Genius PR

CASE STUDY

Nate Herk

From YouTube reach to Inc. authority

Genius PR · Four-month media programme · August–November 2026 · geniuspr.com

Situation

Nate Herk is the founder of AI Automation Society (AIS), the education and community business behind one of YouTube's largest practical-AI channels. By late summer 2026 he had passed one million YouTube subscribers, built a free community of about 450,000 members, launched a paid tier and a Certified AI Consultant programme, and published the Amazon-bestselling book *Becoming AI Native*. He had come to that work from a business-intelligence role at Goldman Sachs, not from a software-engineering background.

The problem was not awareness. A Genius PR go-to-market plan written in August 2026 put it in one line: he did not have an awareness problem, he had a belief problem. Buyers searching his name found a large creator and very little independent, institutional press — no flagship profile, no awards circuit, no major podcast run — at the moment AIS was trying to turn a popular education brand into a credential employers would recognise.

Task

Genius PR was hired under an agreement with CRG Management LLC, completed on 25 August 2026, to build founder, operator and investor credibility around Nate and AIS. The four-month programme was designed as 12 flagship and 24 supporting placements, with four clear objectives:

1. Land a tier-one origin-story feature — Inc. was the first named target — so an independent outlet, not only YouTube, vouched for the founder story.

2. Put Nate into a regular commentary circuit on AI, work and automation, so journalists had a reason to come back between features.
3. Book high-relevance podcasts and conference stages, including a Forbes 30 Under 30 nomination submitted at the start of the engagement, and bigger shows later in the programme.
4. Use original proof — especially a member survey — to make the AIS certification and "AI-native workforce" narrative something editors could report, not only a brand claim.

Action

Account lead sat with Jeffrey Chow and Bradley. The client channel was Slack #ais-geniuspr, opened on 28 August 2026, with onboarding calls on 28 August and 7 September. Strategy was set in an 18 August session and in the written go-to-market plan: first explain the problem, then prove the solution, then define the market, then aim to own the category.

An origin story, with data editors could use

The core pitch was not "a YouTuber with a big audience." It was a former Goldman Sachs analyst who had built a self-taught AI workforce, and a survey of more than 1,000 AIS members that found only 1.5% had learned AI mainly through employer training. That exclusive was offered to Inc. and became the spine of the 30 October feature. A shorter Inc. expert piece on 22 September, on why experience still beats polished AI-generated content, opened the relationship.

Commentary, then a byline

Between features, the team turned Nate into a usable quote for breaking AI stories. TheStreet ran a string of commentary placements from September through mid-November, on AI and financial decisions, the AI race, agents in payments, and agents in social trading. Investing.com published his commentary on OpenAI's "kill switch" on 11 November. Phoenix News / iFeng cited his GPT-6 Astra experiment in a 7 October technology feature. On 16 October, AI Journal ran a bylined op-ed, "Knowing how to use AI is no longer enough," under his name as CEO and founder of AIS.

Podcasts and a conference that had to be rebuilt

The first published podcast of the engagement was AI InterConnect, released on 30 September — a founder conversation on building an AI automation business and the AIS community. Other shows were booked or are still being

scheduled, including a Forbes Future of Work studio interview confirmed for 3 December 2026 in Jersey City.

Web Summit in Lisbon was the first major conference play: a Future of Work stage slot, then a planned interview series with companies including Replit, Manus, Lovable, You.com, Higgsfield, Cloudflare, Genspark, Runway, Atlassian and Black Forest Labs, plus pitches onward to TIME, The Interface, TechCrunch and CES. On 6 November the organiser cancelled the confirmed speaking slot and issued a media pass instead. Genius PR kept Nate on site, confirmed the pass, and converted the week into recorded media interviews with HKET and Forbes and company conversations including Higgsfield and Atlassian. A photo set from the week is at 25horasports.pixieset.com/websummit27nate (https://25horasports.pixieset.com/websummit27nate/). Those interviews were still pending publication as of mid-November.

Results

From the late-August start through 25 November 2026, 11 placements have a verified public URL: three Inc. stories, four TheStreet commentaries, one Investing.com analysis, one AI Journal op-ed, one iFeng citation, and one published podcast. Notion also marks several further items as approved or booked, but they are not counted below until a live link is confirmed.

Media coverage

- Inc. published three pieces: a 22 September expert article on credibility in an AI-content era; a 21 October comment in a feature on breaking into legacy industries; and a 30 October founder feature, “He Left Goldman Sachs to Teach AI on YouTube…,” built around the AIS member survey. Inc. described AI Automation Society as one of the biggest communities for people teaching themselves AI. The 30 October story is now linked from the AIS homepage.
- The survey, first shared with Inc., found that 76% of more than 1,000 members learned AI mainly through free content or their own experimenting, and only 1.5% named employer training as their main route. Among other findings reported in the piece: 85.1% said AI skills saved them time, and 60.6% felt more secure in their jobs because of those skills.
- Commentary placements included four TheStreet stories (7 September, 16 September, 9 October and 18 November), Investing.com on 11 November, and a 7 October iFeng feature that cited Nate’s Astra video experiment.

- AI Journal published Nate's bylined op-ed on 16 October, arguing that proof of work, not tool fluency, is becoming the hiring test for AI.

Podcasts and stages

- AI InterConnect Podcast, "How to Build a Successful AI Automation Agency," published 30 September 2026 (YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jm2-Ztb4ufc); episode page (https://www.aiinterconnect.com/podcast/nate-herk)).
- A Forbes Future of Work podcast interview is booked for Thursday 3 December 2026, 1–2pm ET, at the Forbes studio in Jersey City. Calendar holds have been accepted; it has not yet been recorded or published.
- An ETN Show live interview was briefed and scheduled for 24 November 2026. A public episode link has not yet been located.
- Web Summit (9–12 November, Lisbon): the Future of Work speaking slot was withdrawn by the organiser and replaced with a media pass. Media interviews with HKET and Forbes, and company conversations including Higgsfield and Atlassian, were recorded or held on site and were still awaiting publication as of the 13 November weekly report.

Still in flight

- Forbes 30 Under 30: the nomination was submitted at the start of the engagement (25 August). A December list has been referenced in correspondence; the outcome is not yet known and is not claimed as a result.
- Notion lists further approved or in-progress items without a live URL, including Fast Company, a Guardian op-ed, Benzinga, and Forbes collaborations logged as "On the Margin" and "The Gut Punch Podcast." A WhatsApp summary records a Forbes podcast with Steve around October, but the Telegram record only shows a 28 September pitch to Steve Bertoni with no confirmed booking; no public URL has been found. A separate Forbes Future of Work studio date is confirmed for 3 December.
- Other booked or proposed podcasts in the client portal, still without public links, include On the Margin, The Index, Machine Dreams, Creators Build and How I AI.
- A further Investing.com commentary opportunity was sent on 24 November; publication, if any, is not yet confirmed.

Social-reach, search-ranking and certification-enrolment figures were discussed as success signals in the original plan. Those numbers were not found in Slack, Drive or the Notion reports tabs reviewed for this draft, so they are omitted rather than estimated.

Impact

The job was to move Nate Herk from a very large owned audience to press that independent buyers, conference programmers and awards desks already trust. In the first three months, that shift is visible: Inc. told the origin story and published the member survey, a bylined AI Journal essay set out the certification argument, and a commentary circuit at TheStreet and Investing.com gave editors a reason to return.

The Web Summit week showed the same approach under pressure. When a confirmed stage slot disappeared, the team held the media pass and came back with recorded interviews and founder conversations rather than an empty trip. The next public test is already on the calendar: a Forbes studio interview in December, with the 30 Under 30 outcome still ahead.

Links

Live URLs verified from the client portal, Slack, Medialyst, the AIS site or the publisher's page. Rows without a URL are recorded in the research notes as gaps.

Inc. — Anyone Can Make Polished Content Now. Experience Is What Makes It Credible
https://www.inc.com/kamya-marwah/anyone-can-make-polished-content-now-experience-is-what-makes-it-credible/91408444
(22 September 2026)

Inc. — Breaking Into a Legacy Industry Is Hard. Here's the Playbook That's Working
https://www.inc.com/hillary-remy/break-into-legacy-industry-startup-founders-entrepreneurs/91422637
(21 October 2026)

Inc. — He Left Goldman Sachs to Teach AI on YouTube. 1 Million Subscribers Later, He Says These Are the Essential AI Skills to Stay Ahead at Work
https://www.inc.com/tobi-opeyemi-amure/goldman-sachs-youtube-ai-skills-get-ahead-work/91428479
(30 October 2026)

AI Journal — Knowing how to use AI is no longer enough
https://aijourn.com/knowing-how-to-use-ai-is-no-longer-enough/
(Nate Herk byline, 16 October 2026)

TheStreet — The AI race has a growing problem nobody can ignore

https://www.thestreet.com/technology/the-ai-race-has-a-growing-problem-nobody-can-ignore
(16 September 2026)

TheStreet — What new data reveals about Americans and AI financial decisions
https://www.thestreet.com/technology/what-new-data-reveals-about-americans-and-ai-financial-decisions
(7 September 2026)

TheStreet — The AI agent race is creating a new battleground for payments
https://www.thestreet.com/technology/the-ai-agent-race-is-creating-a-new-battleground-for-payments
(9 October 2026)

TheStreet — AI agents could change a familiar Wall Street habit
https://www.thestreet.com/markets/ai-agents-could-change-a-familiar-wall-street-habit
(18 November 2026)

Investing.com — OpenAI Built an AI Kill Switch: Who Holds Yours?
https://www.investing.com/analysis/openai-built-an-ai-kill-switch-who-holds-yours-200691363
(11 November 2026)

iFeng — Claude, GPT “cross-border” make videos, are Seedance’s moats still stable?
https://tech.ifeng.com/c/8x1iEl3LBTt
(7 October 2026)

AI InterConnect Podcast — How to Build a Successful AI Automation Agency
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jm2-Ztb4ufc
(30 September 2026)

Web Summit photos — Lisbon photo set
https://25horasports.pixieset.com/websummit27nate/
(November 2026)

Summary

11

Verified live placements

Articles and one podcast with public URLs, September–November 2026

3

Inc. stories

Including a 30 October founder feature built around an AIS member survey

1.5%

Survey finding

Share of surveyed members who learned AI mainly through employer training

1

Published podcast

AI InterConnect, 30 September, with a Forbes studio interview booked for 3 December

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Genius PR · geniuspr.com (https://geniuspr.com) · Case study draft, 25 November 2026

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Facts in this document are drawn from Slack #ais-geniuspr, the Nate Herk Notion portal, Google Drive, Gmail, PandaDoc, Read.ai, Medialyst, Perigon and a WhatsApp history summary. Fees, unpublished commercial terms and internal account notes are omitted. Official AIS marks are used from aiautomationsociety.ai; logo permission for the website should still be confirmed with the client.