



International Platform Association

Speaker Bureau

*Bringing the World's Top Speakers
and Their Audiences Together
Since 1831.*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Founded in 1831, the International Platform Association Returns to the Stage — with a Chicago Event Pairing Top Speakers and the Planners Who Book Them

*Historic speakers' association relaunches October 6–7 in Chicago with
a curated speaker-meets-planner gathering*

CHICAGO, IL — June 30, 2026 — The International Platform Association (IPA), one of America's oldest speakers' organizations, will relaunch this fall with a curated gathering at Maggiano's Little Italy at Clark and Grand in Chicago on October 6–7, 2026, bringing professional speakers face-to-face with the meeting planners, event organizers, and program chairs who book them. The event marks the first chapter of a renewed IPA built for today's marketplace of ideas — and for the people who put the right voice on the right stage.

Where the historic IPA convened audiences around the great public lecture, the new IPA convenes the two parties who make great events happen: the speakers with something worth saying, and the planners searching for them. The October gathering is designed as a working room — part showcase, part matchmaking — not another conference of panels.

In a nod to its 1831 origins, the gathering will feature historical character speakers — live portrayals that bring the great figures of the platform tradition into the room — giving planners a memorable sense of the caliber and craft the IPA stands for.

"Every planner I know is hunting for speakers they can trust, and every great speaker is trying to get in front of the people who actually book the room," said Mitchell P. Davis, Chairman of the International Platform Association. "We're putting both in the same room in Chicago and getting out of the way. That's the whole idea."

Davis compares the relaunch to spring training in baseball — a place where experienced professionals sharpen their craft, refine their judgment, and mentor new talent before the season begins.

"Think of it as spring training for the platform", Davis said. "You come to get sharper, to learn from people who've done it, and to leave ready for the big leagues — stronger voices, stronger businesses, and a stronger public square".

The IPA carries serious history into the room. Founded in 1831 by statesman Daniel Webster and educator Josiah Holbrook as the American Lyceum movement, it grew into the premier showcase of American public discourse. Its past programs featured voices ranging from William F. Buckley and Carl Sagan to Barbara Walters and Art Buchwald. That legacy — a fellowship of proven voices serving the public square — is the foundation the relaunched Association is building on.

The renewed IPA will operate as a membership organization for thought leaders, subject-matter experts, and advocates — people who bring knowledge, integrity, and credibility to the platform and want to reach more audiences while helping one another improve their craft, their reach, and their service. Membership programs, original content, and conferences will follow the October launch.

"The Founders built a country where free and reasoned discourse mattered", Davis said. "The IPA inherits that charge — to steward credible voices who speak freely, think deeply, and serve the common good".



Format & Schedule

The two-day program on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 6–7, includes hosted breakfast and lunch each day at Maggiano's Little Italy, Clark and Grand. An optional Lake Michigan evening cruise is available Monday, October 5, for early arrivals looking to connect before the program begins.

At the heart of the program, dozens of speakers each take the platform in the fast-paced **PechaKucha format — 20 slides, 20 seconds each**, advancing automatically for a tight, visual showcase of just under seven minutes. The format keeps every presentation concise, image-driven, and moving, giving planners a fast, side-by-side look at real talent instead of a stack of one-sheets. Born in Tokyo in 2003 and named for the Japanese word for "chit-chat", PechaKucha lives by a simple rule — talk less, show more — which is exactly what a room full of busy planners wants. Structured networking runs throughout both days, so the introductions made on stage turn into conversations, connections, and future engagements.