

Announcer (3s):

Welcome to the Maximize Business Value Podcast. This podcast is brought to you by Mastery Partners, where our mission is to equip business owners to maximize business value so they can transition their business on their terms. Our mission was born from the lessons we've learned from over 100 business transactions, which fuels our desire to share our experiences and wisdom so you can succeed. Now, here's your host, CEO of Mastery Partners, Tom Bronson.

Tom Bronson (34s):

Hi, this is Tom Bronson, and welcome to Maximize Business Value, a podcast for business owners who are passionate about building long-term sustainable value in your business. This podcast is part of our series on with speakers from the upcoming Business Transitions Summit, which is on May 2nd. It's for business owners to learn how to maximize the value of your business and begin preparing for your ideal transition. Every business on the planet transitions some by design, some by default. Wouldn't it be better if yours was by design?

Tom Bronson (1m 14s):

Come to the Business Transition Summit on May 2nd and learn how to get started. Whether you're exiting in the next year or sometime in the next 50 years, it doesn't matter. Come and learn. Registration is now open at [businesstransitionssummit.com](https://businesstransitionssummit.com). I'm intentional about the way I say that because it's transitions with an s [business Transitions summit.com](https://businesstransitionssummit.com). This episode, I'd like to welcome our guest back to Maximize Business Value, she was just on a couple weeks ago. It's Susan Fennema, CEO of Beyond the Chaos, and that is Chief Eradicating Officer.

Tom Bronson (1m 54s):

I believe I got that correct Beyond the Chaos. And Susan will be one of our featured speakers in the Business Transition Summit on the topic of documenting your processes, which is hugely important when it comes to business value. So welcome back to Maximize Business Value, Susan.

Susan Fennema (2m 15s):

Thanks Tom. And it's chaos eradicating officer,

Tom Bronson (2m 19s):

Chaos eradicating. But

Susan Fennema (2m 21s):

I also wanna note, I'm wearing my shark to tooth necklace. Oh, in honor of Damon John. Oh, they're all famous keynote speaker, of course, except for you. But since he's from Shark Tank, I thought I had to at least, you know, bring the, the whole thing together here.

Tom Bronson (2m 39s):

That's right. You know, he is the people shark, so that wait until you see the video that he just recorded. And we're gonna release to the public, I think actually probably around the time this podcast drops. So be on the lookout for that on social media. So I know I, it's Chaos eradicating Officer. I, I don't know why I, I have it. It's written right in front of me. Right. Chaos Beyond the Chaos. So tell us, speaking of chaos,

Susan Fennema (3m 9s):

This

Tom Bronson (3m 10s):

Podcast, tell us a little bit about Beyond the Chaos.

Susan Fennema (3m 14s):

So Beyond the Chaos helps owners who are struggling with their day-to-day operations. We help them get out of it. So they get great relief and confidence from having process-driven operations, effective software tools, and some project management, some fractional project management to back them up. Our prof, our, our professionals, and they truly are professionals that work with us. They all deliver fractionally. So we're excited to jump in with these owners, help in that overwhelm, increase productivity, and really free their time so that they're able to scale their business, to accelerate it and to exit it.

Tom Bronson (4m 0s):

Yes, yes. You know, and, and having those documented processes, the thing that you guys help with. So w so well has so much to do with value and, and I'm sure we'll get into that as we get into the topic. You're speaking at the, at the summit on the, the session is titled Why It Pays to Document Your Processes. Now tell us a little bit about your upcoming session.

Susan Fennema (4m 29s):

So we're gonna talk about obviously the benefits of creating processes. We're gonna talk some about where to start, how to roll them out, and how to manage to them, which is really important to kind of change your mindset from we are a business that does x to being very process driven so that your deliverable can be consistent, your people can be held accountable, and you the owner can step back. So that's really where the freedom comes in. I know a lot of times people think, oh, processes so much bureaucracy, but you have no freedom unless those are in place and businesses want to buy businesses that they don't have to work in.

Susan Fennema (5m 22s):

Right? So if you are free from the business, another owner can step in and be able to just run the business and not have to do all the time. That's what we're gonna cover.

Tom Bronson (5m 35s):

I, I have to tell you, that's actually one of my criteria. You know, our listeners already know I have owned 103 businesses in my career and, and so owned or operated. And one of the criteria that I look for for buying businesses now are businesses that have leaders in place and that have well documented processes, because I don't want to step in and have another, you know, 40 to 60 hour week job. Right? I just want to add to my portfolio. So that to me, ha what you described and what, you know, the overview of this session is absolutely essential if you wanna make your business sellable.

Tom Bronson (6m 20s):

So what are some of the kind of takeaways that, that the Business Transition Summit attendees can expect from your session?

Susan Fennema (6m 31s):

So one of the things is we're gonna talk about how to create process. So, you know, it's hard, it's detailed and there, but there are some tricks to get at least started. And once you get started, it's, it's a lot easier to keep going. So how to create them is, is one, how to store and maintain them. Because the other part about this is, you know, once you create your process, you're not done. They now live and grow and breathe with your business. And if they don't, you've just thrown away a bunch of money. So make sure that how you store them and how you maintain them is part of your process development process.

Susan Fennema (7m 17s):

Redundant. But same point the

Tom Bronson (7m 21s):

Other, you're, you're repeating yourself all over again. Redundant,

Susan Fennema (7m 24s):

Redundant. So, right. Another thing that we're gonna talk about at length is how to manage to them. I think one of the things that small business owners struggle with is holding their team accountable and people can get upset when things go wrong. So processes actually give you a method to be able to handle things in a lot more of a rational way of bringing your team together to help them solve the problem with you. And there are some methods of how to manage, to manage your people to the process.

Susan Fennema (8m 6s):

And then that also helps you with the maintenance of your process. So it's all kind of that concept of process driven business. And then the other thing we're gonna talk about too is what software can help you do this? What are some software options that you can bring in and different methods that different people are using to store them?

Tom Bronson (8m 25s):

Oh, that's awesome. You know, that means we don't have to sit down with just a, a blank sheet of paper or a Word document.

Susan Fennema (8m 32s):

Please do not

Tom Bronson (8m 35s):

Oh,

Susan Fennema (8m 36s):

Not recommended.

Tom Bronson (8m 37s):

You know, that's, that's gold right there. I I hadn't really thought about that. But processes are, to me, the way you described it, I mean, they are living and breathing and it, it's not something that you write and then stick on a shelf to collect dust.

Susan Fennema (8m 52s):

Right. Check off the box. I did it. Nope. That's not enough.

Tom Bronson (8m 56s):

Right. You know, processes are so important to, to the success of a business. And I, I will tell you when I, when I ask people, this is a frequent question I ask our clients. So if our clients are listening, if you're a client of ours and you're listening, you'll recognize this question. How long does it take to train somebody, you know, a new hire in your organization? And if it, if it is a significant amount of time, sometimes I hear, oh, three months or six months or a year, I, I'd say that, well then perhaps your process is not documented well enough because you should be able to hire somebody and at least get them on firing on some cylinders within, you know, a couple of of days, if not weeks.

Tom Bronson (9m 43s):

Right. And so, and it's all about having well documented processes that you can use to teach from. So, so living and breathing, just like a strategic plan, I think that is huge. And I, and giving them tips and tricks on how to be able to do that is just amazing. I'm not even sure how you're gonna pack all this into a 45 minute breakout session, but I

Susan Fennema (10m 7s):

Breaking through the fire hose, Tom, drinking through the fire hose. Exactly.

Tom Bronson (10m 11s):

So, I mean, your passion for this topic just comes through. Why are you so passionate about this?

Susan Fennema (10m 18s):

It's the freedom. I mean, I've seen how process real processes really create freedom in your business. I've watched business owners be able to delegate. I've watched businesses grow and I've literally watched business owners get their lives back because they wrote a few processes. I mean, we eat our own dog food here. And it's really made a huge difference in the ability for me to scale beyond the chaos too. You know, I, to your point, I can bring in a consultant. Now, of course, these are professionals with a lot of experience, but I can bring them in. We run 'em through our process, we run through our onboarding process.

Susan Fennema (11m 0s):

We can assign them a new project that walks them through how to do it the first time. Th they do one and they're, they're golden. So once you can start systemizing how you do those things, it really then becomes focusing on delivering this amazing quality to your clients. And you're not thinking about the how you're, you're really thinking about serving. And I think that makes a huge difference. And you can't do it if you don't have the processes there.

Tom Bronson (11m 32s):

No. And, and you know, if you have a hundred people doing the same job, you also can't guarantee that it's all being done to the same quality unless you have a process that they're following. Right.

Susan Fennema (11m 45s):

Correct. And, and you know, it affects your brand. Mm. It, you know, when, when you have a hundred people doing a hundred things a hundred different ways, let's do the math on that. I am not a mathematician, but it's a lot.

Tom Bronson (11m 57s):

That's a, it's a

Susan Fennema (11m 58s):

Lot that gives you a lot of different experiences that your clients are having, and that should not, your, your brand should be how you deliver and how you serve. And if everyone, one's doing whatever they want, whenever they want, you're not, you're not a brand, you're just a bunch of people running around.

Tom Bronson (12m 22s):

I like that. I like that. But what qualifies you to be a, a speaker on this topic.

Susan Fennema (12m 27s):

So beyond the Chaos has worked with over a hundred small businesses in the past six and a half years.

We've been establishing processes with them just during that timeframe. But additionally throughout my 30 plus, I'm leading it at that. I'm not giving the real number anymore. Throughout my 30 plus years of experience, I have worked as an ops manager and a project manager, essentially the right hand took quite a few business owners where I was always helping that owner grow the business and make things happen by creating process. Before I really way, way back before I really knew that was a thing, it just kind of came naturally to me.

Susan Fennema (13m 12s):

So as a God-given talent. So that is also a qualification that I'm required to share with the world.

Tom Bronson (13m 19s):

That's awesome. That's awesome. So 30 plus years. So that would, let me just do the math. You, you would have started that when you were four then, right?

Susan Fennema (13m 28s):

Yeah, absolutely. Actually, you know, when I was three, I used to, my, my mom used to sew, and so she had this giant jar of buttons, which hold on.

Tom Bronson (13m 40s):

Oh boy.

Susan Fennema (13m 42s):

Giant jar of buttons, which now I

Tom Bronson (13m 45s):

Have.

Susan Fennema (13m 46s):

Yeah. And I would dump them out on the floor and organize them by color, by size, and make little graphs out of them. So it is God-given that's for sure. That was me playing.

4 (14m 0s):

And,

Tom Bronson (14m 1s):

And how long have you been in therapy?

4 (14m 3s):

Right?

Tom Bronson (14m 5s):

Wow. Yeah. You know, our kids don't even understand, you know, a, a big jar of buttons was our toy. Right, right.

4 (14m 12s):

I had

Susan Fennema (14m 13s):

Top and pans whatever was around. Yeah.

Tom Bronson (14m 15s):

I had a hula hoop. Right. And it wasn't even a hula hoop, it was a, like a, like a barrel rings.

Susan Fennema (14m 24s):

That is old.

4 (14m 25s):

Wow. That's there.

Tom Bronson (14m 27s):

He's, well, awesome. Well, so I, I'm confident everybody's gonna want to come to your session, but there is competition. You know, we have 16 concurrent sessions. You will be in a group of four. So, so our attendees will have their choice of which session to go to, why should they come to yours as opposed to anybody else's.

Susan Fennema (14m 49s):

So developing processes is the key. It's the key to getting out of being an integral part of your business. I mean, if the owner is involved, as we were talking before, if you're involved in everything, it's substantially lowers the value of the business. So no one wants to buy a job, as you mentioned, they wanna buy a business that can run without you there, and you don't want to have to be hired back to continue to do your job, essentially. Right? Yep. So the process part of this is the key to getting you out. That's why I'd say attend this session.

Tom Bronson (15m 30s):

I think that is a brilliant reason. So, so strong argument for sure. Now, I've asked you this question before, so let me put a different twist on it, as opposed to giving me the one most important thing. You can give me any most important thing. One of, I mean, I know, you know, a lot of things that business owners should do to improve value, but what is an important thing business owners should do to improve value?

Susan Fennema (15m 57s):

Well, you know, if you were gonna ask me the one I was gonna say, do I really have to answer that? I just have, it's create process in your business.

Tom Bronson (16m 4s):

Well, I figured the answer was obvious based on a podcast, but yes. So what's another one?

Susan Fennema (16m 10s):

I would say embracing technology is important. If you're already there, then take it a step further and let's start kind of automating your calendar and, and making your calendar so that you're not even kind of thinking about what you're doing. The next block shows you what you're doing so that you can be productive and effective in your work and focus on what you need to be focused on at the time. So that would be another important thing I would recommend doing to help build that business, to make time to build the business.

Tom Bronson (16m 48s):

Yeah. Use the technology, especially, it might take a little extra time to do something the first few times, but once you embraced technology, then it can make your life very much easier. I love that piece of advice. So your bonus question today is what advice would you give to your 18 year old self?

Susan Fennema (17m 11s):

There's so many things that I'm probably not going to share publicly, but there is a big one that I can, and that is don't be so afraid to start your own business. As you, as you heard me say, I have well over 30 years of experience and a business that I only started six and a half years ago. I should have done it earlier. I, I was under the impression that how much security I could have come from a company giving me a paycheck. And it turns out you're a lot more secure when you're in control of how that's gonna happen. And I'll never, ever have to look for another job again.

Tom Bronson (17m 52s):

Yeah. I am what my wife calls chronically unemployable.

Susan Fennema (17m 58s):

Oh, yes.

Tom Bronson (18m 2s):

So, yeah, I, I would have a hard time going to work for someone. I'm a, I'm a great business owner. I'm a terrible employee. So, so I'm with you. I think that that is an excellent choice. So I wonder what advi, although you don't have to answer this, I wonder what advice you'd give that three-year-old person sorting the buttons.



Susan Fennema (18m 22s):

I'd be like, you know, you could make a business out of this.

Tom Bronson (18m 25s):

Exactly.

Susan Fennema (18m 25s):

Exactly.

Tom Bronson (18m 26s):

And I have to tell you, your mother is brilliant for, for turning a jar full of buttons into a game.

Susan Fennema (18m 35s):

Right.

Tom Bronson (18m 37s):

Brilliant. So how can our viewers and listeners get in touch with you

Susan Fennema (18m 42s):

Best way, and I'll give them a free ebook? Ooh. They can download the book@beyondthechaos.biz slash ebook. It's three Ways to Control Chaos in your Small Business. It does talk about process, it talks about avoiding interruptions, and it talks about project management. If you're the overwhelmed business owner, that's like, I cannot read a book, help me. Now, there's also contact information on that page. So you can just click a button if you wanna come straight to the source.

Tom Bronson (19m 14s):

Yes. I, I actually have clients that tell me, stop giving me things to read, put it on. Right. Exactly. Exactly. Well, thank you and thanks for that offer. That's very generous. You go out and give a free ebook to our listeners. I think that is awesome. Thank you, Susan, for once again, just a few weeks apart, sharing your wisdom with our audience today.

Susan Fennema (19m 38s):

Well, I'm glad you know to be here, and hopefully we can make a habit of it.

Tom Bronson (19m 42s):

I, I, I look forward to that. So you can find Susan fema@beyondthechaos.biz on LinkedIn, and of course, you can always reach out to me and I'll be happy to make a warm introduction. However, you can also come to the Business Transition Summit and see her live and see her talk about the things that we talked about here

today. This is the Maximized Business Value podcast where we give practical advice to business owners on how to build long-term sustainable value in your business. Be sure to tune in each week and subscribe to our channel wherever you found this podcast. That way you'll never miss another episode.

Tom Bronson (20m 24s):

Until next time, I'm Tom Bronson reminding you to go register today. Do it for the Business Transition summit@businesstransitionsummit.com so you can learn how to maximize business value.

1 (20m 44s):

Thank

Announcer (20m 44s):

You for tuning into the Maximize Business Value Podcast with Tom Bronson. This podcast is brought to you by Mastery Partners, where our mission is to equip business owners to maximize business value so they can transition on their terms, learn more on how to build long-term sustainable business value, and get free value building tools by visiting our website, [www.masterypartners.com](http://www.masterypartners.com). That's master with a y mastery partners.com. Check it out.

5 (21m 19s):

That was perfect. I wouldn't make any changes on that.