

Chris Barton

Founder and Creator of Shazam, Entrepreneur, Inventor, and Tech Investor

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

Topics

- Artificial Intelligence
- Business Growth / Strategy / Trends
- Change Management / Organizational Change
- Entrepreneur
- Innovation / Creativity
- Technology / Alternate Technology

About Chris Barton

Spend time with inventor Chris Barton and you'll be inspired to believe anything is possible. His positive energy to make seemingly impossible ideas come to life is absolutely contagious. Chris's latest venture, Guard, uses AI to detect drowning in swimming pools – a never-before accomplished effort. Chris's best-known creation is Shazam, the app that changed the way the world discovers music and laid the groundwork for the consumer AI industry we know today. With over 2 billion downloads, Shazam is a global phenomenon and Apple's sixth-largest acquisition. The app lets people identify songs out of thin air from anywhere they are, making it nothing short of pure magic. Chris holds 12 patents and played key roles in the early days of Google and Dropbox. He believes his dyslexia helps him uncover novel solutions to obstacles and to achieving audacious goals. In his speeches, Chris shares his Start From Zero thinking method of questioning assumptions and challenging conventional wisdom. His amazing story and storytelling completely captivate audiences and inspires them to make big things happen in their organizations – to create magic in defiance of the obstacles.

Chris grew up with a French mother and British father – both of whom were university professors. However, academics were a struggle for Chris. Chris would come to learn he had undiagnosed dyslexia. Over the years, Chris learned to embrace what he now calls his superpower. Chris believes that dyslexia has allowed him to overcome barriers to achieve his many accomplishments.

Shazam is a great example. Though Chris does not position himself as an expert on the broader future of A.I., his journey as a true A.I. pioneer started when Chris had the idea to identify music using a mobile phone, as no technology existed to achieve his goal. In addition, he was told by Professors at MIT and Stanford that this application of pattern recognition was impossible. Besides inventing a new technology that didn't yet exist, he had to build a search engine supercomputer from scratch, create the world's largest music database, and create a user experience on very basic mobile phones. Did Chris ever think maybe the experts were right? "No," he says.

When Shazam was founded in 2000, it was far ahead of its time. It was three years before iTunes, seven years before the iPhone, and eight years before the App Store. The nascent Shazam struggled in the early days, teetering near bankruptcy for six years waiting for key digital advancements to arrive, allowing Shazam to unleash its full potential on the world.

In 2018, Shazam, and its 200 employees, was acquired by Apple in Apple's 6th largest acquisition of all-time. Today, Shazam has been downloaded over two billion times and is considered one of the world's most popular apps. It has become an integral part of our everyday lives, with its ability to instantly identify songs and provide information about the music such as lyrics. Shazam has even become a verb, as in "Can you Shazam this song for me?" In addition to its widespread usage, Shazam has also been the inspiration for a popular game show hosted by Jamie Foxx called "Beat Shazam," which has aired for four seasons on the Fox Network challenging contestants to recognize songs faster than the Shazam app.

Chris has also played a key role in tech history as a founding member of Google's Android Partnerships team where he created Android's mobile operator partnership framework. He also spent four years at Dropbox where he led carrier partnerships and was one of the first 100 people at the company.

Holding 12 patents, including one found within the Google search algorithm that billions of people use, Chris has made significant contributions to the tech industry. He also invests in a wide range of start-ups, including artificial intelligence for heart health and inflammatory disease therapeutics.

Today, Chris spends much of his time building his third startup company, Guard, a system that detects drowning in swimming pools using artificial



intelligence.

When he has the time, Chris enjoys speaking at events and sharing lessons learned from his experiences achieving the impossible. He inspires people with stories of the unexpected mindsets that are necessary to overcome challenges and achieve success. Chris gives audiences a new framework for thinking about the obstacles they face and motivates them to take action.

Prior to his audacious technology career, Chris was a strategy consultant and earned two master's degrees from UC Berkeley and Cambridge University.

When he isn't working or speaking, you can find Chris enjoying the outdoors and spending time with his son, Jude.

Select Keynotes

- **CREATE YOUR OWN SHAZAM MAGIC**

Disrupt Your Thinking. Defy Barriers. Inspire Delight.

Chris Barton knows a thing or two about bringing bold ideas to life. When he dreamt up Shazam, Chris was told using a phone to identify songs out of thin air was impossible. The rocky path from that audacious idea to becoming Apple's sixth-largest acquisition is an inspiring story worthy of a Hollywood movie. With over two billion downloads, Shazam delivers pure magic and has changed the way the world discovers music. In this presentation, Chris unpacks lessons learned from creating Shazam using the earliest forms of AI as well as his pioneering involvement with Android at Google and mobile partnerships at Dropbox. Doing something new – disrupting the status quo – tests our resilience and requires an ability to overcome obstacles with fresh eyes. A holder of twelve patents, Chris's storytelling and insights inspire people to accomplish big things within their own organizations using "creative persistence" and his Start from Zero methodology – new ways of thinking and overcoming barriers. Startups use these concepts to tackle insurmountable obstacles, and you should too – to create Shazam-like magic in defiance of all odds.

Chris customizes the emphasis of this presentation for each audience. Sample takeaways:

- Questioning the familiar to distill to the "basic truths"
- Reimagining what's possible with AI
- Overcoming barriers with "creative persistence"
- Remaining focused on core insights despite resistance
- Making things simple and friction-free
- Delighting people by connecting to emotions

Select Articles

- ["Basic Truths" Thinking and Creative Persistence: An Interview with Chris Barton \(From the Winter 2023 issue of Montessori Life Magazine\)](#)

Select Testimonials

"We recently had Chris Barton speak at our 40th anniversary celebration. He delivered what was by far the best one hour keynote that our clients and staff had ever seen. Chris was insightful, energetic, and entertaining speaker with thought-provoking ideas."

— *CEO, Costa Rica, Porter Novelli*

"Chris embodies inspiration from head to toe. We loved his stories and insights on the core mindsets that lead to game-changing innovation. His delivery was fun, genuine and honest, both during his speech and as our "guest star" at my leadership team's offsite dinner."

— *CEO, Mexico, L'Oréal*

Your presentation was beyond unbelievable! So inspiring!! I know you have made a difference in how my team, and I will be thinking going forward. Our customers and sponsors were all reeling from your journey! THANK YOU. Cheers to removing boulders with heart!!

— *CEO, Store Capital*

"Brilliant brilliant brilliant speaker! Chris delivered an inspiring and on point presentation tailored to over 7,000 Optus employees to launch our new Innovation strategy. To date, Chris's talk attracted the highest in real time attendance and engagement as compared to any other speaker we have had on this topic. Chris shed light on how innovation can be a big breakthrough, but it can also be an everyday improvement sharing practical examples from his time at Shazam and Google. The presentation balanced both the mindset that is required to drive a cultural shift for innovation as well as the process to bring innovative ideas to life. Chris delivered a compelling talk that generated talkability across the organization with leaders revisiting the recording later with their teams to help reinforce key messages. Powerful content delivered with an

engaging story!"

— *Director Innovation Strategy, Optus*

"Chris customized a powerful keynote that delivered significant value for Coca-Cola. His messages sparked action among our executives and inspired our bottler partners toward our goals. Chris's energy and enthusiasm really stands out. He is an inspiration with truly eye-opening insights and stories."

— *VP Customer & Commercial Leadership, Coca-Cola*