Christi Johnson ([00:05](00:05)):

Welcome back to the crush, your goals with Christy podcast, your place to kick overwhelm to the curb and crush your business goals with confidence. I'm Christy Johnson, wedding photographer, community builder, and online educator dedicating to help you feel a little bit less alone in this business journey. Joining me today on the podcast is Brenda Cadman. Brenda is one of only 26, so far verified global Canva experts worldwide. She's the owner of Bonna cord creative, a website development company based in prince Edward island, Canada. Brenda has been an entrepreneur for more than 22 years. And as a Canver expert, she has taught thousands of business owners, how to use Canva more effectively and efficiently in particular, she loves to help business owners tame their hot mess Canva accounts by creating an organizational system that ensures they can spend less time in Canva and more time doing what they love. Brenda, and I had a great chat. I'm really excited for you to hear the conversation. So here is Brenda, Cadman talking about how to organize your Canva account.

Christi Johnson ([01:17](01:17)):

Brenda, thank you so much for being here and welcome to the show.

Brenda Cadman ([01:20](01:20)):

Well thank you for having me.

Christi Johnson ([01:23](01:23)):

So for those who are new to Canva, I want to see if you can give us just a brief insight into some of its key features. I know a lot of our listeners probably use Canva all the time, but for anyone who's like, Hmm, what is this? I I'm intrigued. Give us a little bit of a brief overview.

Brenda Cadman ([01:41](01:41)):

Sure. It, so most folks will know Canva as a tool they can use to create social media graphics. And that's kind of where it started. That's where people used to focus on as far as it was primarily used to create things like Instagram and Facebook posts. And then it's just really broadened out over the years in terms of the templates that they provide. So this I'm, I'm trying to remember if it was either, I think it was 2013 that they officially founded and I've been using the program since 2014.

Christi Johnson ([02:13](02:13)):

It is.

Brenda Cadman ([02:13](02:13)):

Wow. A lot since then. I know it's it's one of the OGs <laugh>, as far as Canva goes, and it has really kind of evolved into a much broader kind of business design tool. You can use it now, not only to create your social media graphics, but for any online content that you need and not just any online visual content, but also any workbooks that you need to create or checklists or business cards, or basically anything. If it's a visual marketing component that you need for your business, there's a very good chance that Canva is going to be able to help you create that. It's not always the best tool for certain printed pieces, but it does have a real wide range of products and designs that they provide you now. So it's wonderful, but it can also be a little overwhelming for a lot of people just because of how much you can do in the tool.

Christi Johnson ([03:10](#)):

That's true. Yeah. I'm literally using it for almost everything that I am doing that has any kind of visuals, PDFs, workbooks, presentations, you know, Instagram posts and everything. Pinterest, even videos I can do, which is like crazy to me. Mm-Hmm <affirmative> but it, it can be a little bit overwhelming, but at least for me, when I first started using it, I was so excited cuz I was actually doing a lot of stuff in Photoshop or something like that. And it got so frustrating where I would just, I would just throw in the towel or whatever, because it took so long to open up Photoshop and do all this stuff. So, so I was kind of using it initially, which is I'm sure a lot of people have to just create graphics in my business. Now I'm not a graphic designer. I, you know, cannot claim that. But I think that graphic designers, I wonder like what is their relationship to Canva? I know that some people are like, oh, I hate it. And some people are like, oh, you can replace a graphic designer in your business. No, <laugh> no. So talk to us about a little bit of like, does it really replace the need for a graphic designer or does it not?

Brenda Cadman ([04:18](#)):

No, it does not. So any graphic designer is listening to this can <laugh> put away the pitch forks. I'm not here to take over your to

Christi Johnson ([04:26](#)):

Yeah,

Brenda Cadman ([04:26](#)):

<Laugh> it definitely does not replace the role of a talented brand or graphic designer. I'm still a very big believer in investing in those core branding components that every business owner will likely need at some point. So your logo and figuring out what your color palette and your fonts and what all of those are and how they work together. Because it's, it's not just a matter of making something pretty, a talented brand designer is going to work with you to really create a visual brand that reflects your brand personality and your values and who your ideal client is. And all of these components that go into that. So it's not a replacement for that. It is just a tool. Now it's a fantastic tool and there are a lot of templates and things that come with it that you can customize that will have been created by professional designers to begin with.

Brenda Cadman ([05:17](#)):

So you're given a really good head start there, but at the same time, if you are putting in, I like say garbage in garbage out mm-hmm <affirmative> in terms of, if you're not putting a solid looking brand in, obviously what's gonna come out at the other end is maybe not going to look quite as polished and professional as you'd like, now that all said, there are a lot of business owners when they really start at the beginning, they can't invest in that yet. And I don't want them to feel like, oh, well what's the point of using can, but then it's just gonna, you know, it's gonna look like garbage. It's not, it just may not have that level of professionalism and that, you know, it may not connect with your audience in the same way that something a brand designer creates would. However, I don't think any of us are really in a position, any solo printer or a small business owner really is in a position to have a full-time graphic designer on staff, to be able to create your Instagram graphics on the fly. And we need to be able to have a tool to take what our graphic designer has created and carry it through all the materials that we do need to create.

Christi Johnson ([06:20](#)):

Yeah, exactly. It's so useful for the day to day, you know, posts that I'm putting up or blog graphics, or even Instagram stories. But if I don't have a good looking brand or one that reflects my identity or, or those types of things to begin with, then it's, then it's gonna be confusing. But yeah, it's a great starting place for anyone. Which, which I'm, I'm a huge believer in like, if you have a passion for something and, and you are letting things hold you back from that passion, like, oh, I don't have a really great logo and I wanna get this business out there, like get the business out there. <Laugh> yes.

Brenda Cadman (07:00):
Yeah. Don't let that, don't let that hold you up.

Christi Johnson (07:03):
I mean, it's exactly,

Brenda Cadman (07:04):
It's an, it is a wonderful thing to be able to have a brand that you are proud of, but ultimately you've gotta get started. And it's the same reason. I, I never wanted to get hung up on the perfect business name. If you have people to serve, if you have a service to offer, you need to get out there and start doing it. And brands are not written in stone. You are ultimately going to end up at least revamping it and rejuvenating it a little bit. If you were lucky to kind of really nail it the first time, but our audiences change our service offerings change. Our brand personalities may not change as much, but ultimately you are going to end up revising it at some point. So even if it's not perfect, really what is perfect. It <laugh>, it's not going to be perfect.

Brenda Cadman (07:50):
Get it good enough <laugh> and get out there and create, create content. You can create some really beautiful graphics and, and materials for your business in Canva. So it is something I see the value of it. I that's kind of the point I wanna drive home though, is there is a real value in the skills and the talent that somebody who does this for a living will bring to the table. But if you're not at a position where you can afford that yet in your business, it is not the end of the road. So don't let that hold you back.

Christi Johnson (08:20):
Yeah. A hundred percent. So I know that you have a background in professional organization. So tell us a little bit about that and how does that help you work in Canva? I feel like my Canva is a hot mess.

Brenda Cadman (08:35):
Yeah. I, and it's funny. I was talking with a friend of mine yesterday and we were trying to talk, you know, list. What are all the reasons that somebody should care about getting organized in Canva? And I said, at one point, well, being organized will, you know, it's gonna free you up to find more joy in your life. She's like, Brenda organization does not bring joy. I'm like, it brings me joy. <Laugh> it brings me a tremendous amount of joy, but it, and I do really believe that maybe it doesn't bring you joy, but it is gonna bring you a, a sense of relief and freedom. And it's gonna claw back more time that you're not spending searching endlessly for that one design that, you know, you created two months ago that you now need to make a copy of. If you have a really clearly created filing cabinet within Canva, it is just gonna make it so much easier for you to be able to find what you need when you need it so that you can take that time, get the project done quickly and move on to more important things in your business.

Brenda Cadman (09:32):

And I say more important can was important in my life, but it should not be the most important thing in somebody else's life. If that is not their business, it should be a tool. It should save you time. It should help you create the things that you need to move the needle in your business. But I don't wanna see you spending hours upon hours in it that are not necessary.

Christi Johnson (09:51):

Yeah, for me, the biggest hurdle that I have, I, I, you know, I finally figured out that, oh, I can put my projects in folders. That's really cool. Some people might not know that and we can talk about that. But for me, the hardest thing is scrolling through my images. And I just feel like I'm constant. My uploads, I'm constantly scrolling and scrolling and scrolling and scrolling and scrolling to find this photo that I uploaded like a year ago or two years ago. And so I inevitably end up just like, re-uploading the picture, wherever it was saved on my hard drive, cuz I can like now have faster.

Brenda Cadman (10:21):

And now you four copies of it and uploads. Yeah. <laugh>

Christi Johnson (10:24):

Exactly. Yeah. So do you have any can you help me <laugh>

Brenda Cadman (10:29):

Can I save you from your image pile? Yes I can. Because don't just think about creating folders for your designs. Think about creating an, a photo filing system as well, because regardless of whether you're on a CAMBA pro plan or a free plan, you now have access to create unlimited folders and you can create folders. They've just updated the number of how many you can nest. So it used to be, you could only do five levels deep of folders, and you can now do 10, the rolling that out right now. That's gonna give you a lot more. You can get a lot more granular that way with the, the categorization that you're doing, but don't rely on that uploads folder. I really believe that uploads folder should be a temporary holding box. If you're working on a project and you just need to quickly get the image into your account.

Brenda Cadman (11:15):

So if you think of it, think of an office you're gonna have your in tray, your inbox tray, and then you're gonna have your filing system. You, you should not be storing your, your papers long term in your inbox. They need to go into an actual system. It should just be a, a temporary place to hold them and then move them out. So I would like to see people do the same thing with their photos that they're uploading into that uploads folder, create folders by maybe, you know, if you have images for various clients, break down client folders and move the images into those respective client folders. Maybe you have photos from three different styled stock websites create a folder for each of those and then move them into those and then maybe further organize them into subject matter. Maybe there's a folder in there for, you know, tablet, mockup, styled, stock images, and another one for mobile and another one for whatever it is.

Brenda Cadman (12:11):

Or you could even break it down by color. So it it's really, there's a lot of ways to break it down. It depends on how you would go looking for that image again, if you know there's and it's a worthwhile

exercise to think about what's one image that you've used recently in your Canva account. If you had to go find it through some folders, how would you go looking for that? Would you look for it by the subject matter? That's in it or by the color or by the client or by the place that you downloaded it from and start with some sort of organization system around it. And if it's not working change it, but don't be leaving them all in your uploads folder because you will never find them again.

Christi Johnson ([12:49](#)):

You're right. I never find them. And this is honestly blowing my mind cuz I, I guess I didn't even really realize that I could put images in a folder. Yeah. I think what I have been doing is like generally in generally, you know, I go into can and all my projects are there. So I'm scrolling, scrolling, scrolling, scrolling. Eventually I started creating some more in-depth things and realized, oh, I should really organize these types of designs into a folder of the design. Yeah. You know, the project. So I didn't even realize. So basically that's all I've done. <Laugh> and I it's a good start and realize you could. Yeah, I know it's a start. So at least now if I'm like, oh, I need to look up this presentation or this set of slides for whatever thing that I'm doing. I, I can find that. But so you can actually put, you can actually put, I guess the only way I've ever been browsing is like your designs or projects or whatever, but you can actually put images and stuff in the folders too.

Brenda Cadman ([13:43](#)):

You can. And not only that I would encourage you, it, I mean a lot of you listening or going to already have upload folders that you need to just move everything out of that into the other folders. Yeah. But going forward, you can, you know, you can upload the images directly into those folders. You don't have to go through uploads first and there's a lot of different ways you can do it. So if you are on the projects area of your Canva account and you've opened up the images folder, let's say you had just for, to keep it easy. Let's say you had a folder called flowers and you're now going to upload 20 new flower images. You could op go and open up the flowers folder and you're either gonna be able to you can upload it directly in. I'm trying to remember where it is now.

Brenda Cadman ([14:27](#)):

I think if you click on the, no, I'm not gonna say anything because ultimately it's going to change by the time someone publish this. Yeah. Yeah. But there, there are ways that you can do it directly in there, but you can also just drag the images into that folder from your desktop, from your computer. Awesome. And it load them in directly. So that kind of form we're used to that sort of interface on a lot of different programs where if you're moving it into a folder, it just copies them in. And the same thing does work in canvas. So if you know, you've got 20 new folder flower photos, you wanna add drag 'em all in, in one fell swoop into the folder itself. And then you'll be able to access your folders from within the design within the design editor. There's a little tab that says folders. If you can't see it, you just need to click on the more three dots at the bottom of your left of your design menu and you'll see it. And then you'll have access to everything that you've put into those folders.

Christi Johnson ([15:22](#)):

Okay. Mind blown. That's amazing. You're saving me so much time already and hopefully other people who are listening as well. That's awesome. So images is one way we've talked about that, but what are some other ways or some of your favorite things that people may not have heard about or know about some of the FA things, sorry. <Laugh> just

Brenda Cadman ([15:45](#)):

Like you wanna do a three second pause.

Christi Johnson ([15:46](#)):

Yeah. I'm I will. Okay. So we've talked about images, but tell me what are some other ways that business owners can get organized in Canva? Like what have been some of those big game changers that you have seen where business owners are like, whoa, this is amazing. Tell us about that.

Brenda Cadman ([16:05](#)):

I think one of the biggest ones is it's not a big, fancy feature. It's just that you can batch organize. I think it, it's not a really obvious functionality. A lot of the times people will they'll they? Yes. You can drag individual designs into a folder, but they'll check they'll hover over a bunch of them. They'll check them all off. And then they'll try to drag a bunch of them into a folder and it doesn't work. And they think that they can only do it one by one. And that's not the case when you click multiple designs off and they're all selected at the bottom middle of your screen, you're gonna see two little icons. You're going to see a folder icon and a trash can icon. And if you tr hit trash, you're gonna delete all of those items at one time. But if you click on, well, you know, some people they need to because you really should be purging your account. Right, right.

Christi Johnson ([16:55](#)):

Don't need.

Brenda Cadman ([16:56](#)):

But that folder icon, if you click on it, you're now going to be able to drill down your folders or search by folder name in order to find the folder that you want to move all of these designs into. So if you are moving designs one by one, please know there is a, so if you are moving files one by one, please know that there is a much faster way to be doing this.

Christi Johnson ([17:22](#)):

Okay. That's amazing. I did not know that. I think I have been doing it one by one. So thank you for sharing that with us. Anything else that you would say that is really, really important for people to know about getting organized in Canva? Like what would you say,

Brenda Cadman ([17:41](#)):

Play pay very close attention to how you're naming your designs. We tend to fall into a trap of, you know, copying an existing design and then we don't rename it to reflect the new content that's in it. We may just leave it as copy of whatever it was. And then not only does that not properly inform you about what's actually in it. If you are not including key terms in how you're naming things, it's gonna make it harder for you to find them. If you do wanna use that search bar at the top, because even if you have the best filing system in there, often it's gonna be really fast, the fastest thing to do to just use that search bar. But if you didn't name it in a way that you can go retrieve it later on, you are making your life a lot more difficult than it needs to be.

Christi Johnson ([18:28](#)):

That's very true. And would you recommend in terms of getting organized, would you recommend starting, you know, today with all of your new files going forward? Or would you actually, do you ever teach a system for your clients to go back and get things in the past? Yes. In the farther reaches of their CAMBA account organized.

Brenda Cadman ([18:48](#)):

Absolutely. And I mean, if you are new to Canva and you don't have that much stuff in there to begin with, great, you can start organized from the beginning, create some sort of system you'll probably end up refining your organizational system multiple times until you get just what you need while you're learning how you use the platform. But you're, you're kind of starting from a clean slate if you've been using it for a long time. A lot of veteran users may already have a thousand designs, 1500 designs, 2000 designs in there. And the idea of going back and organizing them. This is not an afternoon project. <Laugh> Uhhuh. It's gonna take a lot more time. And I think that just feels so daunting that a lot of folks just put it off altogether, cuz it doesn't feel urgent and they would rather spend a bunch of time searching for it each time that they need it because it just they're, they're not the funny thing is they are experiencing the pain of that without really understanding how much it is hurting them.

Brenda Cadman ([19:45](#)):

Mm-Hmm <affirmative> I would imagine that if you cumulatively looked at how much time you've wasted searching for unnecessary things, you would, that would probably get you a lot of time back that you could be using into something far more important in your business or unrelated to your business. Something just enjoyable, something far more enjoyable than searching for CAMBA designs. But I do encourage people that if you, you are gonna have to sit down and do some, put some sort of organizational system into it, whether you want to do this in one great big project and just get it done or you want to tackle it in little bites, size chunks, 15 minutes a week, 30 minutes a week until it's done, that is up to, you know, that's up to your individual preferences because I don't want you to feel, I don't want you, you know, cursing my name.

Brenda Cadman ([20:36](#)):

<Laugh> in the middle of organizing because you feel like you have to do this all in one go, you don't do as much as you're comfortable with, but something is better than nothing. And if you just want to go through and start by going, scrolling down to the bottom and deleting anything, you know, you don't need, that's a great first step because there's no point in organizing stuff that you don't need anymore or move what you just want for reference, or you might need in the future into an archive folder. And that just slowly whittle away at what's left. I've also talked to people who knew, they just were not gonna be able to get to this organizational project for the long term, but they want to be organized moving forward and they'll go through, they'll do a purge of what they don't need. And then they'll move all the other stuff into temporary to be organized folders. So they know this is a project they have to do and they're kind of moved into a, you know, an action folder, but now they have a nice clean projects page when they go to it. So that alone gives them the quick win, the, you know, that kind of relaxation feeling going into it rather than feeling overwhelmed by everything in there. And I think that's a good place to start if the site of all of your designs is just kind of, you know, preventing you from being able to move forward.

Christi Johnson ([21:54](#)):

Yeah. Awesome. So utilizing the folders features and, and also NA having a good naming convention. So that things make sense when you try to search for them. Yeah. And I think honestly, the idea of, of organizing things based on the way that you, that you are using it. So are you, you know, when I, for example, when I go in and creating design, a lot of times I'm looking for pictures of myself or, or and so I could have a folder of like headshot or whatever. Yep. Or I could have a folder of different projects that I'm working on for my current courses or whatever it is that I'm creating. So I think, think about how you use it. Do you have, like you said, colors, flowers, lots of things. So it's not, it's not necessarily even like one size fits all. Like how do you search in Canva and, and see what you can see, what you can do there, if that makes sense.

Brenda Cadman ([22:46](#)):

Absolutely. Everybody's gonna have their own way of, of how they organize information and how their brain works to retrieve information. So even if you just spend some time looking through everything you have and starting to jot down what these broader categories might be, the chunks will start. The buckets of information will start to become obvious to you. And everybody's business is going to be a little bit different. The kinds of things I'm creating and how I'm using Canva is very different than somebody else who is a copywriter or somebody else who is a health coach. I obviously everything in my stuff is about Canva for the most part, but I'm still gonna have some general categories. Like I've got one for social media and underneath that, it's broken down into the, each of the platforms. That's how I go looking for it. Somebody else might break it down by project. And then within that project, they have all the social media designs. So there's no right or wrong answer. The important thing is to create a system that works for you and then stick to it. And if it's feeling, if there's too much friction in using the system, you have, you're gonna need to revise it and tweak it until it feels comfortable and easy for you to be able to put things away in the future.

Christi Johnson ([24:01](#)):

Yeah. I think that's ultimately the goal is for you to enjoy spending time there, to save time and to have a system that works for you. So these are things that you teach clients, right. So tell me about how you do you work with clients individually? Do you have classes? How does that work for you?

Brenda Cadman ([24:19](#)):

So you're catching me right when my answer is actually changing <laugh> okay. So I do have courses, one of them there, I have many courses, many trainings and then I do twice a year, a larger kind of high touch program, but there is a mini course specifically to walk you through the process of getting organized. It's a video walkthrough of how to do all these things, how to tackle it in those steps. But what's changing is I have been getting asked so frequently if I do one on one support and I have just been dragging my feet about it because I have had so many other things on the go mm-hmm <affirmative>, but I surveyed my email list this week actually to ask, is that something they would be interested in and more than 50% of the responses indicated they were interested in getting one on one services. Wow. Which is kind of mind blowing, but it does indicate a need. So that is something I am building out now and I hope I'll have in place for August, so.

Christi Johnson ([25:21](#)):

Okay. That's amazing. So you are a verified Canva expert. Tell me what does that actually mean?

Brenda Cadman ([25:30](#)):

That's a good question. <Laugh> so as far as the name, it is actually it's verified global Canva expert. It is such a mouthful and it would be lovely to have some sort of tightened up term. And I think we're getting close to that. Basically there's no certification. It would be wonderful to see a certification for Canva in the future, but that does not exist at this time. It's an invite only program and there are 26 of us. Now it was 25. Initially when we, when the program formally went live this spring and they just added a lovely new expert from Japan last week, I think. So we were selected by various Canva community managers based on the kind of content that we put out. We're all, either educators or YouTubers or train, we train in Canva at some capacity, we are creating content and helping teach how to use the platform more effectively, not just in business, some focus on teaching, how to use Canva to self-publish books. Others are specialized in how to use it for video or, you know, really focused on design tutorials. My approach tends to be more about the business side of it and how to use it in your business business, how to get organized in it, how to use you know, use it faster and smarter. And these kind of short, quick little tips, and I will leave, you know, how to use it for creating great video to those who specialize at

Christi Johnson (26:56):

It. <Laugh> oh, that's amazing. So, you know your stuff, that's basically what it means. <Laugh> and people can

Brenda Cadman (27:03):

Work. I hope so. <Laugh> yeah, I like to thing, so, and it's nice to it. It is nice to have that formal recognition. I'm not gonna lie. I was very honored to be selected as part of it. And you know, if I can take what I've learned since, oh gosh, I guess it's been what, eight years now, eight plus years that I've been using the program. If I could take that knowledge and help other businesses use it more effectively and efficiently in their own businesses than you know, job job done.

Christi Johnson (27:31):

Yes. Amazing. Thank you so much. So, man, it has been such a pleasure having you here on the podcast. I would just love to give you the opportunity if there's anything else that you wanna share with the listeners. We'd love to hear that otherwise, where can they hang out with you or connect with you online?

Brenda Cadman (27:49):

Best place to find me is either on my website, which is just Brenda admin.com, but you may also wanna join us in our, how to use Canva Facebook community. There's at last check, it's over 7,600 of us in there, and it's easy to find if you just go to how to use canva.com, it'll forward you to the Facebook group.

Christi Johnson (28:07):

Perfect. Brenda, thank you so much for being here. This was great.

Brenda Cadman (28:11):

Oh, thanks so much for having me Christy.