



As a Faculty Member, “I visit the people in their homes”

This summer it has been eight years since I presented my last news bulletin for NOS News. My almost 25 years with national broadcasters suddenly ended. Although I had been feeling slightly light-headed during the entire afternoon shift, at the end of it, without really thinking about it, I called out “see you tomorrow!” and left for home. Things turned out differently.

The fact that my physician urged me the next day to take a couple of weeks rest, the fact that I presented one last programme for NOS Actueel a month later because most of that programme happened to be pre-recorded already, the fact that, shortly after that, I said my last goodbyes to my employer after quite some “troublesome hassle”, are things that can happen in any life.

For a while, it felt as if all solid ground had disappeared from beneath my feet. There I was, without a job, colleagues or any idea of what was to follow. Fortunately, I didn’t let it dampen my spirits. In fact, it became clear very soon that there was a lot to be gained from inadvertently finding myself in a position of being able to reinvent myself. Suddenly, I was able to start thinking seriously about what I want and what I can do, about how to combine those 25 years of knowledge and experience. Giving direction to my own fate, led by what interests me, by my own passions, talents, character and health was a blank canvas on which the contours of my company [Hunk-art](#) quickly started appearing.

Now, eight years later, I lead the life that would have made me envious if it wasn’t my own. Every day, I try to give meaning to the title I gave myself: *global freestyle multimedia journalist*. I film and direct videos for clients, produce travelogues using video, text and [iphoneography](#), give media training and workshops for presenters, and am a Faculty Member at Speakers Academy® - the bulk of my work.

As a Faculty Member, “I visit the people in their homes”, I always say. What I mean is that – for me – each assignment starts with getting to know my client and his or her expectations of the event of which I am moderator, speaker, presenter or debate leader. Every client is different and has different wishes and interests. The preparations for the day are therefore as important to me as the day itself.

A personal meeting with the client and continual consultation over the script are a must. This is how the client and I determine where to plan the substantial emphasis of the day, where there is room for levity, how we can use the set and technology to our benefit and how to seamlessly navigate from one item to the next. With these data, I create my own detailed script that excludes the unexpected but leaves plenty of room for spontaneity, interaction with the audience and improvisation.

The beauty of working for Speakers Academy® is the enormous diversity of international organisations with which I come into contact. It can be students at the School of the Arts who invite me to moderate their two-day student conference, or I can find myself leading hundreds of scientists or innovation experts from across the globe through a symposium of several days for DSM Nederland. Then again, I am involved in events for ministries, provinces, communities, companies, universities or (European) cultural foundations – a different assignment every time, a different audience and a different message, sometimes in different languages consecutively. This is what makes it so interesting.

My childhood and upbringing on four continents have brought me a broad outlook on society. My years as a broadcaster have taught me to work with scripts, with accuracy, with sound and vision, with changing pace and with atmosphere. Directing, editing and presenting are all skills and I have been fortunate enough to learn from the best professionals we have in the Netherlands. To be able to use these competences to my own benefit now is what I consider to be my wealth and freedom.

I recently ran into a former NOS colleague during the opening of an exhibition. He told me he had the feeling he was uncomfortably glued to his comfortable chair in the newsroom. All I could think was: “I’m so happy that things went the way they went, eight years ago!”

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