

Chris Leonard

Speaker | Facilitator | Executive Coach

ICP-ENT • ICP-ACC • ICP-ATF • SAFe SPC • A-CSM • PMP • ITIL-F

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Chris Leonard is a keynote speaker, workshop facilitator, and executive coach who helps leaders and teams beat burnout, develop emotional intelligence, and build the resilience to perform at their highest sustainable level. Drawing on over a decade of leading large-scale organizational transformations at companies including Amgen, Pfizer, Merck, and Ahold Delhaize — and years managing touring productions for national recording artists — Chris brings a rare combination of practitioner depth and stage presence to every engagement.

His facilitation approach is interactive and coaching-oriented — designed to move audiences from inspiration to action. Whether delivering a keynote, leading a workshop, or working one-on-one with an executive, Chris balances organizational needs with individual mission to help clients achieve their highest sustainable performance and build the career legacy they want.

ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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| 70+ Speaking Clients | 90+ Total Engagements |
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SIGNATURE KEYNOTES & WORKSHOPS

Keynotes

- Signal from the Soul — Beating burnout with purpose; reframing burnout as a performance risk and reconnecting teams to mission
- You Made It. Now What? — Navigating leadership milestones and the identity challenges that follow achievement
- Mirror Moments: The Pivots That Change Everything — How the inflection points that stop us cold become the moments that define us

Workshops & Breakouts

- Lean and Clean: The Art of Giving (and Receiving) Crucial Feedback — Practical frameworks for feedback that builds rather than breaks
- Making Space for Joy — AI tools for creative problem-solving and reclaiming energy from draining work
- Weighing the Cost of Intervention — How to speak up effectively, and when the price of silence is too high

Technical & Organizational Topics

- Business Agility & Agile Transformation
- Change Management & Organizational Design
- Project & Program Management
- AI Product Development & Product Ownership
- Team Performance & High-Functioning Team Dynamics

SPEAKING VENUES & AUDIENCES

Chris has delivered engagements for professional associations, corporate teams, academic institutions, and government audiences including:

- DevOps Days
- Nashville Software School
- Project Management Institute (PMI)
- International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA)
- Agile and DevOps Meetup Communities
- Life sciences, healthcare, retail, technology, and government sector organizations

CONSULTING & PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

No Impediments — Principal | Nashville, TN | 2023–Present

Independent speaking, facilitation, and executive coaching practice focused on leadership development, team performance, and burnout prevention.

North Highland Global Consulting — Agile Transformation Coach | Nashville, TN | 2020–2023

Led large-scale agile transformations at Merck and Ahold Delhaize. Delivered SAFe POPM training, launched agile marketing teams, developed custom L&D curriculum, and grew the firm's transformation practice. Achieved a 75% reduction in marketing email lead time and \$6M in creative agency cost avoidance for a single client.

SmileDirectClub — Sr. Agile Coach | Nashville, TN | 2018–2020

Coached 25+ co-located and remote development teams. Launched 20 new engineering teams to successful product releases. Operationalized company mission and values through agile coaching.

Earlier Experience | 2012–2018

Program Manager and Scrum Master roles at ServiceSource, BMI, and Tractor Supply Company. Consistent focus on team coaching, agile adoption, and leadership development.

Touring Production Manager & Audio Engineer | Nashville, TN | 2009–2016

Managed full production operations — sound, lighting, staging, travel, and logistics — for national touring acts including Lee Ann Womack, Jars of Clay, RaeLynn, and others. Led road crews through relentless schedules, tight budgets, and constant change, coordinating every moving part of a touring operation across dozens of markets. The parallels to organizational coaching are direct: high-performing teams under pressure, competing priorities, and the daily discipline of getting the most out of people when there is no margin for error. This chapter informs Chris's facilitation in ways that no corporate credential can replicate.

CERTIFICATIONS

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| • IC Agile — Agile Coaching (ICP-ACC) | • IC Agile — Agility in the Enterprise (ICP-ENT) |
| • IC Agile — Agile Team Facilitation (ICP-ATF) | • SAFe Program Consultant (SPC) |
| • Scrum Alliance Advanced Certified Scrum Master (A-CSM) | • Project Management Professional (PMP) |
| • ITIL Foundations (ITIL-F) | |

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science | Greenville University | Greenville, Illinois | 2005