

## EPISODE 47: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO GET TO A PUBLIC SPEAKING TO BUILD YOUR BRAND

with **Christa Haberstock**

Marketing for Creatives Show  
at **IntNetworkPlus.com**

**Announcer:**

Turn your hobby and freelance work into a profitable business! Make your marketing easier by applying the strategies of experienced entrepreneurs and have more time to do the work you love. You are listening to the Marketing for Creatives show with your host Marina Barayeva.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Hi everyone. This is Marina Barayeva. Welcome to another episode of Marketing for Creatives show. In this episode, we gonna talk about everything you need to get to the public speaking to build your brand.

Public speaking gives a lot of exposure to your business and your personal brand.

To get to the public speaking you can approach everyone with everything or get prepared with your show real, credentials, and the right topics. And those are just a few things that you can start with.

Let's get more to the details with our special guest today Christa Haberstock Colson.

Christa is President & Founder of See Agency, the industry's fastest growing speaker management outfit. She manages, consults and represents a cadre of elite corporate talent, personally booking over \$3M of speakers annually into corporate events.

Christa is both an accomplished Recording Artist and Actor. She has written, performed, and produced award-winning songs which received radio play in the US, Canada, and West Africa.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Hi, Christa. Welcome to the show. How are you doing today?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

I'm great. How are you today?

**Marina Barayeva:**

I'm doing awesome. It's so much pleasure to have you here. Please share with us your entrepreneurial story.

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

I'm happy to. I am what I would affectionately call an accidental entrepreneur. For years I taught elementary music, have an arts degree and I'm definitely a creative type. I'm a musician, an actor and an improviser, comedian.

I fell backward into the speaking industry. My brother is a professional speaker. He married a woman who ran a speaker's bureau. She gave me a tremendous opportunity to work under her and learn from her.

I did that for 10 years and learned, I would say pretty much everything you need to know about a speaker's bureau.

Then, after 10 years, this was in 2007. So that was from 97 to 2007, I went over to the other side of the industry from the bureau side to the representation side and worked under a woman for a couple years who knew everything there was to know about speaker management.

Then, ended up going on my own because I realized I was too entrepreneurial and I had so many kinds of big ideas of my own. I just wanted to implement them myself. That was in 2009. I started See Agency. It's a speaker management agency. I started that in July 2009. So we're coming up on our ninth birthday.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Why do you call yourself an accidental entrepreneur? How did you switch your career so much? (Laughter)

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Yeah. (Laughter) I originally, as I mentioned, I was an elementary music teacher in Canada. My husband at the time applied to go to school here in the states. So I applied for teaching jobs and I couldn't get a work visa.

I got job offers from four different schools and accepted one. Then we started the visa application process and it never happened for me.

I spent six months suffering under that. It was really rough actually because we had sold our house and moved everything out. We were just living with friends for six months.

Then my sister in law said, "You know, what if I hired you with that help?" I'm like, "I have no idea." Sure enough, it took no time at all and the chaplain was open.

We came to the states and I started working for her as a management consultant, which was exactly what I was doing anyway. So it just all the stars aligned as they say. It just worked out really well. That's how that worked.

Then I just stayed with it. Stayed with it and got good at it. Then realized I had a lot of big ideas, big creative ideas. I think creative types are a lot of entrepreneurs. You probably have seen this Marina that a lot. Because we have all these big ideas, we think creatively.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Yeah. For sure. That's very interesting. Then you grew your business so big. Can you help us a little bit how can our listeners become a speaker at the big events and conferences? Which is what you do now as I understood it, to help people to get booked with speaking opportunities, right?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

What I got really good at Marina when I was at the speaker's bureau was taking a speaker and making them what I would call sellable. What a speaker's bureau does is they have, let's just say an inventory.

For mine, it was an endless inventory of speakers. I think at one point we had 10,000 speakers in our database and there's even more, I'm sure now. But you have to take those speakers and presenting to the clients and the buyers in such a way that makes them attractive enough to want to purchase them.

Part of I feel like what I was really good at and why I did well at the speaker's bureau was because I took the speakers, repackaged them, made them attractive to the buyers. I made them sellable. I made them bookable.

Then I realized kind of like, this is what I'm doing for speakers so that I can sell them. What if I just did this for a roster of speakers and just kept continued to get to sell them?

That's what I turned out to be really good at was taking a speaker, taking everything that they have, making it a good package and then repurpose it so that they were bookable and sellable. That's my secret

**Marina Barayeva:**

How to create this good package? We have many entrepreneurs and I think for them if they would just come to any conferences and say, "Oh, can you hire me?" Probably, most of them will not get speaking gigs.

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Right.

**Marina Barayeva:**

What are the secrets? What should they prepare? What should they focus on?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

The biggest thing is to create the world's best video keynote speaking reel. And really, I think you need three of them. You need a short one, a medium one and a full length.

The short one really what it is, is like if it's an elevator pitch. It's visual elevator pitch, the short one. Then the longer one has a lot more speaking in it of course. And then the full-length one is kind of an uninterrupted look at their speaking.

I think the video is the most important part, but a consistency of quality brand is definitely overall. They have to stand out and they have to be creative but they have to be consistent and simple. They have to simplify their brand so that it makes it easy for people to remember and to repeat. I think those are some of the biggest things.

**Marina Barayeva:**

When you talk about creating the video, should it be from the real speaking or should it be the presentation or their selves or what should they include there? And how long should be the video?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

So, the first question first. They include everything that would represent them in the most professional and fantastic way. I guess is the best way to say it.

What you want is for the person watching it, really, the ultimate goal is for them to say, "How have I not heard of this person?" And then "How do I find out more about them? I want to learn more."

As far as how long the video should be, my standard answer is a bit of a non-answer. It's a video should... it doesn't matter how long the video is, as long as you don't give someone a reason to turn it off.

The moment you feel like you want to get distracted, that's when you know it's probably too long or you have to change it up a little bit. More of a specific answer would be eight to probably maximum 12 minutes. It is the maximum for a speaker downhill.

The demo really isn't. The keynote speaking reel is probably a better way to say. A demo is kind of an industry slang and it's not the best. But yeah.

I've seen speaker keynote reels as short as five or six minutes. I think that's too short. I think that the sizzle reel or a short elevator pitch reel should be about three minutes, no more than two and a half, three minutes.

And then the longer one, about 30 minutes. So I hope that I hope that answers it. It's a bit non-specific.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Would you recommend to include there the presentation of their selves or just part of the keynote speech?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

A little bit of both. I think what you want to do is give the meeting planner or anyone watching it, the experience of being in the audience. It's introducing them as a person,

introducing them as a professional and industry are seeing them as a speaker. Kind of in that order, I think.

I give this example to speakers a lot with regards to demo creation or keynote speaking reel creation. If you've ever seen shows like America's Got Talent or American Idol or I think even Dancing with the Stars does this.

The people that kind of advanced along the network goes in, interviews them at home, talks about their story, gets their personal thing. It's like 90 percent of it, and then the last 10 percent is them performing.

And what did the people vote on? Are they really voting on the performance? Or they voting on them as a human?

What I think that's kind of a good viewpoint for speakers to remember. That's not the formula. That's not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is that people really want to connect with other human beings.

So for speakers to lead with content is a mistake. You lead with who you are, what you've done, the human element because people are longing for connection. I think that's where the best marketing will win.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Would you prepare any extra materials like BIO or key points of their career? Something like Media Kit, About page. What else would you send to those speaking either conferences or agencies?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

I think those are all good things. The video was the biggest thing. But definitely having the professional website and on it you'll have a BIO and you'll have testimonials. Some people call it social proof.

Social proof would be what makes people feel better about you actually having some experience as a speaker. So testimonials from people who hired you with maybe first name, last initial, so they don't get spammed. The first name, last initial and position at their company and the company.

And then testimonials, BIO... I wanted to mention the intro. Obviously, at the event for the event planner, they're going to need a few things. They need an introduction, they need AB, they need what kind of they need a hotel and all that kind of stuff.

But the introduction is different than your BIO as a speaker. And I think that's an important note that a lot of speakers forget. They think that you just get up and read the BIO and that's not what you do.

An intro should be much shorter and it should make people excited to see what's going to happen. It shouldn't tell your whole story. That's an important note and I think, of course, professional headshots and make them non-cliché.

I think speakers make the mistake of getting a headshot that you'd put it on LinkedIn or something. You know what I'm saying?

It should show some personality but be the very high end. Because it's an indicator of quality I think. What else am I missing? I'm sure I'm missing something. I'll circle back to it.

**Marina Barayeva:**

When you talk about the intro, how long do you think should it be? Like a couple sentences.

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

It could just be a couple of sentences. Some speakers and I actually liked this approach, their short demo, their little two-minute sizzle reel that they use that as part of their introduction because it gets people really pumped up and motivated to see who's about to come up.

I think that's actually a great introduction. So you could have a couple of sentences with the sizzle reel if it's appropriate or something a little bit longer, more like 10, 12 sentences. But nothing longer than a minute and a half or so, but just to get people excited for who's about to come on stage.

The other thing that I did forget to mention, I knew I'd remember something, topics of course. I think three topics is good. It's the power of three of course. I think more than three topics is probably too many.

The choice for planners is nice to have more than three topics, but I think it's probably too many.

So, you have three on your page and then you say other topics may include and then that kind of thing. Three main topics.

**Marina Barayeva:**

When you talk about topics, should they be similar or completely different? How would you recommend to approach those?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Very good question. I think they have to be similar enough that it's obvious that you're not trying to be all things to all people. But different enough that it has a wider appeal.

Let me just as a side note about topics. What I mentioned before about the content. There are so many people who were listening to the same Content is King, Content is King. It is. People need to walk away with content. But the way buyers and audiences see content and the way we are on this side see content is very different.

We're not talking about for the most part, for the most speakers, you're not talking about thought leaders who are going to give like the seven... you know, something very high level. What I think people want, and people can only take so much in in an hour, so you have to give them simple applicable things.

There's a fine line as speakers are creating their content that you want to make it accessible but also make it sound high level. I hope that makes sense. I don't feel like I explained that very well.

**Marina Barayeva:**

What would you recommend to people, sometimes I see guests on the podcast or speakers use different titles, but the same idea, the same topic or some people use different topics and different content all the time? What do you think is more effective?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

We may be comparing apples and oranges. My preference is the first one because I know that it's more appealing to... it's more sellable, to be honest. It's like I said at the beginning the simpler, the better.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Why?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Because there are so many speakers in the marketplace that it's just overwhelming. The easier it is to describe a speaker and remember them, the easier it is for someone to sell them.

I mean, I worked with a speaker's bureau, so that's definitely where I'm coming from. And I worked with a specific genre of the speaker. It's the motivational, inspirational, great story with good content.

I'm not talking about the, you know, Malcolm Gladwell's of the world. I'm not talking about the people that are thought leaders for a living. And then they'll speak on their content. That's not what I'm talking about.

They're kind of, like I said, apples and oranges. You just want to keep it very simple for people. If you did XYZ, if you're an astronaut, you talk about the things that you had to be in due to become an astronaut, and that the lessons that you've learned in space. But if you ran Toyota Motor Corporation, it's a very different animal.

**Marina Barayeva:**

So, you would recommend people to pick up to three topics, specific topics and focus on them and be very good in them and just repeat over and over?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

I think so. There are differing schools of thought on this so there will be people listening to this going "I totally disagree." And even just this weekend I had a meeting with a speaker and there was two of us agents in the room, one being from overseas from... He lives in Spain now. And I being from over here.

The speaker who was talking to us, he said, "How often should I change my content?" His answer was every 18 months. And my eyes kind of bugged out and I thought, "Oh God, that's way too often."

So, I didn't really say anything, I was like, "Well, maybe." The speaker actually asked me later. He said, "You seem to disagree on that."

And I said, "Yeah. Because if I'm a bureau agent and I learn your information, it takes me six to 12 months to really get you on my radar, understand it and start pitching you with confidence and booking you. If you change it six months later I have to relearn it and it pushes you to the bottom of the pile again. Or I keep pitching your old content."

I really think you have to just keep it simple. Not the content. You don't have to dumb the content down, but you have to keep it easy to remember and simple to pitch.

**Marina Barayeva:**

In the beginning, you said that you need to be consistent in your content and in your brand. What did you mean by that?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Consistent content and brand is "Who moved my cheese?" How everybody knows that. And if they had shuffled that around, it just, we would have lost the power of that.

7 habits of highly effective people. We all know that because it was consistent and it has remained consistent over the years. Maybe it's branched off, but it, the foundation is strong on that.

That's what I mean. Don't diversify so much from who you are that you forget the simplest thing and it's the foundation of what's going to make you memorable. Keep the brand memorable and simple.

**Marina Barayeva:**

What about those people who are kind of multi-passionate entrepreneurs or those who have a few different areas of interest? For example, you. You being a musician and then you became a speaker. Or I'm a photographer and I do podcasts about business and marketing.

And there are many, especially the creative people, often they have their main job or something else out of the creativity. How will you recommend to them to pick those topics and focus on?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

That is an awesome question. And you've obviously done some thinking about this. Here's a little story about me to illustrate the conundrum.

I'm not sure that there's a simple answer to it, but I will tell you that I understand this firsthand. I am a business owner, entrepreneur, speaker, expert. I do some speaking in the speaking industry. I am a musician. I do acting and Improv and comedy and of course those are just the things that I do for potential income.



Let's back up to when Christa was applying for her work visa. I referenced this. I was a teacher. I was one thing I could not get a work visa. I could get a work visa as a management consultant for a company which I could easily do because of my education background. So I slipped into that role.

Fast forward and I am getting at the time, let's say over the next 10 years from 97 to 2004, I was getting some really good traction and exposure with my music. Actually to 2001. Probably about there. For about four years.

So my music was doing really well. Then I started doing some comedy. So when I actually applied for my green card, I applied for music and comedy. I got a special visa for the music and comedy, which is a very hard visa, gets called O-1. It's an alien of extraordinary ability.

**Marina Barayeva:**

I know that.

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

You do? I wondered.

**Marina Barayeva:**

It's so hard.

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

It's a hard one to get. I got that from my music and comedy. So I applied for my green card with it. And because I was doing well also with See Agency it confused immigration and they denied me.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Oh Wow.

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Yeah. Continue on. Here we are. So this was in 2010 or 11 that I had applied for my green card. Because I was building my case all those years, those five, six years. They denied me. It was a traumatic situation.

I had to go back to Canada, pull my kids out of school. It was awful. Put all of our stuff in storage.

Finally got back to the states, was able to get under a different visa. Came here on temporary visas, applied for my green card again in September of 2005 with more evidence than I can even... I can't describe it to you. It may fill a room. All of this evidence.

And I got married, thank God to an American because they denied me again. They denied me again. Now I have a visa because I'm married to an American. But this is a very dramatic example and I do think it's the American view. Its individualism is gone a little bit haywire.

You need to be good at one thing. **Kelly Clarkson**, better be good at one thing and one thing only. Because if she's good at more than that, we're going to get confused and it's going to dilute her brand.

And I needed to be good at one thing. My lawyer just kept saying "You're good in too much stuff" like as a joke. But I'm a performer and I run an agency and I do both. So if you go online, you see it all.

I'm telling you speakers need to pick a lane and stick with it. If you're an Olympian, you're an Olympian. Don't try and be a singer too. And that's one of the speakers on my roster. She got an Olympic gold medal, Carly Patterson, in 2004. She was great at that. Then she's also a really good singer.

She's like, "Well, you know, I won the Olympics. How hard can this breaking into the music industry be?" And the industry rejected or because it's like, "No, you're an Olympian. Stopped trying to be good at something else."

That's I know that's a long story and it is a dramatic example, but I've seen it over and over. So, speakers, they may be good at more than one thing, but you've got to just pick one and pretend that's all you're good at.

### **Marina Barayeva:**

Basically, you stick to this and you also show through your content online and all of the stuff you do even if you do many other stuff, right?

### **Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Yes. And then on stage, if you want to talk, I had a speaker therapy clients a couple of months ago and she's really good at life balance and wellness. Stress and life balance and mental wellness kind of thing. But she also does trapeze for fun.

And she kept highlighting this stuff. I'm like, "You gotta drop it. I'm sorry you got to drop it. Because it may kind of play into your life balance stuff. But it's people are like, 'Wait, sorry. She and the circus?' you just have to get it off your website."

I know that was really hard for her. But that's another good example of that.

### **Marina Barayeva:**

When they have prepared all the documents, all the videos, everything to apply, how to apply and have a chance to be accepted as a public speaker?

### **Christa Haberstock Colson:**

As I mentioned before, when I was at the speaker's bureau, we had 10,000 speakers in our database. I read somewhere, a speaker's bureau recently, I think they said they had 20,000 speakers in their database.

What do you do to cut through that white noise? How do you rise to the top? I referenced this earlier as well with the video. You have to make them wonder how they haven't heard

of you before. And I will say the biggest secret, and I wrote a [blog post about this](#), I'll send it to you later, Marina.

Steve Martin has a great quote and when someone asked him, an interviewer asked him "How do you become a success in the entertainment industry?" He said, "Be so good they can't ignore you." And that applies to speakers.

I think it applies to everything, but I really think it applies to speakers that when you want to get the attention of a speaker's bureau, there are a couple things you can do to get their attention.

You can toss a booking. Like if you have a direct booking, you can toss it at an agent and say, "Why don't you book this, keep the commission and then you'll get to know that I'm awesome?" That's a good way to do it.

This is the one you can't control is for speaker's bureau to actually lose a booking to you. And they go, "Hey, who is this person?"

Or the other, the third thing is to have a trusted client. Someone that you work with a lot, if they work with the speaker's bureau, have them bring your name to a speaker's bureau and say, I've worked with this person, you should take a look and that will get their attention. So those three things.

**Marina Barayeva:**

When people would start getting to public speaking or maybe they had some, but they want to have bigger speaker opportunities, like big conferences, would you recommend them to do free public speaking or would you recommend them to charge right away? How would you pick those speaking opportunities?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Again, there are different answers to this question, but my answer since you asked me (laughter) is the bottom line is it's about three-quarters of all of any speaker's inbound leads will come from referral.

There have been some reports over the past five years. I'd say anywhere from 73 to 78 percent of all inbound business comes via referral. That's word of mouth, which is either as a meeting planner or someone sees you at an event speaking and they tell a friend. Or someone sees you at an event and they tell their boss. The referral comes from them seeing.

This has played out in all of our business to that the speakers who are the busiest are get busier because you speak more to speak more. So if you have no momentum, you've got to take off the dates.

You try and keep as much fee integrity as you can by only booking dates at your fee. And you pay a fee and you keep it. You keep it consistent. You always quote the same fee no matter what.

But you can exchange value for money. It's like, I need this, the attendee list, or I'd like to do an interview prior to it, or just trade for value. But speak more to speak more, take every

opportunity at the beginning to get onstage and in front of people because you have to create buzz. Word of mouth will get you more bookings.

**Marina Barayeva:**

How much would you suggest to charge for public speaking?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

That's kind of asking me "Well, how much does a car cost?"

**Marina Barayeva:**

Any recommendations? Because pricing is always so difficult question.

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Yes. And it depends what part of the world you're in. And what type of speaker you are.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Exactly.

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

It's all over the place.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Even from depends on the state, I guess.

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Yes, a little bit. A little bit. It really even does. It's just that I'm actually going to go on record and say that's an impossible question for me to answer just because it's going to depend on your content. It's going to depend on your status.

I will give you kind of a blanket statement though that might help. I can't take credit for this. This is from a speaker friend of mine that told me this years ago, but there is a reverse correlation between your fee and the length of time it takes you to describe yourself.

For example, if I am the adjunct professor of socio-economics at the University of Iowa... you go "What?" (Laughter) you get like \$150. But if I'm Beyonce, there it is. I get jillion dollars.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Ok. We're getting to Beyonce. (Laughter)

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

(Laughter) Just about that. That silly, but I just sat down with the... he was the VP of innovation for Disney for 30 years. I think that's very easy to describe. Or astronaut.

I was talking to as a speaker of about three, four weeks ago. He's the first astronaut to tweet from space. I just think that's so cool. You know, all of the cool things he's done. He's like, "Really? And that's the one that gets people's attention?"

But he has tremendous potential to price himself more aggressively because it gets people's attention. I think the longer it takes you to describe yourself the lower your fee is going to be. And the reverse is true.

**Marina Barayeva:**

What is better to apply to the public speaking by yourself, use the agents or speaking bureaus? How to do it?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Whatever works. Whatever works to get your name out there at the beginning. It doesn't usually make sense for a speaker to have an agent. A lot of speakers have their spouse working for them because keeps them in-house and nobody knows you better than your husband or wife or your partner.

There's a lot of people who do that at the beginning. Then speaker's bureaus are a great distribution channel, the revenue stream for a lot of speakers. And I think that you don't have to work with the speaker's bureau as a speaker, but I think ignoring it would be a mistake.

But in the beginning speaker's bureaus and generally going to be motivated to work with a speaker who doesn't have an aggressive fee because the commission payoff just isn't there.

You're going to see speaker's bureaus for the most part on average working with clients who have, I'd say 7,500 to 10,000 and more because the commission on those deals makes it worth it. So speakers who are under that price point generally don't catch the attention of a speakers bureau.

**Marina Barayeva:**

What strategy would you suggest to our listeners to get fully booked with public speaking and grow their brand?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Like I said before, be so good, they can't ignore you.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Yeah. There are so many people who are good at what they do and speaking, but they're just not there.

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Yes. That's right. Well, you got to get more exposure. You have to speak more to speak more. And as far as the excellent standard, [Nancy Duarte](#) who wrote a book called... It's sitting on my shelf... It's called Resonate. There it is.

She wrote a book called **Resonate**. It's about the art of speaking and what goes into it. She recommends 30 hours of practice for one speech. That is the standard that she set.

She studied all the great speeches over time. Steve Jobs when he launched the iPhone. I have a dream speech. And that's the science behind it as 30 hours of practice for one speech.

Then once you get to the 10,000-hour level, you're typically a genius at it and you maybe don't need to practice that much for them. But it's, there's speak more to speak more and make sure that your brand is consistent and as professional as you can. Practice to be really, really good.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Thank you, Christa, so much for many amazing tips. Please share with us how can we connect with you and know more about you?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

The website would be probably the best way. We have a contact us page on the website as [seeagency.com](http://seeagency.com). S as in Sam, E-E. What you do with your eyeballs. [seeagency.com](http://seeagency.com). And we'd love to hear from anybody who wants more information on anything.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Where are you on social media?

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

We are out @seeagency on **Instagram** and **Twitter** and there's that.

**Marina Barayeva:**

Thank you so much. It was a pleasure to have you on the show.

**Christa Haberstock Colson:**

Thank you for asking.

**Announcer:**

Thank you so much for joining us today. If you are new to the show be sure to subscribe. And for more marketing tips go to the [IntNetworkPlus.com](http://IntNetworkPlus.com) where you'll find the answers on the hottest topics about how to grow your business. You were listening to Marketing for Creatives show. See you next time.

**Resources from this interview:**

- Learn more about Christa Haberstock Colson on [seeagency.com](http://seeagency.com)
- An example of good brand positioning [Kelly Clarkson](#)
- Check Christa's blog post [How To Make Speakers Bureaus Want You](#)
- Read [Resonate](#) by [Nancy Duarte](#)

- Follow Christa on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)