



CHRIS BARTON

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

BIOGRAPHY

Chris Barton wanted a way to identify songs he was hearing everywhere around him. There wasn't one – so he invented an app called Shazam. Chris's creation is nothing short of pure magic. That was his goal. Chris seeks to delight people by using technology to make seemingly impossible ideas come to life. Shazam, which now has over two billion downloads, is just one of them. In addition to creating Shazam, which Apple acquired for \$400 million, Chris holds 12 patents and played key roles in the early days of Google and Dropbox. Despite having dyslexia, incredibly, he didn't let that get in his way. In fact, it gave him a different way of looking at problems. Chris's newest venture, Guard, aims to use AI to detect drowning in swimming pools. In his speeches, Chris's story and storytelling completely captivate audiences. He inspires people 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. When Chris had the idea to identify music using a mobile phone, 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 for a reported \$400 million, making it 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.