



**HOW PROFESSIONAL  
FRANCHISE SPEAKERS  
ARE EVOLVING THROUGH  
VIRTUAL & HYBRID EVENTS**

# **THE INTERVIEW**

**WITH KATRINA MITCHELL**

**dynami** 





*Katrina*  
**KATRINA MITCHELL**

Katrina Mitchell is a dynamo in the franchise industry. A former franchisee herself, she has built the go-to franchise speakers bureau, that has weathered decades of ups and downs in the marketplace – and come out stronger as a result. The recent 18 months have been no different. Ms. Mitchell, who refers to herself as a “Matchmaker” in the speaking world, has a passion for big ideas and bold messages that shows in every conversation. Although she is warm and approachable, she has a reputation for uncompromising professionalism that only accepts top talent into her stable of speakers. That’s why Kenneth Jones, dynamo sat down with her to explore what the speaking talent landscape looks like now and how franchise systems can get ahead of the trends and maximize their investments in speakers.



*Kenneth*  
**KENNETH JONES**



## **Kenneth Jones, dynamix:**

Let's dive right in. If you're looking for franchise speakers who have mastery of the craft of virtual and hybrid presenting, how will you know that they actually have the mastery they claim to have?

## **Katrina:**

Great question! First of all, there's the preliminary process of evaluating a speaker, whether the franchise event planner does it, or a Bureau like Franchise Speakers does it. That process begins with assessing whether a speaker is one we want to work with. Next, it is imperative to look at their virtual demo reel.

You know, given that we're now 18 months or more into this virtual/hybrid event experience, a professional speaker who would like to be paid to speak virtually should have a virtual demo reel. It's a price of entry in my world, showing different groups, reflecting the engagement of those groups back to the presenter.

Second qualification would be other client testimonials. Looking at the speaker's client list, see if there's anyone on that list that you know personally, and reach out. Otherwise, ask the speaker to just give a couple of referrals.

Lastly, ask the speaker what sort of applications and interactive technology they leverage to make the sessions more engaging, and ask them to demonstrate that for you.

Naturally, we're a Bureau, so this is what we do for a living – evaluating and reviewing speakers. As a result, when we bring our clients an offering, we've already done all that heavy lifting. So, if a client was not working with a Bureau like Franchise Speakers or another reputable Bureau, those are all the things that they're going to need to do for themselves.



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BEFORE...

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## **Kenneth Jones, dynamix:**

As the expert on franchise speakers, can you share how to get the most of an outside speaker in a virtual or hybrid event?

### **Katrina:**

So, instead of just waiting 12 to 18 months for the annual franchise convention, there are many more ways to create meaningful connections via virtual experiences with your entire franchise system. Don't get me wrong, live events will never go away, and the value of coming together as a group to learn and laugh together will never be replaced by virtual meetings alone.

There are just so many FRESH and NEW opportunities for engagement and interaction in the virtual realm that didn't exist before, when we were relying solely on live for that. A great format that we feel really delivers a meaningful experience for virtual attendees is when an outside speaker includes an interactive facilitation as part of their program. The speaker might deliver a 15- or 20-minute concept and then give the audience a case study and exercise to work. Franchisees move into breakout rooms and workshop the challenge using the newly acquired tools and mindsets delivered by the speaker. This is a great way to help attendees really absorb and implement the speaker's content.

Getting the most out of your investment also includes ensuring that the speaker is delivering very tight, high energy content. A virtual delivery is very different than live delivery, as we mentioned earlier. For example, in a live session, a signature story would go for six minutes, where for virtual, it's trimmed to three minutes, because the presenter needs to keep the audience's attention with fast-paced content.









PHIL HANSEN

Also, having someone monitoring the chat for the speaker, helping sort out key questions and having an opportunity for the audience to do a facilitated, live Q and A is a great addition. Of course, we have speakers who leverage technology in all kinds of creative ways including white boarding, polls and collaborative art. Inviting participants to co-create something skyrockets engagement. For example, one of our very favorite speakers is **Phil Hansen**, who does an interactive art piece. As he is talking about change, adaptability and flexibility, he'll say, "Okay, I want everybody to go on your phone to my app, and draw a picture of the thing that is the most important to you in your life." He then takes all of those pictures and creates a mosaic. Throughout his virtual keynote, he's giving them instructions of what to draw. Then, two weeks later, he delivers this custom piece of art that is an exquisite image of something he has agreed upon with the client that is made up of all those individual images and words. Attendees can see it, and even zoom in and find their own little drawing that made part of that mosaic. It's really beautiful.

## **Kenneth Jones, dynam:**

Yes, it seems like we have become very inventive in creating virtual engagement. So now that business is coming back full force, are there particular speaking topics, such as motivation, sales, marketing, leadership, or something else that are in especially high demand right now?

## **Katrina:**

You bet! I just put a fresh list together of a client.

The first one is absolutely Resiliency and Grit. Followed by Mindset and Peak Performance. We've been monitoring it, and I have a list of the top 10 you can include.

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- 1.** Resiliency & Grit
  - 2.** Mindset & Peak Performance
  - 3.** Change & Embracing Uncertainty
  - 4.** Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
  - 5.** Engaging & Leading Virtual Teams
  - 6.** Marketing, Word of Mouth, & the Customer Experience
  - 7.** Creating a Culture of Accountability
  - 8.** Culture
  - 9.** Leadership
  - 10.** Digital Sales and Marketing
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## Kenneth Jones, dynamis:

Brilliant. Everyone benefits from seeing what's in big demand, so they can plan ahead. Which leads to the next question: How far in advance should organizations be booking speakers now, and is that different from a couple of years ago?

## Katrina:

It's coming back to the normal timeframe. My recommendation is to book your speakers at least six months in advance, and ideally, up to 12 months, because the really good speakers get booked, and their calendars fill up. So, the more runway that we have to help find the perfect fit, the better shot we have of finding that 'Home Run' keynoter for you. We have clients who will book their speaker first and then build their theme and content flow around that speaker's key messages, tying the entire event together around their speaker selection.

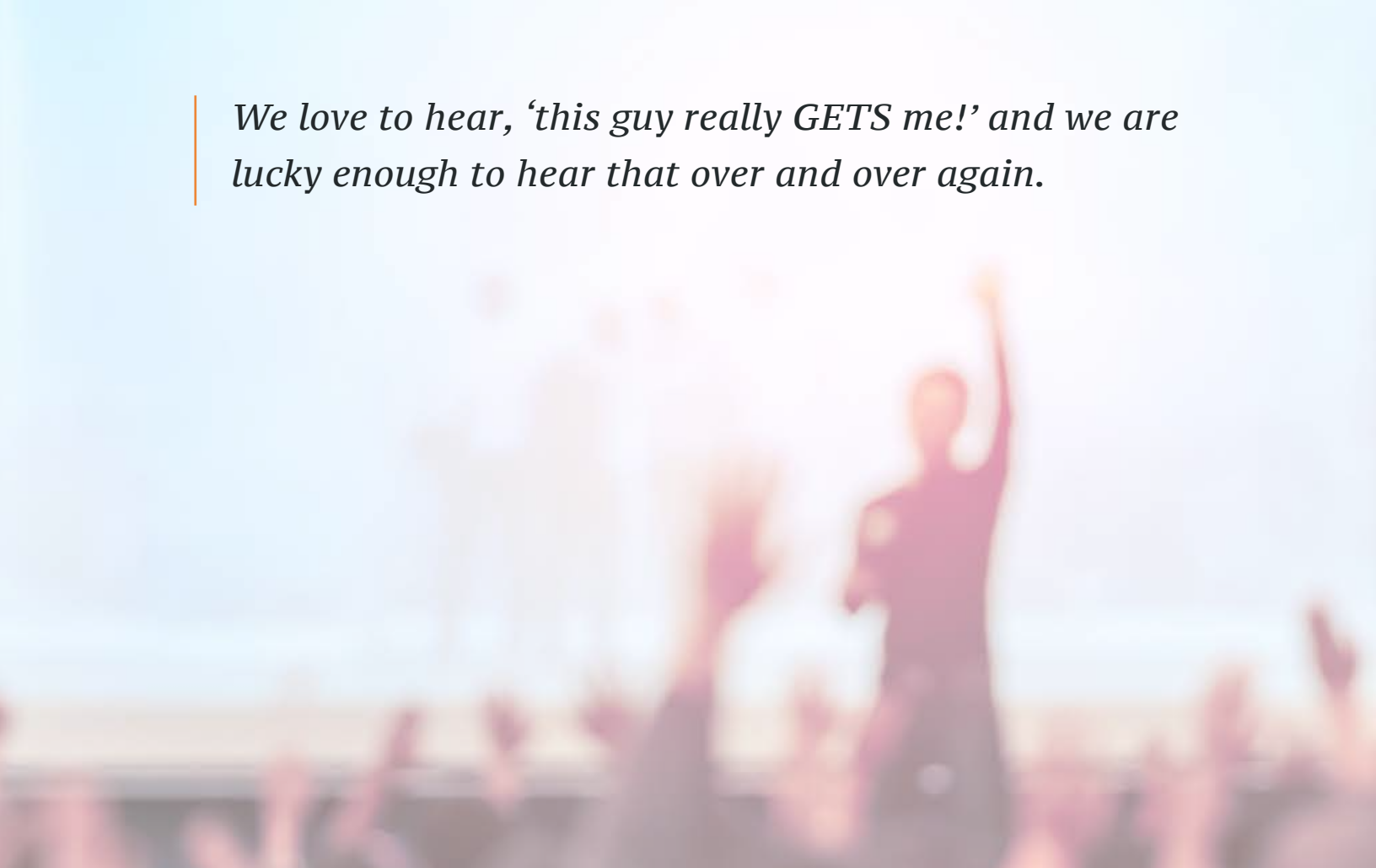
I hate to say it, but we've run into a false assumption with a few clients that speakers are all just hanging around with nothing going on since live events shut down. Building on that assumption is the idea that speakers are available and much less expensive than they would be live because they don't have to travel to an event. That's not actually true.

We gently remind clients that talented, professional speakers don't sell their time. They are selling their expertise, their insights, their tools and techniques AND the polished platform and delivery skills that makes all that learning stick for audience members. Clients are also investing in the many hours of pre-program research and customization that a good speaker will do. And in fact, there's often a LOT more time and effort involved in virtual presentations with all the pre- and post-production work.

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Good speakers don't just show up and deliver the same speech over and over. They take a deep dive into the client's culture, learning objectives and desired outcomes. They do their homework and learn what the challenges and obstacles are for both the franchisees and the franchisors. Then a true professional speaker will seamlessly meld their unique ideas, tools and tips into the clients desired takeaways. All the while making the audience feel compelled to take positive action and truly engaged. We love to hear, 'this guy really GETS me!' and we are lucky enough to hear that over and over again.

So yes, ideally – 6- 12-months is the right time to be locking down your speakers.

And of course, we have had our share of 'emergency' calls where a speaker booked direct by the client or by someone else cancels at the last minute. In some of these cases, we've jumped in and found an appropriate speaker replacement in just a few hours. We have a huge network of speaker partners and when the emergency call goes out, everyone steps up to try and help. Like franchising, the speaker network is an amazing community of super smart, really kind and always ready to be helpful pros.



## **Kenneth Jones, dynamix:**

Well, that's a really important point in this new landscape. A lot of us want to understand if there is a different pricing structure when it comes to hybrid or virtual events?

## **Katrina:**

Bottom line, every event is unique and how the client wants it delivered. Now there are a bunch of new variables to discuss. So, if it's a virtual event, but they want the presenter to deliver from a specific professional studio, there are studio fees, as well as travel fees. It's essentially the same fee as a live keynote.

If the presenter is delivering from a home studio or a local studio that they have access to, sometimes there will be a minimal studio fee for post-production. As mentioned earlier, pre-records can often be twice as much work for the presenter because of the post-production.

Ultimately, the client is investing in is this person's insights, their many years of experience in their field, and their stagecraft. At the end of the day, you are still investing in that quality of content: that unique thinking... that special messaging and professional stage craft and delivery skills peppered with interactive exercises.

A professional virtual presentation is certainly NOT the same as you and I sitting in our home offices talking on Zoom. Clients are investing in the talent a professional speaker brings to create an EXPERIENCE for attendees. That's what the investment is all about!



## **Kenneth Jones, dynami:**

Well, that really brings up the elephant in the room. We're all painfully aware that presenting on stage and on camera can be very different. So how can a buyer be confident a speaker will deliver incredible impact on a virtual hybrid event?

## **Katrina:**

The truth is they can't. We watched a lot of presenters who were very much in high demand on the platform go completely dark in the last 18 months because they did not have the skills to deliver virtually.

As you know, presenters are feeding off the audience, working with the energy they're putting out and the response that they're getting back. It's a give and take; a flow as the energy is building, and they are working and moving that energy in the room. However, virtually, you're sitting in a silent room talking straight to camera. You're not necessarily feeling that energy in the same way. It takes a completely different skill set to engage with a remote audience in a meaningful way.

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*... are there ways to maximize the involvement of a franchise speaker beyond the keynote for virtual or hybrid events, so the energy can extend beyond a moment in time?*

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### **Kenneth Jones, dynami:**

That is so important – and when it comes to that energy you are talking about - are there ways to maximize the involvement of a franchise speaker beyond the keynote for virtual or hybrid events, so the energy can extend beyond a moment in time?

### **Katrina:**

We definitely have clients who like to extend the impact of a speaker's presence in traditional ways, such as pre-purchasing the presenter's book ahead of time and sending it in gift packages to all of the franchisees. Another way to maximize the investment is to include a follow-up 'fireside chat' or live Q & A with the speakers after the event.

We also encourage speakers to offer an 'Excitement Video' pre-event so that Clients can send it out to their franchisees as a little taste of what the speaker will be offering. This helps build excitement about the content and can often help increase registration and participation in the event. Occasionally we've seen opportunities for two or three short, post-event 'Re-cap Clips' that reinforce some of the key messages from the session. This helps franchisors reinforce important content as well as extend their investment in that message over the next two or three weeks. Some speakers can also provide diagnostic tools or content downloads to anchor the actions they are helping to instill.



THIS IS  
BY FAR  
OUR VERY  
**HARDEST**  
INTERVIEW  
QUESTION.

### **Kenneth Jones, dynamite:**

It's wonderful to really think outside of the event for bigger impact. Surely there are some speakers that really excel at this. So, who are some of your favorite speakers for franchises right now, and why?

### **Katrina:**

This is by far our very HARDEST interview question. We are blessed to work with so many amazing, franchise-savvy speakers it's hard to just pick a few....

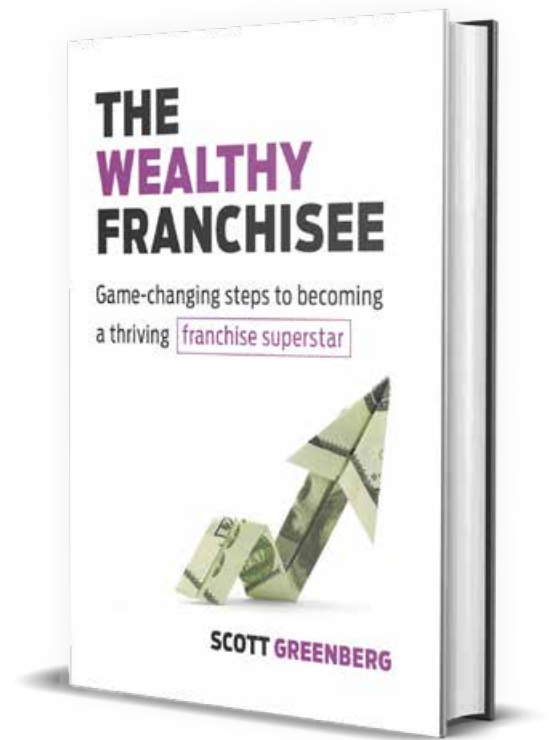




SCOTT GREENBERG

Right now, I would say **Scott Greenberg**. Scott's, released his book last Fall, *The Wealthy Franchisee: Game-Changing Steps to Becoming a Thriving Franchise Superstar*, along with his online Business Breakthrough training program, and he is on fire in the franchise industry.

The community is buzzing about him and talk about the book is just bubbling up everywhere. People can't get enough of the enormous value of this content. As a case in point, we had a franchisor who got the book, and halfway through, ordered copies for her entire leadership team. She started reading it again, and then called up and ordered books for all the franchisees. Then she called up again and said, "I need Scott to come speak at our convention. How much is that?" In fact, Greenberg was a successful award-winning franchisee himself. He really comes at sharing his secret sauce for success with other franchisees in a peer-to-peer relationship.



TROY HAZARD, CSP

**Troy Hazard, CSP**, is our most consistently in-demand franchise speaker. Troy has been a franchisee (multiple times) a franchisor (and he is one now) and a consultant to over 300 franchise brands. Every presentation is completely custom-crafted and his stagecraft is impeccable. Troy's messages on Change, Future Proofing Your Business, Resiliency, and Vision are always applicable and even more so given our current times.



**FORD SAEKS, CSP**

Our next hottest speaker would be **Ford Saeks, CSP**. Ford is our strongest All-Star Utility Players. He is amazing in the virtual format and is a master at leveraging technology to keep engagement and interaction at the highest level. He delivers content on business growth, local area, marketing, digital marketing, selling, virtual customer experience, hiring and retention, being the best place to work, mindset, and peak performance. I mean, really the truth is that he actually can truly deliver on ALL of these topics. And does it well. When we have a client who would like to make an investment in a virtual session packed FULL of actionable takeaways, Ford is always in our top of our list of recommendations.

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**KELLY MCDONALD**

Rounding out, I would add **Kelly McDonald**. Kelly's latest book is *Do Better, Be Better: How To Talk About Race At Work*. She's a marketer, but here she digs into DEI, which is such a hot topic in every organization today. And she is an excellent virtual and hybrid presenter. Not coincidentally, what makes Kelly stand out, besides being an exceptional virtual hybrid presenter, is that we have more and more demand for diverse presenters. I literally have clients who will say: We want to see, and we want to hear from different kinds of people, meaning that they are looking for ethnic and gender diversity. And by the way, Kelly is a powerhouse. She is direct, to the point, delivers immediately actionable insights.



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*... I have this conversation with pretty much every one of our clients...*

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**Kenneth Jones, dynamix:**

Those all sound great. So, tell us – is there a benefit to working with a professional convention production agency to ensure the most benefit from speakers you represent?

**Katrina:**

Well, I think just for the client alone, working with a professional meeting, planning and production company is one of the very best decisions they could possibly make. And I have this conversation with pretty much every one of our clients. I understand that initially working with a professional meeting organization is looked as an expense. But the reality is it's often such a huge savings in time in energy and in costs. So, let's, we'll talk costs first. So oftentimes a professional company will find many ways to save the client money, whether it's in the, you know, in the menus, the BEOS and the hotel, uh, negotiation in the AAV, uh, discussion because this is their business. And they know the ins and outs of all of it.

Of course, that's the client side, but a frequent complaint I hear from speakers just coming to us as a Bureau, speakers who were used to booking themselves, that having a professional, creative or production or planning entity running the show meant that they knew that the right tech was there to support them, that they had the right microphones, that they had the right audio and, and lighting. They felt confident that that graphics would be handled, that they weren't coming in and having to put out fires as a speaker.

A group of people's hands are huddled together in a circle on a wooden desk. In the background, a laptop keyboard and a smartphone are visible. The scene is lit with a warm, orange glow. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

**Kenneth Jones, dynami:**

Yes. Speakers are such an important investment for a franchise convention. Your point about focus and confidence in every aspect of an event makes enormous sense. **Thank you** for sharing your candid insights with us. You are an advocate for the franchise industry's success, much like us.



Ask us about what other clients are doing to leverage the power of hybrid conventions and conferences to navigate organizational change successfully.

Learn more at: [www.dynamigroup.com/virtual-and-hybrid-events](http://www.dynamigroup.com/virtual-and-hybrid-events) and use our contact form to schedule a free consultation and demo.



WORLDWIDE MEETINGS & PRODUCTIONS

[www.dynamigroup.com](http://www.dynamigroup.com)

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FRANCHISE CONVENTIONS | ROAD SHOWS | REGIONAL MEETINGS  
PRODUCT LAUNCHES | EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING  
INCENTIVE MEETINGS | MANAGEMENT CONFERENCES  
SALES CONFERENCES | WEBCASTING

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## dynamigroup

### YOUR FRANCHISE CONVENTION RESOURCE:



#### PRODUCTION

Identifying, planning, and designing the physical and technical support needed to effectively deliver your program. Audio-visual, stage-set design, seating plans, scheduling, labor, technicians, etc.



#### EVENT MANAGEMENT

Comprehensive logistical planning, everything from the rudimentary to the ritzy. Site/venue research, hotel contract negotiation, room-block management, ground transportation, food and beverage, onsite registration, staffing, motivational speakers, entertainment, linens, florals, activities, premium items, lions and tigers and bears, oh my!



#### ROAD SHOWS

When you need to take your business message to the street (or many streets on a tight schedule), we know how to deliver the often-complex event management and production needs driven by tight turnarounds and overlapping schedules. Rubik's Cube...? Solved!



#### VIDEO

This powerful medium adds energy to your program and can be designed and produced at all quality and price levels from GoPro Hero 3 to broadcast-worthy. We offer full-service video support, including concept, design, scripting, production, and editing.