

Right? I'm like, how am I a fucking idiot? She goes, "Why don't you become the guy who changes how the world networks and fix everything that people hate about networking." And I went...

**Kelly Smith:** Your wife is kinda a brilliant!

**Donnie Boivin:** Oh, now one of the next books coming out is *The Shit That My Wife Said That Actually Changed My Life*.

Um, and that's a real one.

**Kelly Smith:** And that is the title, right?

**Donnie Boivin:** Yeah because there's a series of these things, like get off your ass and go sell something, you know, in the likes that she said at key pivotal moments. I'm like, don't worry, babe. At some point, I'm gonna put your ass up on stage.

She's like, "Oh no."

**Kelly Smith:** We'll get her there. Well, let me know when that book is out, then I'll buy it.

**Donnie Boivin:** I will. No, everybody loves that, you know? But it's all true, but at that moment, when she said that seven days later, we launched our first chapter. And then within 10 days, I think altogether, we had launched five chapters.

And we literally just fixed what most people hate about networking. And, you know, we did things like, okay, no multi-level marketing or network marketers. We did things where all of our meetings were virtual and built for virtual. I mean, nobody wants to sit around and listen to 30-, 60-second commercials for 35, 40 minutes, and then somebody drum on and do a horrible presentation that nobody gives a shit about.

And then they fabricate a whole bunch of referrals. So we brought a lot of training and education into it. You have access to the entire SCN network, so you're not just networking with your chapter. You can go network with all the other chapters. We have online training where we bring all the chapters together. Private communities.

And then we do hub events where we do combined events in areas. We have multiple chapters and it leads up to the Badass Business Summit. So, um, and I don't know how you measure it, but people keep telling us we're the fastest growing organization on the planet. I mean, we've got 55 chapters across the U.S. [...] in Canada.

We're working on six other countries. And you know, it all stems from we wanted to change how the world networks, and people leaned in quickly and said, "Okay, let's do just that." Some days I feel like I'm riding a lightning bolt. It's a lot of fun.

**Kelly Smith:** Well, and so do you love it because you said you didn't wanna do it at first.

**Donnie Boivin:** Well, the quick answer is yes. And I think the answer is yes, because I built it for me. I'm like, what would I actually show up to? What would I actually attend? What would I do? And you know, another thing that I think has been a key contributing factor is we don't talk about referrals because referrals lead to a singular transaction, right, leads to, if I can get you to, and most times people very rarely, like, if you do websites for a living, like that's your company, very rarely do people run into other people who are looking for website work, you know. Now flip that, there are people that know that their clients are fixing to need website work and redo some things.

Now, if you figure out those people and you start getting introduced to those people, you can open up a ton of work coming in. So we flip the entire idea of quit looking for referrals and start looking for introductions. Cause if I can get you to the right person, that will open up a shit-ton of doors. There may be a ton of referrals and additional business down there, but it's a lifetime relationship.

It's not a one-off, you know, let's get this transaction done. And that philosophy shifted for so many people and people usually will see it now. They attend one of our chapters. They're like, "Holy shit, my schedule's full." I'm like, yeah, they're gonna open the world

up for you very, very, very quickly. Cause we know making introductions is the fastest way to grow your business.

**Kelly Smith:** That's great. And you're right. It's about relationships. 100%. Not this one-off thing.

**Donnie Boivin:** Part of Success Champions Networking, everybody knows that the group is not your fucking prospecting list.

You go to all these other meetings and all these other organizations and people have got their damn hand out. They're like, "What are you gonna do for me?" You know? Or you'll hear people say, "I haven't gotten any referrals." Or you'll hear people say, like, "I haven't gotten any ROI out of this thing."

And it's a hundred percent of, cool, what doors have you opened for other people? I mean, how have you invested in others and you know, we're a pretty easy thing to qualify for and, and to disqualify yourself. Like if you walk up to our organization and you're like, "Okay, what do I get out of this?"

Cool. It's not for you because, with that mindset, you're never gonna, like, we had one guy tell us, he goes, "Why the hell would I introduce my clients and contacts to anybody? They're mine." I'm like, ah, self-qualified, brother. We are not a fit for you, my friend. You know, I mean, all those things come from a desperation mindset.

And when people are desperate, they can't pour into others. And winning comes from pouring.

**Kelly Smith:** That's not who you wanna work with at all or have around you.

**Donnie Boivin:** For sure. But if you keep upping the caliber of who you work with, what you do, the right people keep showing up. And you know, for me at the end of the day, if you just get a bunch of badasses, like legit badasses that will invest in others, good shit happens.

**Kelly Smith:** absolutely. So how can people find you to work with you or apply for one of your chapters?

**Donnie Boivin:** So the easiest place to go is to go to Donnie Boivin dot com okay. So DONNIE BOIVIN dot com. You can find all the things that we do there, from the Badass Business Summit to Success Champion Networking to the podcast, the books. That'll get you all the places.

Or you can text the word SUCCESS to 817-318-6030. And we'll send you an email with all the links to all the stuff as well. We try and keep it as simple as possible. But follow me anywhere on social media and inevitably I'll say it, or one of our links will be there. So I'm active damned near on everything.

And it's actually me doing the content. So people always ask me, you know, it's actually me producing and creating and posting and interacting against the content.

**Kelly Smith:** Wonderful. That's great. Well, I will put the link to the website in the show notes and on this episode's page on my website. And I will also put that number to text to in the show notes and on this episode page on my website.

**Donnie Boivin:** Beautiful. Beautiful. Totally easy. Let me do one quick favor before we wrap this thing up for the next yes. So guys, if you got any tips, tricks, any value out of this episode, something that you can apply to your business, do Kelly the greatest favor and share this episode out with one person. I can tell you, having your own podcast, it's a lot of work to continually produce content, find the guest, promote the show, and get the content out there.

Do her the greatest favor and share it with one person. It's literally like you walked up and gave her a virtual hug. It'll mean everything to her. So help her out.

**Kelly Smith:** Thank you so much for that.

Yes, it would be like a virtual hug. I love that. Thank you so much, Donnie!

**Donnie Boivin:** You're very welcome, dear.

**Kelly Smith:** And one last question. We didn't talk about this beforehand. You are in the Fort Worth region. I am originally from Houston, Texas.

**Donnie Boivin:** Oh, look at you, fellow Texan. There you go. My goodness.

**Kelly Smith:** I live in Pittsburgh now.

**Donnie Boivin:** Oh, I didn't know. People actually lived in Pittsburgh. No, I'm kidding. I'm kidding.

**Kelly Smith:** Yeah. You know, you can take the girl out of Texas, but.... Well, thank you so much. This has just been so much fun. I love your story. I love your book. Y'all buy Donnie's book. Do you want them to buy it from your website?

**Donnie Boivin:** Yeah, go. I mean, even on the website, it's gonna take you straight to Amazon, so.

**Kelly Smith:** All right. Then I'll put a link directly to the Amazon page as well.

**Donnie Boivin:** Thank you. Thank you. Great. You know, last funny offer. If anybody thinks an hour of my time would be valuable. If you'll go to Amazon and buy 10 books and you email me a receipt at [donnie@donniebovie.com](mailto:donnie@donniebovie.com), which will cost you \$40, I'll send you my calendar link and I'll take sit down with you for an hour and help you work on your business.

**Kelly Smith:** That is awesome. Oh my God. Y'all should do that. Buy 10. Give them to friends. Give 'em to your clients. Give them to colleagues. What a gift. This would make an excellent gift for clients, you know?

You give them, you give them things from Christmas, don't you, or you give them out in a client welcome basket, or, you know, gift bag, whatever.

**Donnie Boivin:** And trust me when they see the cover and they read the title, they're gonna giggle and laugh right along with you.

**Kelly Smith:** Yes, they will. That is a great idea. Thank you for that Donnie.

**Donnie Boivin:** You're welcome.

**Kelly Smith:** Fabulous. All right. Well, thank y'all for being here today. I really appreciate your listening. You can leave comments on this episode's page on the website, link in the show notes. I'd love it if you would rate and leave a positive review. And I'll be back in just a few days. So see you next time on the Marketing Chat Podcast.

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[“F\\*cked to Focused: Taking Your Business From Growth Mode To Ultimate Scale” on Amazon](#)

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