

Melissa Fors Shackelford

Purpose-Driven Leadership Speaker, Author & Growth Strategist

About Melissa

"Helping leaders turn purpose into performance and vision into action"



Melissa Fors Shackelford is a nationally recognized author and sought-after speaker, bringing over two decades of experience in purpose-driven leadership and strategic communication to healthcare, nonprofit, and technology leaders. As founder of Shackelford Strategies, she advises mission-driven startups and established organizations on scaling with integrity and fostering inclusive storytelling.

Her dynamic presentations combine insightful research with practical frameworks, empowering the next generation of leaders to build authentic connections and drive meaningful societal change. Melissa is the author of the Amazon #1 Bestseller, ***Harnessing Purpose: A Marketer's Guide to Inspiring Connection***, and has shared her expertise at prestigious forums, including the American Marketing Association, the American Hospital Association's Society for Healthcare Strategy and Market Development, the University of North Dakota and the University of Minnesota.

She has been honored as **Nonprofit Marketer of the Year** by the American Marketing Association and named one of the **Top 50 Women in Healthcare** for her leadership and impact in mission-driven fields.

Signature Talks

Healthcare:

Breaking Barriers: Understanding and Addressing Stigma in Healthcare Marketing

Stigma quietly erodes trust, engagement, and outcomes. This session shows how to spot it, remove it, and replace it with language that respects people and strengthens credibility.

Audience leaves with: Stigma-Safe Messaging Checklist, fast copy audit method, before-and-after rewrite examples tailored to healthcare communications.

AI Can't Rebuild Trust: The Human Side of Innovation in Healthcare

Technology can scale access, but it cannot manufacture trust. This keynote reframes "innovation" around human proof, clarity, and accountability so adoption becomes possible.

Audience leaves with: Trust-by-Design framework, messaging do's and don'ts for AI and automation, a simple model for measuring trust beyond satisfaction scores.

Leadership & Communication:

Harnessing Purpose in the Employee Experience: Building Engagement, Retention and Trust

In constant change, people do not just want direction, they want meaning. This session helps leaders turn purpose into daily behaviors that build engagement and keep teams anchored.

Audience leaves with: Manager conversation guide, purpose-to-performance alignment prompts, an internal communication cadence leaders can implement immediately.

The Hidden Power of Purpose: Why Meaning, Not Metrics, Will Shape Your Future

Metrics matter, but meaning is what people follow. This keynote gives leaders a clear way to use purpose as a decision tool that drives loyalty, resilience, and long-term results.

Audience leaves with: Purpose-to-Decision filter, "what purpose looks like in practice" behaviors, a balanced measurement approach that connects meaning to performance.

Marketing:

Harnessing Purpose: How Marketers can Lead with Meaning and Still Drive Results

Purpose does not replace performance. It improves it. This session equips marketers to align brand and culture, create high-impact campaigns, and prove results with credibility.

Audience leaves with: Purpose-led campaign brief template, messaging architecture that ties to outcomes, KPI map that connects purpose to action and conversion.

Marketing With a Conscience: Reclaiming Integrity in a Purpose-Driven World

In a world of skepticism, integrity is not a nice-to-have. It is a competitive advantage. This talk helps leaders navigate complex issues with purpose as a compass while reducing reputational risk.

Audience leaves with: Ethical marketing decision checklist, trust and harm pre-mortem method, practical language guidelines for transparency without overpromising.

Testimonials

"The conversation was energizing, leaving me with with a clear takeaway: the critical importance of leading with your full, authentic self"

Lindsay Amundson, CMO, Sabrosura Foods

"Melissa, it is so refreshing to hear your passion for healthcare marketing and how there are real outcomes with the content we put out there"

Andy Pondillo, The Making of a Marketer

Awards & Recognition

- Nonprofit Marketer of the Year, American Marketing Association
- Women's Health Leadership TRUST Award
- Top 50 Women in Healthcare (2025)
- #1 Amazon Bestseller, *Harnessing Purpose: A Marketer's Guide to Inspiring Connection*



Book Melissa for Your Next Event

To inquire about availability, fees, or to request Melissa's keynote for your conference, please contact:

Email: melissa@shackelfordstrategies.com | **YouTube:** @MelissaForsShackelford

Website: www.melissaforsshackelford.com | **LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/MFors](https://www.linkedin.com/in/MFors)