

Speaker 1 ([00:06](#)):

Welcome to the Online Business Launchpad Podcast. We're gonna be helping guide you step by step through the process of growing your business online, and we're gonna be giving you tips and techniques that are going to help you break through the barriers that can stop you making progress in your business.

Trudy Rankin ([00:23](#)):

Welcome everyone to the Online Business Launchpad Podcast. In today's conversation is with Brenda Thompson, and Brenda is a founder of Synergy48 and bb4g.co or in other words, the Better Business for Good Company. Now, Brenda had a background in corporate in the organizational development space and she loved her job, until almost overnight everything changed and suddenly it was the last place she wanted to be.

Trudy Rankin ([00:49](#)):

And Brenda tells an amazing story of how she builds on every seeming setback to build not one but two businesses and to bring a lot of value to businesses, not just here in Australia, but in developing countries as well. So, join me in welcoming Brenda to the podcast. Welcome to the Online Business Launchpad podcast, and-

Brenda Thompson ([01:10](#)):

Thank you for having me.

Trudy Rankin ([01:12](#)):

I just want to say thank you for being willing to be interviewed and to be honest, I'm really looking forward to today's conversation.

Brenda Thompson ([01:19](#)):

I'm excited too. I haven't done a podcast interview for a while, so, so I'm really looking forward to it as well.

Trudy Rankin ([01:24](#)):

(laughs) Well, that's good, that's good. So you know, you and I have, have chatted a little bit over the last little while, but I'd like you to just introduce yourself to our listeners. Just tell them who you are, tell them a little bit about your background.

Brenda Thompson ([01:37](#)):

Okay. So, my name is Brenda Thompson and I can see the cash. (laughs) And a little bit about my background. So I've had multiple career changes. So, I guess my first career was as a public servant for 25 years. I worked for the Department of Defense and then the tax office. And when I worked for the tax office, I had nothing to do with tax returns. I was in the, the HR department. So I was, I progressed through from being a training officer through to being an HR adviser in a tax office in Melbourne.

Brenda Thompson ([02:12](#)):

And the whole of that time of my career was about doing people skills training. Everything from selection training to leadership training, facilitate you train the trainer, all of those people skills training.

And it was during a time when the tax office actually cared about people. (laughs) I think, I don't know if it does anymore, but during that time there was a total focus on people are our most valued resource, and I had the best 20 odd years imaginable.

Brenda Thompson ([02:41](#)):

I would have gone to work at any time during that time without being paid. I just felt so much like I was part of an amazing team doing amazing things, and I would have kept doing that for a long time. And then my, well my son is now 30 he was four, so we're talking 26 years ago now. He was, well he would have been five. So, at the end of his prep year, he, still couldn't read his name and he was diagnosed as a gifted child with a learning disability.

Brenda Thompson ([03:14](#)):

And I went, what the heck do we do about that? And nobody seemed to have any answers. And it was exactly the same time that the commissioner for taxation changed to a different person and all of a sudden everything was backed up, bottom dollar and we don't need all that training stuff, and we don't need all that people's stuff and we don't need all that leadership stuff gone.

Brenda Thompson ([03:34](#)):

And I went, I cannot work in this environment. I've never been so unhappy in my life. And here I am with this child who desperately needs my help. And I have a psych degree. It was an organizational psych, but I thought it's a psych degree. I couldn't transfer that. And I went back to uni, and did a an honors year in, in written educational psych and reading disabilities. And then I actually went on and started a PhD on researching dyslexia. (laughs)

Brenda Thompson ([03:58](#)):

So, so that was, that was such, took me from career one to career two, which was doing the PhD and researching children with dyslexia and, but PhDs don't earn you any money. And we had two children in private schools and a massive, great mortgages. I don't know how, you know, sort of like I no longer find any of that important. But then it was kinda like this, you know, where's the big house? Where's the massive mortgages? All the private school stuff. And then my husband lost his extremely well paid job.

Trudy Rankin ([04:26](#)):

Ouch.

Brenda Thompson ([04:28](#)):

Ouch. And he's a programmer analyst and we went, oh, we need to get like, we'll, we'll start, we'll start a business. So we bought, we bought a web development franchise. (laughs) The learning from buying a web development franchise was enormous because Colin is the tech person. Theoretically, I'm the people person. I am, I'm totally a people person. So onto me fell the role of marketing, and I tell you what, I am not a marketing person. (laughs)

Brenda Thompson ([05:01](#)):

So, the PhD went out the door and we started to build this franchise, which turned into a complete catastrophe and cost us a lot of money. But during the process of that, we actually, it was actually a

Canadian franchise and we went to Canada in February to do all of our training, which was amazing seeing a frozen Niagara Falls.

Brenda Thompson ([05:21](#)):

But during that training, this topic of networking came up, and we actually had a whole day's training on how to network effectively. And how to deliver your perfect elevator pitch. Now to me networking, having come from, first of all, the public service and then the world of academia, networking was about building really strong professional connections. It was not about selling stuff. (laugh)

Trudy Rankin ([05:47](#)):

Yes, yes, yes. A lot of people feel like that.

Brenda Thompson ([05:51](#)):

Oh, it was awful. So anyway, I came back and tried to do that, and as I said, this franchise failed dismally, but in the process of having to do this networking that I absolutely hated, I realized that there was something that was intuitively wrong in my head about how and why I was doing it and, and the results it was having. And we actually, as part of showing what a wonderful web development company we were. And this was in the days before meetup when it was really, really difficult to find, in, an all the mess where the networking groups were. So we set up an online directory of networking groups.

Trudy Rankin ([06:31](#)):

Oh, okay. Yes. Taste of my beer.

Brenda Thompson ([06:34](#)):

And, and, and it grew like mad, but networking groups don't have any money to spend on advertising. So it was kind of like a, not a very profitable model. And I'm not very good at creating profitable online businesses. I'll leave that to you. (laughs) But in the process of that, I had all these people going saying to me, well now I can find all these networking groups, but it's still not working for me. Can you help?

Brenda Thompson ([06:53](#)):

And that was when I had this kind of like realization that we were networking for the wrong objectives by networking for clients, which brought me out of this elevator pitch, I call it having a yellow pages adverts stuck on your forehead.

Trudy Rankin ([07:06](#)):

Yes, I liked that. I liked that analogy.

Brenda Thompson ([07:08](#)):

Yeah, yeah. Then I actually started to, to sort of look at training around networking and what worked and what didn't, particularly for introverts.

Trudy Rankin ([07:16](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([07:16](#)):

Because let's face it, if you're a outspoken salesy extrovert type networking works real fine, but it doesn't work so well for the huge number of us who were introverts and the kind of more likely to sit in the corner and go, can I just talk to the one person I know please? (laughing) So, so, so looking at all of that and look, and looking at what worked and what didn't, and this aha moment that we needed to change our perspective on why we network and how we network.

Brenda Thompson ([07:44](#)):

Because if I was to ask, and I've, I've done this on a number of occasions, 'cause I've now done lots of speaking on networking, and I'll ask the room, you know, sort of who's here because they'd like to get some more clients. So you know, you see all the, all the hands go up, and then I'll say, well, who's here because they really like to be sold something tonight.

Trudy Rankin ([08:01](#)):

(laughs) No hands go up.

Brenda Thompson ([08:03](#)):

No hands go up. And I said, well that's a bit of a problem, isn't it? Because if everybody's here because they'd like to find somebody to buy something and nobody's here because they want to be sold something. Where's the win or the win-win or anything else?

Brenda Thompson ([08:17](#)):

And then I came up with this story that I'm sure it, it in actual fact didn't happen. But I absolutely know that the outcome of this story is true. Imagine for a moment that Walt Disney had met Ray Kroc at a networking event. (laughs)

Trudy Rankin ([08:33](#)):

The mind boggles.

Brenda Thompson ([08:34](#)):

The mind boggles. But what I'm damn sure wouldn't have happened is they wouldn't have gone, hey, Walt look, what do you want to buy my burgers? We've met at a networking event, I can sell you some burgers at a discount price and vice versa. But what actually did happen, not between those two men, I'm sure, but between, I imagine their marketing teams was, and I mean I'm sort of in my 60s so this was a lot when my kids were little, they had all the, all of the happy meals, had the figurines from the movies that were on those school holidays. And you went to the movie at the school holidays and you got the voucher to go back to McDonald's. And the cycle went on.

Brenda Thompson ([09:07](#)):

And that strategic partnership literally generated millions and millions and millions of dollars worth of income for those two companies. So, I tell that story and then what I say is, well that doesn't just have to be about big businesses like Disney or McDonald's. If you approach every networking event you go to or every networking conversation on LinkedIn or wherever you're networking from the perspective of how can we work together to create a win-win. Then everything follows from that.

Brenda Thompson ([09:39](#)):

And then all you need to worry about is not whether they're in the market for your products or services. Because I reckon I used to get, I used to go latte colored with all of the coffee meetings that I had, you know, that went absolutely nowhere until I flipped that around. And then I would be going, okay, so does this person share my target market? Does this person share my values? Because if they share both of those things, then we can sit down and have a really constructive conversation about how we can achieve both our goals moving forward.

Brenda Thompson ([10:08](#)):

And that's basically the start of the Synergy48 Group story, because Synergy48 Group is a collective of really smart business owners who share the same values and the same target market. So, that's one of my two current businesses. And that totally grew from that idea. And it's amazing how much those that team of people are doing together and the amount they're able to better support their clients because they are there for their clients, this is collective of amazing people that they know and I can trust, who have gone way beyond somebody that happened to casually meet at a networking event or on LinkedIn to being this really solid collective of high quality people who share the same ideal clients.

Trudy Rankin ([10:52](#)):

I, I think that's, that's pretty powerful. Um, I, I'm, I'm smiling a little bit to myself because I have a friend who, who says that his entire job consists of having coffee meetings. That's all he does all day. And it's all about developing relationships, maintaining relationships.

Brenda Thompson ([11:07](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([11:08](#)):

And, and keeping them strong. And, and I really love that concept of, of collaboration. You know, we, we teach our online business liftoff students or participants that when you do your keyword research and go out there and look to see you, you know what your competition is.

Brenda Thompson ([11:23](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([11:24](#)):

You go out there and you look at them and you, and we've tried to flip their thinking around to say they're not your competition, they're future potential collaborators.

Brenda Thompson ([11:33](#)):

Yes.

Trudy Rankin ([11:33](#)):

That's powerful.

Brenda Thompson ([11:34](#)):

Yeah. It's amazing. Even when you're in the same space, how you can find ways to work together, particularly because even in the same space, your niches are often different-

Trudy Rankin ([11:44](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([11:45](#)):

...and then you can really hone in on, because I sort of think of it, if you think of it as a, as a magnifying glass with the sun shining through it, if you hone that in on one tiny spot, you can create a fire.

Trudy Rankin ([11:59](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([11:59](#)):

And way too many new businesses go, aha, who's your target market? Everybody. (laughs)

Trudy Rankin ([12:05](#)):

That's one of the things that I had to learn the hard way. You know, you start out thinking, well, what can I, who can I help? What can I do to help them?

Brenda Thompson ([12:11](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([12:11](#)):

Or I can help everybody do everything?

Brenda Thompson ([12:13](#)):

Yeah. Yeah, everybody.

Trudy Rankin ([12:15](#)):

And it's, it's, it's maybe it's a form of arrogance, maybe not, uh, I think it's really just a mark of a new person really. But you know, there's that saying, you know, if you try to help everybody, you help nobody.

Brenda Thompson ([12:25](#)):

Nobody. Yes.

Trudy Rankin ([12:26](#)):

Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([12:26](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. So, and that's my other business, which is the Better Business for Good Company, which is the social enterprise, has actually evolved from that collective, that collaboration of, of high quality SME businesses. Because what they did was they put together a whole list of the things that they saw successful businesses is doing then less successful businesses didn't do in their areas of expertise.

Brenda Thompson ([12:51](#)):

And they put, which is really, really, really, really big long list. By the time it was 39 checklists with something like 207, it's actually 272 items within those checklists. And we actually, over the course of around a year, we managed to get 101 businesses to actually complete the whole thing, (laughs) 'cause I mean that was a pretty big ask, as a, as a one questionnaire sent out on survey monkey. But what we found was this amazing correlation with between how many of those checklist items they'd done and how profitable they were.

Brenda Thompson ([13:22](#)):

So, we've now turned that into an online app, like a, of cool little colorful tool, a business can use to analyze, to see where their strengths and weaknesses are and put in a place in, in place a plan to improve. And it's kind of fun and engaging and interactive. And it's a social enterprise. So, a 100% of the profits, uh, go to helping create, helping provide micro loans to people in developing countries and to help launch indigenous businesses in Australia.

Brenda Thompson ([13:51](#)):

So I'm really, that's my, like my legacy project now and that's totally come from that story of how we actually managed to put together this amazing group of people from the original concept of collaboration is best.

Trudy Rankin ([14:04](#)):

Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([14:04](#)):

And that's why the names, that's why that one's called, that business is called Synergy, because it's, it really is. That's, so that's my story. (laughs)

Trudy Rankin ([14:13](#)):

That's an amazing story. I, there's a ton of things in there that we could sort of dig into-

Brenda Thompson ([14:17](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([14:18](#)):

...but I just find it really fascinating. Just the whole concept of doing research, asking your customers questions, and then using the data that comes back to be able to then give them something that's a value and that they need. I think that's very powerful. That's one of the things we also try to teach our, our participants in the online business program-

Brenda Thompson ([14:37](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([14:38](#)):

...but not very many businesses do that.

Brenda Thompson ([14:42](#)):

No, no, they don't. I think that, that in many ways they're kind of too scared to do it.

Trudy Rankin ([14:47](#)):

But why do you think that is? What is it because people are afraid of, of the number side of things or what? What is it?

Brenda Thompson ([14:53](#)):

I don't know if, I, I don't know even if it's that they're afraid of that, if they're even afraid of the numbers side of things or if they're not afraid of, of failure, rejection, negative feedback. One of the things that we do in Synergy48 is we, it's a requirement that all of our members survey all of their clients from the last 12 months, and they have to get a good enough score to be accepted for membership.

Brenda Thompson ([15:17](#)):

And I am going to have amazing businesses, but the amount of trepidation with which they approach doing that for the first time is just incredible and yet customer feedback and it's, it's incredibly a, it's, I mean, if you get good feedback and often you will, and if you don't, then you need to fix something. It's fantastic for testimonials and Google reviews and all of those kinds of things.

Brenda Thompson ([15:41](#)):

If you need to fix something, you needed to fix it, didn't you? You know, where were you going to go if you didn't fix it? It's fantastic for doing customer research, for actually going, okay, new products or services. It's brilliant, absolutely brilliant for getting your customer's words in order to be able to improve your marketing in your sales processes.

Trudy Rankin ([16:00](#)):

Yes, it is.

Brenda Thompson ([16:01](#)):

Just all of those things. So, but I think it's, and I haven't noticed, I guess we're probably sort of fairly even between male and female, and I sometimes wonder whether, whether there are some gender differentials between men and women in terms of doing these things. And, but I haven't noticed that there's a difference, particularly between how many of my members do it regularly and consistently and easily. There's not agenda difference there I don't think.

Brenda Thompson ([16:25](#)):

But I think, yeah. So, I wonder whether sometimes it's fear of failure. Sometimes it's ego sometimes, 'cause I don't know that it's about numbers because it's not really, it's really far more qualitative than quantitative-

Trudy Rankin ([16:41](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([16:43](#)):

...or it should be, it's more valuable.

Trudy Rankin ([16:45](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([16:45](#)):

That kind of feedback is more valuable qualitative because it's often, it's the languaging that really informs your marketing collateral in your sales processes.

Trudy Rankin ([16:56](#)):

So, so is it, I'm just thinking out loud here, you know?

Brenda Thompson ([16:59](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([17:00](#)):

Maybe, maybe part of the problem is, is that people might look at that and maybe, maybe it isn't even something as simple as fear of failure or, or, or you go, maybe it's the fact that they look at that information and they don't know what to do with it.

Brenda Thompson ([17:15](#)):

That's possible. Yes. Yep. And this is not a fairly failure or ego, but when you've invested so much of your heart and soul into something-

Trudy Rankin ([17:24](#)):

Uh, yes.

Brenda Thompson ([17:25](#)):

...to have it rejected-

Trudy Rankin ([17:27](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([17:28](#)):

...or criticized-

Trudy Rankin ([17:29](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenda Thompson ([17:29](#)):

...is heartbreaking.

Trudy Rankin ([17:31](#)):

It's hard to take.

Brenda Thompson ([17:33](#)):

It's extremely hard to take.

Trudy Rankin ([17:35](#)):

Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([17:36](#)):

And I wonder whether that's it.

Trudy Rankin ([17:37](#)):

And I suspect that you're right, and it's probably a combination of all of those things, but it's so important, it's so important to be able to take that information and use it as a way of improving, iteratively improving-

Brenda Thompson ([17:50](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([17:50](#)):

...what you offer to people.

Brenda Thompson ([17:51](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([17:51](#)):

I think it's so important.

Brenda Thompson ([17:52](#)):

Yeah. We've just gone through that process with the early adopters of the, of the Better Business for Good thing. And we've actually made some fairly significant changes to the way people can access the second stage of it, because the first stage was overwhelming. So we've kind of, yeah, which has come from feedback.

Trudy Rankin ([18:09](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenda Thompson ([18:09](#)):

You know, and we went, aha, but we didn't want to do that, but, oh no, hang on, if they're not going to use it because we didn't want to do that, then get over yourself and fix it. (laughing)

Trudy Rankin ([18:20](#)):

Yes, exactly, exactly. I'd like to just dig into, you know, this, this second business that you have. You mentioned that it's your, it's the thing that you'd like to leave as your legacy.

Brenda Thompson ([18:30](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([18:30](#)):

What made you choose that, and what made you choose the, I guess the, the give part of it. What made you choose the people that you help with the proceeds from that business?

Brenda Thompson ([18:43](#)):

Mainly, I chose that because I've been doing giving as part of my business model for a long time-

Trudy Rankin ([18:51](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenda Thompson ([18:51](#)):

...probably 10 years. And what's always seemed to me really important when you, you do that is obviously it needs to be important to you, but it needs to make sense to your stakeholders, your clients. It needs to have a logical connection. Like if I was an optometrist, then I would probably do a different, I would probably do something like helping people get their eyes fixed.

Brenda Thompson ([19:18](#)):

I chose what I've chosen because I'm in the business improvement space, and the helping small businesses space, and it makes, it makes logical sense, but it also sits really well with my values because it's about giving a hand up, not a handout.

Trudy Rankin ([19:34](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([19:35](#)):

So, I think it has to be congruent to your values and congruent to your stakeholders, clients, teams, all of those people's values. And I think if you can't, if it can't be congruent to, to both, that probably says there may not be a good fit between you and what you're trying to do.

Trudy Rankin ([19:50](#)):

Yeah. Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([19:52](#)):

That's really, and that's a big, yeah, that's a really big, like, whoa, really? Oh, it might not feel really good about that. Yeah. If you're really heavily invested in something, that may be what it's, because people do things sometimes for not the best possible reason-

Trudy Rankin ([20:05](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([20:06](#)):

...because they're trying to solve the wrong problem. (laugh)

Trudy Rankin ([20:10](#)):

Yeah. And they might legitimately be trying to solve that problem, but if it is the wrong problem and there's no integration-

Brenda Thompson ([20:16](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([20:17](#)):

...here is pretty [crosstalk 00:20:17]

Brenda Thompson ([20:17](#)):

It really ensures that your values are really aligned.

Trudy Rankin ([20:23](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenda Thompson ([20:23](#)):

And that was, that was kind of really big, really, really critical thing for me because what motivates me, and it's, it's, it's really when I get up out of bed in the morning, or I go to bed at night, I've had the best days, or I'm looking forward to the best. In fact, it's more not for me, you know, how they talk about, you know, when you get out of bed in the morning, you're excited, because for me, it's that when I jumped out of bed in the morning, if I'm excited, it's because I've just had another new process idea that I madly want to go and write down.

Brenda Thompson ([20:51](#)):

But that's not what sends me to bed excited at night. What sends me to bed excited tonight or at night or possibly what stops me sleeping is when I've made a real difference for somebody.

Trudy Rankin ([21:00](#)):

Yes, yes. And it's palpable.

Brenda Thompson ([21:03](#)):

And it's palpable, and they've, I've, you know, I've sat on the phone or I've sat in a Zoom call or I've delivered something and it's been like game-changing.

Trudy Rankin ([21:12](#)):

Yes, yes, yes, yes, absolutely. That's so resonates with me because that's how I am.

Brenda Thompson ([21:17](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([21:17](#)):

And that is so much how I am. Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([21:20](#)):

Yeah. And taking it a step up from that and this has happened to me in everything I've ever done, this to me, in for me and how I work, there's two steps to that. You start with game-changing at an individual level. Like I started off being a training off... you know, first career, I was a training officer. So, it was game-changing to the people in that training room.

Trudy Rankin ([21:40](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenda Thompson ([21:41](#)):

And then I went, I, I reached a point where I went that's not enough, and that's what I started looking for promotions so that I could be game-changing at an organizational level.

Trudy Rankin ([21:51](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([21:51](#)):

I was part of the process that put into place career development resource centers and tax offices, I'm part of process that did the childcare yet putting in bigger things. And then when I was doing my PhD on reading difficulties, I was teaching individual children for a while as part of, you know, that was my only income was teaching individual children.

Brenda Thompson ([22:15](#)):

And then I sort of went, hang on a sec, there has to be something bigger than this. So, you know, so then I really started going, okay, well now clearly I need, well that was when I started the PhD as opposed to just the teaching was, yeah, I've I've got to make a bigger difference. There's gotta be a bigger scale.

Trudy Rankin ([22:30](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenda Thompson ([22:32](#)):

And then when I started to do the business stuff, you know, the, the networking stuff, it was kinda like, and then moving into it, 'cause I do not, I am not, and I do not want to be a business coach, but I kind of found myself in this semi-business coaching role where I didn't want to be, and I was going not, that's just, that's there. And yeah, that's nice for some people, but that's not me. Where's the bigger difference? Where's the thing that can apply on a large scale? And that's kind of me. (laughs)

Trudy Rankin ([22:59](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. So just, just basically, yeah, you start with something-

Brenda Thompson ([23:03](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([23:03](#)):

...you figure that out and then you need, there's gotta be more-

Brenda Thompson ([23:07](#)):

Yes.

Trudy Rankin ([23:07](#)):

...there's got to be a way to impact on more people, more people, more people.

Brenda Thompson ([23:11](#)):

Yes.

Trudy Rankin ([23:11](#)):

I think, I think that's a progression that a lot of entrepreneurs and business owners go through is, is they kind of reached the limits of what they can do with what they have and then it's time to look more widely.

Brenda Thompson ([23:21](#)):

Yes, yes.

Trudy Rankin ([23:21](#)):

I think that's, that's uh, it's pretty, pretty necessary. So coming back to your first business, your Synergy48 business-

Brenda Thompson ([23:30](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([23:30](#)):

...what do you think is the biggest challenge that your clients have, or that the people that are in your groups have?

Brenda Thompson ([23:38](#)):

Probably finding, and, and this may be, this may be a process problem on my part, but probably finding the best ways to work together to add value to their clients. It's quite easy to fall, 'cause we have, we run a, we have a meeting every month and it's a really effective mastermind process.

Trudy Rankin ([23:58](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenda Thompson ([23:59](#)):

So they get, get and give a lot, because they're all really top notch. It's like, you know, it's like a board of advisors every month. So they're really good at that and referrals fly because clearly when you're working, but I think perhaps I've injected the sense that possible, it's possible to do more. So I focused a lot of energy into 'cause that's really where the whole Better Business for Good thing came from. That's me trying to give them an X another step as in it's possible to do more. But some of the feedback that I

get is they'd like to find more opportunities to do more to actually help their shared clients or should, yeah. So that's, that's, I guess that spring to mind, 'cause I've had two members tell me that in the last two weeks, because I do go talk to them about what's bothering them. (laughs)

Trudy Rankin ([24:40](#)):

Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([24:40](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([24:45](#)):

That's kind of, that's kind of interesting isn't it? Because, I mean obviously you're following your own process of doing the research, asking people what the challenges are and stuff, but it's almost, it's almost just listening to what you have to say, is almost as though it's a, what's the process for having two people actually somehow either share research or conduct research that that's integrated, that helps extract the, the answers to those questions about how can we help more-

Brenda Thompson ([25:11](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([25:11](#)):

...in, in inter-related way-

Brenda Thompson ([25:13](#)):

Yes.

Trudy Rankin ([25:13](#)):

...as opposed to two separate sort of ships in the night-

Brenda Thompson ([25:16](#)):

Yes.

Trudy Rankin ([25:16](#)):

...that they're sort of service same customers-

Brenda Thompson ([25:18](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([25:18](#)):

...but not in a, not in a way that synergistic, that's the word I'm looking for.

Brenda Thompson ([25:21](#)):

Yes, yeah. Absolutely. And I think what happens is we all get so caught up in running our own business that's, and let's face it, business is not easy and it's doesn't get easier. Like it, it doesn't get any easier, I

mean like it doesn't get any easier that fast really. (laughs) And so you get totally caught up in, in my goal, I got to get the work done, I've got to bring the revenue in, I've got to try and grow this thing. So it's no longer all just about weighing on my shoulders, and when I'm working with a client, I'm working with a client about me, and I don't have time to talk to them about somebody else.

Trudy Rankin ([26:01](#)):

Yes, yes, yes. And how to break out of that, that paradigm-

Brenda Thompson ([26:07](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([26:07](#)):

...and create the space-

Brenda Thompson ([26:12](#)):

Yes.

Trudy Rankin ([26:12](#)):

...and almost giving yourself permission to create that space to do that.

Brenda Thompson ([26:13](#)):

Yes. Yeah, 'cause I have some of them do that absolutely brilliantly, absolutely brilliantly. And I think when, when you do, you're adding so much value to your clients, because that whole extra dimension you're in effect giving your clients access to just to a board of advice. (laughs)

Trudy Rankin ([26:27](#)):

Yes. And that's pretty powerful.

Brenda Thompson ([26:30](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([26:30](#)):

I mean, you know it certainly when I was first starting out in business, you know, you don't know what you don't know.

Brenda Thompson ([26:35](#)):

Oh.

Trudy Rankin ([26:35](#)):

And just having the ability to talk to somebody and ask them questions about what to think about, what to expect, what to, what to make yourself learn.

Brenda Thompson ([26:44](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([26:44](#)):

That's pretty powerful, having that, that's, it's really powerful.

Brenda Thompson ([26:48](#)):

Yes. Yeah. I was talking to somebody yesterday about exactly that and we were saying how many thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars both of us had wasted stuffing things up at the start.

Trudy Rankin ([26:59](#)):

Yes, yes, I can put my hand up for that. Definitely.

Brenda Thompson ([27:03](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. Particularly when you probably, and I mean I think that your clients are really lucky because they've got you and a whole team of experts, but for an awful, I mean I theoretically had a franchise group initially, but [inaudible 00:27:15] (laughs) but for, but for an awful, awful lot of new small business owners, they venture out into that network of, of their peers, often most of whom are in the same space as they are. Well, either they give well meaning advice, some of which is totally inappropriate and wrong. I use Facebook, you got to use Facebook.

Trudy Rankin ([27:33](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([27:34](#)):

Well, maybe you shouldn't. So I had this, the well-meaning advice, but be this that same network of people are all struggling to get their own businesses off the ground and they've got their yellow pages that stuck firmly on their forehead. So, not only are they going to say, if they happen to be the person selling Facebook advertising, not only are they going to say, yeah, you should do Facebook advertising. They're going to desperately try to sell you Facebook advertising, whether it was the right thing for you to do or not.

Brenda Thompson ([27:57](#)):

Not because, you know, because they'll believe in their heart of hearts, I'm not saying that they're horrible and unethical, but when you're relatively new in business and you haven't yet figured out that your solution is not for everybody, and we come back to that, my solution is for everybody, you truly believe you're helping.

Trudy Rankin ([28:13](#)):

Yes, yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([28:14](#)):

And you're so sometimes not.

Trudy Rankin ([28:16](#)):

(laughs) And that's, it's hard to accept that, that that can be the case. 'Cause I think most people are pretty decent, and they want to help other people.

Brenda Thompson ([28:24](#)):

Yeah, exactly. Yes. I wouldn't want to be casting the message for a moment that I thought it was from a, you know, I mean there was, there's some not, yeah, there are a few nasty people in the world-

Trudy Rankin ([28:31](#)):

Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([28:31](#)):

...but most business owners aren't. Most people who have gone into business are doing it because they actually genuinely want to make a difference in some way.

Trudy Rankin ([28:39](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([28:39](#)):

Well, I believe that-

Trudy Rankin ([28:39](#)):

Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([28:41](#)):

...but when they've still got that, my solution can help everybody mindset and they're desperately trying, let's face it, when you're new in business, quite often you're underfunded-

Trudy Rankin ([28:51](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([28:51](#)):

...and quite often you're desperately going, I have got to make some sales and I have got to make a quit. So those two things together, this belief that yes you can help this other person and this, oh my God, I got to make the sale.

Trudy Rankin ([29:05](#)):

Collision course.

Brenda Thompson ([29:06](#)):

Yeah. It is, yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([29:08](#)):

Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([29:09](#)):

And for the naive person on the end of it. (laughing)

Trudy Rankin ([29:13](#)):

Well yeah, 'cause they, cause like I said, if you don't, you don't know what you don't know-

Brenda Thompson ([29:16](#)):

No, no.

Trudy Rankin ([29:16](#)):

...um, and it can be, it can be really, really, really tricky. And I think sort of given, given the times that we're in at the moment, you know, what would you say is the biggest challenge that people are facing in this unusual time?

Brenda Thompson ([29:31](#)):

Oh, that is so going to vary from business to business. Like I have some of my clients who are businesses booming.

Trudy Rankin ([29:39](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenda Thompson ([29:40](#)):

You know, like the tech company.

Trudy Rankin ([29:41](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([29:42](#)):

You know, moving everybody's computers to home and sorting out all of that stuff. Then there's all those poor people in hospitality and all of those businesses, the solutions are not, yeah, the problems are not the same and the solutions are not the same. It's, it's very much about being specific and, and everybody's saying pivot and kind of go, oh. (laughs)

Brenda Thompson ([30:06](#)):

Sometimes how the heck do you pivot when in fact I heard somebody saying, I got told to pivot, and but I haven't got enough, you know, like if I'm going to suddenly take my restaurant and set it up as an online restaurant with, you know, home deliveries or whatever, I've got to set up a website. I've got to do all of these new things that I don't know how to do, I've got all of this stuff. I can't afford to do that.

Trudy Rankin ([30:29](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([30:30](#)):

I think, yeah, honestly it is a really, really incredibly stressful time, not that Synergy48 Group members actually started to put together, uh, we talked about it at our first online meeting after everything started to hit the fan, and they all agreed that it would be really great to put together this kind of resource library of things they had to help their clients. So we started to do that. But there, I think we've

got about six things in there, despite the fact that there was all this enthusiasm because they're still overwhelmed.

Trudy Rankin ([30:58](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([30:59](#)):

Whether they're overwhelmed because they're drowning or whether they're overwhelmed because they've got more work than they can do. They're still overwhelmed. So I think my advice would be to, if you can pivot, even though I don't like that word, if you can find new opportunities, then do, if you can't, then try and maximize help that you can get from government and other people and so that you can hunker down and get through it, and stay home, stay safe, support the people around you as best you can, and try and protect what you've got so that you can come out the other side still moving.

Trudy Rankin ([31:40](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([31:40](#)):

I think, 'cause I think when we come out the other side, there are going to be some amazing, well I hope they will and I hope that government will support the being, and companies will support the being some amazing new opportunities. When you think about as a small business owner who works from home, I used to spend an awful lot of time in the car because every meeting I had was physical and there was this expectation that every meeting was physical.

Brenda Thompson ([32:03](#)):

Now I think I will, I'm sure I will take my group meetings back to physical, but I won't be doing anywhere near as many one-on-ones physically. And I think we've all learned that, yeah, hey, yeah, we have to do them now. But yeah, hey, it's okay. And it's actually, you know, I'm enjoying talking to you just as much like this as I would over a cup of coffee, you know?

Trudy Rankin ([32:22](#)):

Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([32:22](#)):

It's kind of, because now I'm, now I'm into it, now I'm feeling comfortable and relaxed with it. So, that's from the sort of the individual basis. But all of these people who are now, all of the organizations that now have had to support their staff working from home. And in the process of doing that, they're going to discover that, hey, that wasn't so bad. And that's actually working. And I saw a LinkedIn post this morning from somebody saying that his team's productivity had gone way up.

Trudy Rankin ([32:48](#)):

Yes. Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([32:50](#)):

And, and that's like, oh and hey, I don't have to sort of spy in on them and ask them what they're doing every second of the day, because really you should be measuring what they're achieving and who cares then, when and how they did it. As long as they achieved the results, not whether they had their baby sitting on their lap or the cat wandering over their laptop or whatever. It's about getting the outcomes and it can save an organization, a massive ton of money not having to support all this, but our office space, pollution is already looking less out there. There's less cars, less tension on our roads, our public transport, the amount of time, the amount of time that everybody saves.

Trudy Rankin ([33:27](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([33:28](#)):

Not commuting is times for families and getting lives back.

Trudy Rankin ([33:32](#)):

Yes, and I think that that we've forgotten that aspect of it as well.

Brenda Thompson ([33:36](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([33:36](#)):

That's huge.

Brenda Thompson ([33:36](#)):

It's absolutely enormous. I mean if you think about people who live in Melbourne's outer, outer suburbs and Sidney's outer suburbs, and the time they spend in traffic achieving nothing when they could be home with their families.

Trudy Rankin ([33:50](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([33:51](#)):

And I think we've also got incredibly driven by the, what I talked about earlier when I said I had to have the big house and the kids in private schools and being driven by this all [inaudible 00:33:59] dollar. And I kind of hope that will come out of the end of this with a more generous, less driven, less consumerist feeling.

Brenda Thompson ([34:10](#)):

And I noticed when I walked the dog that we're used to, didn't use to walk past many people. Now we do admittedly walk past a lot, a lot more people and we sort of go, you know, off the path two meters to one side. But everybody's going, how are you doing? Are you okay? Are you coping? I think I would love to see us have more, get back to community because of this.

Trudy Rankin ([34:29](#)):

I think that's really, yeah.

Brenda Thompson (34:30):

I think we've lost the community.

Trudy Rankin (34:30):

I think you're right. Yeah.

Brenda Thompson (34:34):

So, that's what I would reach out to people where there's hunker down and come out from the other end with a different perspective on how you live your life and how you are in your community and how you work with your workforce.

Trudy Rankin (34:46):

Yeah, I, I, I would have to agree with you a 100%, I think that's, that's really, really, really important. I, I want to come back and we're coming to the sort of the end of our time, but I have to come back to, to that concept and to just take it a little bit further in order for people to a survive this period of time.

Brenda Thompson (35:03):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Trudy Rankin (35:04):

And you know, whether, you know, if they have to think about pivoting or if they have to think about changing how they do things, what kind of advice would you give around the whole mindset side of things? Because we all know that mindset matters, you know, if you decide whether you think you can or you think you can't-

Brenda Thompson (35:22):

You can't.

Trudy Rankin (35:22):

...do right, I, I guess, what would you say to people about mindset and that shift that they're going to have to make?

Brenda Thompson (35:28):

I think, 'cause I'm, I'm not big on, I don't, I'm not, I'm sort of a big fan of, you know, the power of positive thought. It's, it's kind of like if you're feeling down, you're feeling down. (laughs) But, but it's, for me it's, it's very much thinking, okay, if I can't see a way to solve this problem, then I have to go just park it until I can find a way, and focus on what I can fix and focus on what I can do rather than focusing on what I can't do.

Trudy Rankin (36:02):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenda Thompson ([36:03](#)):

Like if I've, it's, and that's kind of like how I, how I look at things. Because if I focus on what I can't do, then I have sleepless nights and I get stressed and, and distressed and grumpy and horrible to my family and all of those kinds of things. Whereas if I can go, okay, right now I can't fix that, but what can I do?

Brenda Thompson ([36:25](#)):

And sometimes it's, which is why my, why perhaps I've had very different, you know, like my businesses have made very significant shifts. Like I've, you know, it's kind of like, well that's not what, and maybe I give up too quickly and that's why I shift, but I tend to make big, I kind of go, well that didn't work and yeah, I'm not going to focus on that. Let's look at it a new way.

Trudy Rankin ([36:46](#)):

Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([36:46](#)):

That's how, and, and, and I don't know if that's good or not good. I mean some people would, I, one of the things that, that I've learned at, you know, sort of age, you know 63, 64 so I can never remember which it is anymore, (laughs) it's actually too many, too many numbers into the 60s, was that it was okay to say, yeah, I'm not good at that, and I'm not good at plowing through something when it's not working, but I am good at going if that's not working, I'm going to find a new way.

Trudy Rankin ([37:12](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([37:13](#)):

Though I acknowledge my weakness and I acknowledge my strengths, and I no longer hammer myself for not being the kind of personal drive through anything because I'm not.

Trudy Rankin ([37:22](#)):

Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([37:22](#)):

And actually, actually I think that's actually really important because we tend to get hammered with that, that you'll, you know, like if you're determined enough, you can win. Well, maybe you're not a, like if you're determined enough, then you probably will win. But if you can't pull that determination out of your gut, maybe you're not trying to win the right race.

Trudy Rankin ([37:45](#)):

Yes. And I think that's very, very powerful as well. And being willing to take, to step back and take a good hard look at yourself in a situation, and being willing to take that turn to the left or turn to the right. Because as a culture, we tend to not to forgive failure, or we call something a failure or mistake-

Brenda Thompson ([38:07](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([38:07](#)):

...when actually what it really is, is simply a learning point-

Brenda Thompson ([38:11](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([38:11](#)):

...or we learned something that didn't work.

Brenda Thompson ([38:13](#)):

Yes.

Trudy Rankin ([38:13](#)):

So what can we find it?

Brenda Thompson ([38:14](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. So instead of getting really down about what's not working, get excited about the new thing that could work. And it doesn't mean throwing the baby out with the bath water, because very often the baby goes with you and the baby has definitely gone with me every time. (laughs)

Trudy Rankin ([38:27](#)):

Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([38:28](#)):

And the things that I've learnt and the sort of like, I mean some of my clients now where clients in, you know, way back when I had that networking thing, you know, it's kind of like, and we've gone that journey together.

Trudy Rankin ([38:41](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([38:41](#)):

Because, so I didn't throw the baby away, but I definitely tipped out the bath water.

Trudy Rankin ([38:46](#)):

Yeah, I put some clean, clean water in.

Brenda Thompson ([38:48](#)):

I put, yeah, or even got a new bath.

Trudy Rankin ([38:50](#)):

Yes, that's a good point.

Brenda Thompson ([38:52](#)):

In fact, maybe not even a bath, maybe now it's a shower. (laughing)

Trudy Rankin ([38:56](#)):

Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well that's, I think that's a really, really valuable mindset and, and I call it mindset because it's just, it's not necessarily so much mindset as it is a way of thinking-

Brenda Thompson ([39:08](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([39:09](#)):

...about what you're going through, and being willing to take a certain approach.

Brenda Thompson ([39:14](#)):

Yeah.

Trudy Rankin ([39:14](#)):

It's a choice. It's more choice.

Brenda Thompson ([39:16](#)):

Yeah, yeah. And thank you for asking me that question, because when people talk to me about mindset, I instantly go that kind of like, well that, that's because, because it's for that very reason that, that I don't do that plow through struggle.

Trudy Rankin ([39:29](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenda Thompson ([39:30](#)):

But that's okay.

Trudy Rankin ([39:32](#)):

Yes.

Brenda Thompson ([39:33](#)):

And you don't have to. (laughs)

Trudy Rankin ([39:35](#)):

Yeah.

Brenda Thompson ([39:35](#)):

So, thank you for asking me the question because I think that's really important to a lot of people.

Trudy Rankin ([39:40](#)):

Yeah. And, and well certainly for, for myself, you know, it's something that I think we always have to think about, but uh, you know, I really appreciate you taking the time to join us today and it's been really great to get to know you and looking forward to chatting again in the future.

Brenda Thompson ([39:56](#)):

Yeah, well, I think we're chatting again about something else next week, aren't we?

Trudy Rankin ([39:59](#)):

We are in did. And I'm looking forward into that episode.

Brenda Thompson ([40:01](#)):

And I've really enjoyed, I've really, really enjoyed that. You asked great questions and so I had a ball. Thank you very much for having me.

Trudy Rankin ([40:07](#)):

(laughing) Well, thank you.

Brenda Thompson ([40:08](#)):

(laughs)

Trudy Rankin ([40:09](#)):

Well there you have it. Thanks again Brenda. If anyone's interested in learning more about what Brenda has to offer in either of her two businesses, you can go to synergy48.com and that's Synergy48 with the numbers 48.com, or you can go to bbg4.co which stands for Better Business for Good Company, and at the bb4g.co address that where she has her business assessment, so you can go there and do the assessment, and then that will give you some idea of the things that you need to work on to actually help your business grow. And I'll put those web addresses in the show notes for you, see you next time.

Speaker 1 ([40:50](#)):

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