

Digital Authority Starts With a Leader: CIPR Communications CEO Christina Pilarski Featured on Small Brave Moves Podcast

Calgary agency founder on why AI search has made brand authority urgent, and what it took to hand off 40 client projects she once managed herself.

CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA, August 14, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Christina Pilarski, founder and CEO of [CIPR Communications](#), joined executive coach and bestselling author Nicole M. Bianchi on the Small Brave Moves podcast for a conversation about digital authority and the leadership habits that quietly work against it. The episode, "Own Your Authority as a Leader Without Losing Your Humanity," released July 29, 2026 as Episode 85 of the weekly series.

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Never has there been a more important time to know how you want to show up in the world”

Christina Pilarski, founder and CEO of CIPR Communications

Pilarski left a corporate communications career in 2010 to co-found CIPR with her business partner and husband,

Peter Pilarski. The agency now serves tourism destinations, hospitality brands and service companies across North America, and in June 2026 won Gold for Most AI-Ready Agency at the 2026 Bulldog PR Awards. Across the 26-minute episode, Pilarski argued that the authority brands compete for in search results and AI answers is no longer optional to think about.

"Never has there been a more important time to know how you want to show up in the world," said Pilarski. "If you're not thinking about that, AI and search are going to start telling people what they should think of you. That's why digital authority is what we're leaning into as an agency right now."

Bianchi, who hosts the show and coached Pilarski through a leadership retreat last year, framed the episode around the premise Pilarski has built her agency on.

"Christina built a company on a belief that most brands get backwards, that authority isn't something you earn after people notice you. It's something you build before anyone ever asks for it," said Bianchi. "What makes this conversation different is that the woman who helps brands show up with authority had her own honest reckoning with claiming it for herself. She

stepped boldly into that authority."

Much of the discussion focused on what that cost. Pilarski described a period when she personally project-managed roughly 40 client accounts, insisting every piece of work carry her review before it left the agency. She now manages none of them, a shift she credits to building systems that hold the standard she used to enforce by hand.

"At the height of my unhealthy leadership behaviour, I was project managing 40 clients. That is not sustainable," said Pilarski. "The moment I stopped trying to control everything, everything changed. My name is still on the door, but it isn't my expertise at the table anymore. It's the team's."

CIPR COMMUNICATIONS

CIPR Communications is a full-service marketing communications agency that services clients in various industries across North America.

The episode also covers Pilarski's years of reluctance to put CEO on a business card, and the conversation in which she admitted to her leadership team that she was at a career crossroads.

The full episode is available [on Small Brave Moves](#), Apple Podcasts, Spotify and YouTube.

About CIPR Communications

CIPR Communications is a full-service marketing communications agency that services clients in various industries across North America. Founded in Calgary in 2010 by Christina and Peter Pilarski, CIPR specializes in digital PR, AI-enabled marketing and digital authority strategy for tourism, hospitality and service brands. Learn more at ciprcommunications.com.

About Small Brave Moves

Small Brave Moves is a weekly leadership podcast hosted by Nicole M. Bianchi, master certified executive coach, bestselling author and Certified Speaking Professional. The show has published 88 episodes since 2024.

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