

<https://ctrlclickcast.com/episodes/diversity-inclusion-at-peers-conference>

CTRL+CLICK CAST #85

Inclusion & Diversity at Peers Conference with Jess D'Amico

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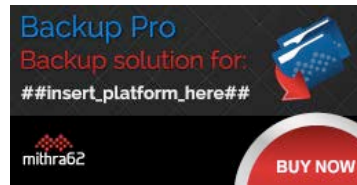
Preview: When we narrow our perspective and only hear from one dominant voice, that frame of reference can be sometimes a little bit too comfortable or familiar or common and why wouldn't we want to hear from a range of voices and different experiences. I think we all benefit from that.

[Music]

Lea Alcantara: From [Bright Umbrella](#), this is CTRL+CLICK CAST! We inspect the web for you! Today our friend, Jess D'Amico returns to the show to talk about how Peers Conference is embracing inclusion and diversity. I'm your host, Lea Alcantara, and I'm joined by my fab co-host:

Emily Lewis: Emily Lewis!

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Emily Lewis: We are so excited to have Jess D'Amico back on the show today. Our listeners may remember her from our EE Podcast days when [we had her on for our Get to Know #eecms series](#). That was nearly four years ago and I think just before she created Peers Conference, which is what we're talking about today. Peers is a therapeutic gathering of entrepreneurs. It has been lauded by speakers and attendees alike, known for excellent content, a diverse range of speakers, and its supportive, compassionate community.

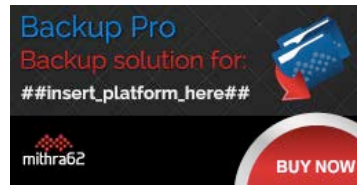
Great to have you back, Jess, welcome!

Jess D'Amico: Thank you! Thank you for having me! It's great to be back!

Lea Alcantara: So Jess, can you tell our listeners a bit more about yourself?

Jess D'Amico: Sure. I'm a web generalist from pretty much the dawn of the web.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



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Jess D'Amico: I live in Washington, DC with my husband and son, and that's pretty much sort of, you mentioned earlier, hobbies. I wish I could say I had more hobbies.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: But I have a 6-year-old.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: And my life includes a lot of Lego and a lot of Star Wars lightsaber battles.

Emily Lewis: Oh, those are good hobbies. [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: [Laughs] They are. I'm getting really good.

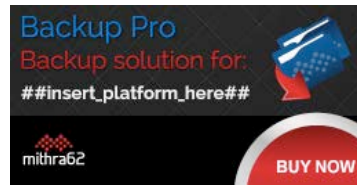
Emily Lewis: So I mentioned when we started, I think the last time we talked to you was before Peers was something that we knew about. Why did you create Peers? How did that evolve?

Jess D'Amico: Yes, so we are heading into our fifth Peers, which is so exciting.

Emily Lewis: Wow!

Jess D'Amico: And the first time we did get together was sort of the dawn of Peers or about its first event. Peers kind of came about for two key reasons. I think one was that in attending events myself within sort of a LAMP and CMS sphere that I was working within, they're always seemed to be the same core group of people that were speaking.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: And I think that this isn't an issue only within the events I was attending. It seems to be something that happens across the board, but what I was feeling was when you're part of a smart community and you know a smart group of people, it feels like the people sitting in the audience really are as valuable and as knowledgeable as some of the people that are called upon to present.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: And there's nothing against people who are speaking over and over. I think it's just that sometimes you look around and think, "Geez, so many of these people in this room could be up on stage. Why aren't there?"

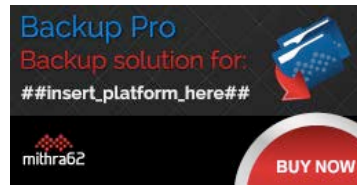
Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: And so that idea, coupled with the fact that within that community that I'm a part of within this sort of CMS-related ecosphere, it was in a way a fracturing time a little bit in that community.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: People were starting to evolve. They were building and embracing new tools, and it seemed like the time was right to see if we couldn't do something that went beyond just one tool and one skillset, and I felt strongly that as a community we could embrace and support more than one tool, and I think we've shown that that's absolutely true. We can still be friends even if we don't spend an entire day using the same system.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: I'm not sure everyone believed that in the beginning, but you're so right. I'm so glad things have worked out the way they have in this CMS community.

Jess D'Amico: Me too.

Lea Alcantara: Was that always obvious from the beginning versus now?

Jess D'Amico: Well, I think in the beginning there probably was a larger CMS or software-related focus potentially to Peers that really has shifted.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

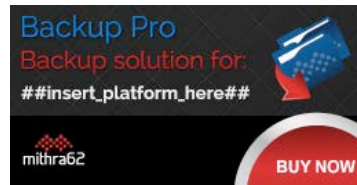
Jess D'Amico: Because I think that as we've evolved as a conference, we've started to look at our content more in the sense of larger-frame skillset perhaps and not so much focused on the individual tools.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: And I think in a lot of ways, maybe that's something that makes Peers appealing to a larger group of people is that they don't have to feel like they are embracing only one choice because when you come to Peers, it's very likely that we will have something that's PHP related, something that's front-end related.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Jess D’Amico: There’s going to be a JavaScript talk, and so maybe it really doesn’t matter whether you’re even using a CMS or building an app. Maybe it’s more along the lines of these are the building blocks of development that bring you in the door.

Emily Lewis: You’re describing content that’s diverse and you’re describing sort of a shift that happened in the CMS ecosystem, as you put it, a couple of years back where it almost had to become more inclusive. We had to start embracing new software instead of... I mean, frankly, everyone knows what we’re talking about. Everyone loved ExpressionEngine and then all of a sudden, people were angry [laughs] at EllisLab and EE for a period of time. That sort of coincided with the emergence of some new content management system options out there, and I feel like at the beginning of Peers, sitting back and looking at how people were talking about it, everyone was like, “Well, how are EE and Craft going to get along? [Laughs] How is everyone going to get along at the conference?” But it’s not been an issue. So from that perspective, it’s been diverse and inclusive, but that’s sort of a narrow approach to diversity and inclusion. How have you defined that for your conference and embraced it?

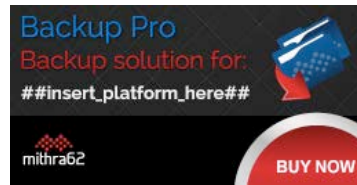
Jess D’Amico: Well, I think, hopefully, in some ways, it’s just by sort of a fitting a model for good behavior.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jess D’Amico: Although I’m not sure I am that model.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jess D’Amico: But [laughs], I think the other thing is that again you really can’t keep a narrow scope. I think the bigger issue is not focusing on the tools, but focusing on the people.



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Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: And that, when we talk about diversity and inclusion, what my goal always is to say to the larger world out there, regardless of what tool they use or even really if they're using a tool at all, it's more along the lines of you are welcome. If you're spending the day building something, if you're spending the day managing a project or managing a team, and if you're spending the day running a software business or running an agency, you are welcome here. You're going to find something for you at this conference and you're going to find someone or a group of someones who share your experience.

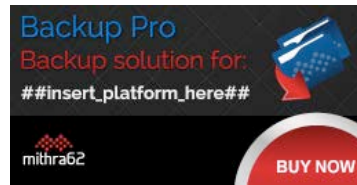
Lea Alcantara: So when you were defining all of this, like were you very specific in regards to, because right now it seems the general idea of diversity, like everyone is included, but generally speaking, when people talk about diversity and inclusion, we're talking about marginalized communities, and when I'm saying that, I mean, people of different genders or gender identities as well as different sexualities as well as people of color. Was that something that you were intentional about when you are thinking about diversity or did that just kind of naturally evolve when you wanted to create an open environment and everyone is welcome kind of theme?

Jess D'Amico: That's a great question. I think that really it is an evolution. I think in the beginning, there wasn't a grand master plan.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: And there still isn't along the lines of, "Oh, we must be X, Y or Z." And I think that if anything running a conference and working with more people has taught me, it certainly cannot be all things to all people.



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Lea Alcantara: Right.

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Jess D'Amico: I'm guilty sometimes of trying to try. I will say though that from my own experience, attending conferences over the years and not always feeling that "I belong there" or feeling other people's reactions towards me of, "Hmm, who are you?"

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

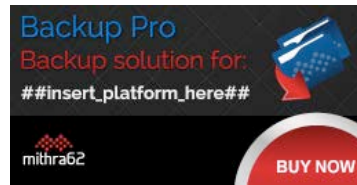
Jess D'Amico: While it wasn't something that I originally thought I want to reach out to X, Y, Z community or set specific goals in place, I want people to feel like they are valuable and have worth at Peers and that they are welcome there. I don't want anyone to ever walk in the room and sort of feel like a needle on the record of "Gee, who are you?"

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Jess D'Amico: And I think that by being very open, at least I hope by being very open, by being transparent about that goal and by setting, again, a friendly and, I hope, inclusive tone. We are saying year after year, "This is an event for you no matter who you are." I think one of the things that I've tried to do though along the way is reach out to different speakers and/or encourage different speakers who might have felt previously that they didn't see themselves on stage.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Jess D’Amico: And I think when we talk about marginalized communities in any scheme of society, whether it be the workplace or whether it be television or anything else, I think it comes down to the ability to see one’s self, and that’s what most people feel like they want to see themselves in a setting.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D’Amico: And so if we can do that because we are including a variety of speakers from all walks of life and from all gender identities and, hopefully, that are representing various ethnic groups, also that are representing various areas of both experience and age, I’m hoping that in doing that we can walk the walk and show people, “Hey, you belong here. You will see yourself here.”

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jess D’Amico: That I think is the long-term goal.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I want to talk a little bit about the speakers, but before that, it’s clear to me the benefit of having this type of inclusive environment is so that one people are comfortable and get something from being there, whether it’s from camaraderie or professional advice or they learn something new, but are there benefits? Are there bigger benefits for the conference itself being something that is known to be diverse and inclusive?

Jess D’Amico: Well, I hope so. I don’t know if there are sort of an immediate takeaways in terms of that, but again, I’m going to just bring it back to the goals of saying, “If we felt as an event, we could bring more people to the table and have more people in the room, why wouldn’t we want to do that?”



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Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D’Amico: And if we felt that we could reach out to various groups of people and say, “Gee, you coded in Python last year, and hey, you designed something last year, and hey, you two don’t look anything alike,” and maybe there are 20 years of difference between you, but we still think that you could sit down and learn from each other, why wouldn’t we want to do that? I think when we narrow our perspective and only hear from one dominant voice, that frame of reference can be sometimes a little bit too comfortable or familiar or common, and why wouldn’t we want to hear from a range of voices and different experiences.”

Emily Lewis: Yes.

Jess D’Amico: I think we all benefit from that.

Emily Lewis: Absolutely.

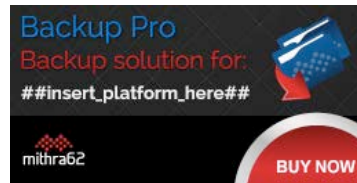
Lea Alcantara: Yeah, I would say that my perspective is that you don’t know what you don’t know, right?

Jess D’Amico: Exactly.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And the only way you can go past that is to get out of your comfort zone and speak to people of different experiences at the end of the day.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Lea Alcantara: It's comfortable, of course, hanging out with people of like minds or like backgrounds, et cetera and so forth, but anytime you want to grow as a professional or as a person, the only way to do that is to find different perspectives or different ways to give you the same thing.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Now, clearly, all three of us agree on the benefit. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: No one really hears disagreeing about that, but playing devil's advocate, are there any particular drawbacks as an organizer for you by having this type of mindset and way of running a conference?

Jess D'Amico: I wouldn't say drawbacks in the way that perhaps other people might look at it. What I will say is, and again, this is something that I'm really proud of, is that I think we've become known as a conference where you can find your footing as a speaker, and I have said through the years that we champion first-timers, and I mean it. If you've never spoken at a conference before and you feel strongly that you have something to share, chances are you should submit to Peers, and maybe you have, we, I think, our many years have an almost equal balance of people who are either within the speaker circuit or very comfortable speaking and people who are speaking for their first time. I would say that while that's not a drawback in terms of an event, sometimes it can be harder to build your audience on the ideas of first-timers.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.



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Jess D'Amico: I will say though, on the opposite side of that, from a very positive, I think it speaks to the wonderful, amazing audience of Peers in the fact that it is a fantastic community and it's full of respectful people who come back year after year and they, as an audience, have always welcomed and embraced and been so supportive of both our first-timers and our mainstream speakers and it really shows, there's always a lot of respect and love in the room.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: I just also want to point out that even the mainstream speakers had to speak for the first time at one point in their lives.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. [Laughs]

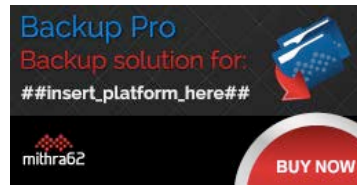
Lea Alcantara: I still remember 10-plus years ago when I first started speaking and a lot of the mainstream names that we know now, they were also speaking for the first time at that time, and conferences weren't as vast and prolific as it is these days, and so at some point, somebody needs to start somewhere.

Jess D'Amico: Absolutely.

Emily Lewis: And I'm one of those who I find it refreshing. I haven't been to a tech event in probably – what – a year and a half.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: But if I look at the lineup of any given tech event this year, it's probably pretty close to what I saw two years ago at my last tech event. I find it extremely representing as someone who's throwing down \$500, maybe more, to attend an event to I've already seen so and so speak, three



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times actually because they're so popular, but I know what they have to say. I've heard it and I'm want to hear other voices and other ideas about how other people work.

Jess D'Amico: Yeah, I think absolutely. I also think it's just – again, I totally understand where that comes from. I think it can happen because sometimes it's easier and sometimes you get people who's been over and over and sometimes maybe it's a little bit of taking the easy way out on a part of organizers or failing to kind of try to make your own awareness more broad, but I've just found it's so nice when we can have new people, and I think, yeah, it takes a little bit more work sometimes to try to stay aware and encourage people and give them a nudge.

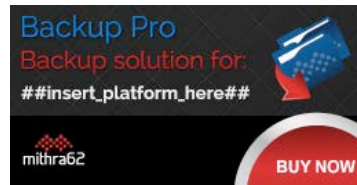
Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: We have had times where we've reached out to people and said, "You know, we think you would make a good speaker. We hope you will consider applying." If you are a first-time speaker and you come to us and say, "Gee, I'm a little nervous or I'm trying something out for the first time," I mean what I say when I say that I want to foster the growth and development of people and try to help support them in any way I can. So if you are a first-timer, chances are you and I are going to spend some time on the phone.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: I may help you with an outline. I may help you build an understanding of our audience in any way I can, and I'm certainly going to want to maybe even hear your talk by myself and encourage you to practice it as much as possible. So I'm hoping we can do everything we can do on our end to just encourage people to give it a shot.

Emily Lewis: Jess, that's just so nice. If I can put a personal anecdote there, when I was beginning my brief public speaking career, I was very interested in speaking at a relatively large, well-known



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event, and I spoke to one of the organizers. I'm one of those wear-my-heart-on-my-sleeve people and so I expressed, "You know, I'm nervous, you know? Do you have any tips?" And the very act, the very statement of me expressing my nervousness essentially took me off of his list. He didn't want anyone with nerves. He didn't want anyone who was questioning themselves. He only wanted a certain type of proficient...

Lea Alcantara: Polished or...

Emily Lewis: Yeah, something like that.

Jess D'Amico: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: And it really turned me off not only to that event, but just that idea like I was really excited to talk about something and share something that I knew with a larger audience and he was fine and excited about it until I expressed my personal feelings about being nervous, and I think you should be able to do that because you want your conference organizer to be supportive of you.

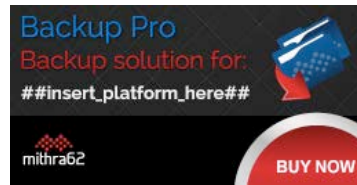
Jess D'Amico: Yeah. I think that's crap.

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Jess D'Amico: And I think also on two fronts, one, it's asking for perfection that nobody has, but also I hope no one is more nervous to get on stage at Peers than I am. [Laughs]

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Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



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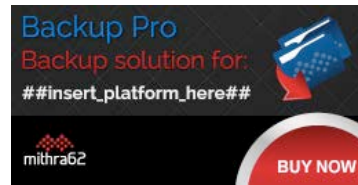
Jess D'Amico: And I get on stage constantly throughout the event, and the audience knows, like when I first started out, I'm sort of gripping the podium like, "Hi guys, it's another new year, yehey!" And somewhere through the event, I kind of find my rhythm, but I think it is your job, like I wanted to be able to say that Peers rises and falls on its content, and in order to do that, that means it's all about the speakers. People don't come to this event to see me, they come to see an amazing group of professionals and hopefully learn something of value that they can take home and use in their business throughout the year, and I take that really seriously. I know they have limited time and a limited budget and they have to make a choice every year about which event they can attend, if any, and that attendance is an honor. I want to earn it.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, absolutely, and I think it's so strange that anyone would be put off by like anybody who is nervous because I think nervousness is a natural reaction to caring about something, right?

Jess D'Amico: Absolutely.

Lea Alcantara: And so I think anybody who is slightly nervous cares about what they're doing, and I think it's just a natural physiological reaction. It's not unnatural at all. And even me, I'm not the shy type of person, but I always get nerves that nobody notices because I care about what I'm about to say. So anybody who is listening who is nervous about speaking, it's completely natural and find a peer who is there to support you and cheer you on along the way, and just another like side note, for example, like Emma Stone who is this famous actress who I love, she constantly talks about how she has anxiety attacks because that's just who she is, she gets nervous whenever she has to act and do certain things, and yet you don't see that on screen because she's a professional. The thing is nerves are natural. It's fine. You'll get through it.

Jess D'Amico: I think sometimes people are confusing nervousness with a lack of preparation.



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Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: Yes. Or incompetence.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: So it's important to understand that you should prepare and prepare and prepare and over prepare, and in that context, you may or may not still be nervous, but even if you're nervous, people will understand that it's the act of standing on the stage in front of people, not that you don't know what you're talking about and that you didn't do your homework.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

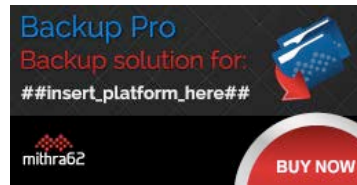
Jess D'Amico: And so I think that's an important distinction to make.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: So Jess, you mentioned a little bit about as you're looking for speakers, you actively seek people who you think might be a good first-timer, nudge people with the idea. What else do you do in terms of finding speakers and good topics, particularly with the idea of a diverse group of people and diverse content?

Jess D'Amico: Sure. So I think the primary thing that I try to do throughout the year and all the time is just to pay attention.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Jess D’Amico: And I’m trying to pay attention in a lot of different ways. We don’t solicit any content specifically in terms of asking our speakers to cover a specific topic. However, I try to pay attention on Twitter. I try to pay attention to other conferences. I try to pay attention to who’s talking about what or who’s running maybe different Meetup organizations that are like-minded and are covering the same kinds of topics so that when it is time for CFP (Call For Proposals) to go online, I can do everything I can to reach out to as many organizations and many people as possible and say, “Hey, you may or may not heard of us. You might be wondering what we’re about. Please check out our CFP.” When we started Peers years ago, I don’t think the first year we had any female applicants.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

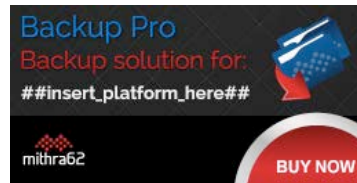
Jess D’Amico: There have always been women who’ve spoken at Peers from the very first year, but I believe that first year, I reached out to women in the community and basically said, “Yeah, you have to be here [laughs]. I need you.”

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jess D’Amico: And I still do that to an extent from time to time. There are always people we invite to speak at Peers. They range from people I’m paying attention to and people who form sort of a dream list for me, what have you. But what is exciting to me is that through a few of the steps we have taken, that applicant pool has gotten so much bigger.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Jess D'Amico: And by diversifying the applicant pool, we then have a more inclusive event because we're diversifying the group of people that appear on our stage.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Jess D'Amico: And so we've been able to do that by reaching out to lots of organizations, primarily on Twitter or through websites where you can sign up to let them know about our event. Organizations like Callback Women, or organizations that basically promote CFPs in general and say, "Hey," they tweet out, "so and so's CFP is open, go take a look."

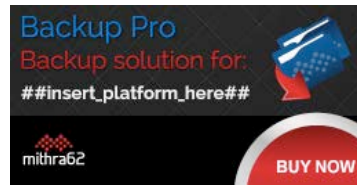
Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: So by letting more people know, by working with people in the community directly and reaching out to whether it's different podcaster or so many organizations, so one thing that's exciting is that there are the larger organizations involved in trying to get women minorities, everyone, involved in tech and so whether it's Girl Develop It, whether it's Women Who Code, whether it's Black Girls Code, there are so many organizations that we're trying to be aware of and make sure they are aware of us.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Jess D'Amico: We try and offer discounted tickets and be part of newsletters that let people know, "Hey, you might not know about this event, but you should attend. You should apply to speak." So I kind of feel like it's a broad collaborative effort.



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Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: And then finally, we really just call on a lot of allies in the industry and try to work with as many women and as many people in the industry as possible to say, "Hey, please pass this on." I think myself and lots of conference organizers have sometimes been guilty of the initial fallacy, "If you build it, they will come."

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

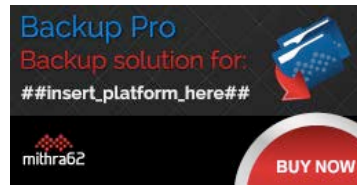
Jess D'Amico: That is not true. [Laughs] You have to really hammer people over the head and remind them, "Hey, we're here. We want to do the right thing. We want to have the goal of just an amazing broad spectrum speaker roster. Please help us reach that goal."

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right. And I also like to point that sometimes you do have to hit people over the head over it.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Because either they're not self-aware or there's just too much signal to noise, depending on whatever is happening in their life or business or their career. It just reminded me of a story when I was speaking at a conference, and I was just chatting with just another female attendee there, and she talked about how like, "Oh, one day I'd like to speak," and then I just asked her like, "Well, why don't you apply now?" It was just always an idea in her mind that it was sometime in the future, always sometime in the future, and she used her age as a way to say like, "Well, I'm still very young or whatever." And to be frank, like my first speaking experience was when I was 22. So when I told her that, she immediately was like, "Oh, you mean, I can start doing that now?" So sometimes



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you need to kind of like really be blatant that, yes, you have something to say, you have something to contribute. If you already have certain ideas, you can already start trying, but sometimes people don't understand that they have those opportunities until someone explicitly tells them, and as another aside, almost all speaking opportunities that I've ever had has been an invite.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. I mean, same with me, I've never submitted a talk. I've always been invited, and it was the act of being invited that I said, "Huh."

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, yeah.

Emily Lewis: And having been an audience member for years sitting back watching speakers and thinking in my head, "I could do that."

Lea Alcantara: Right.

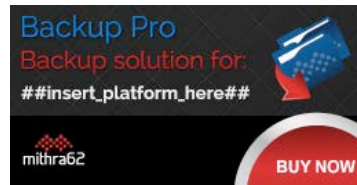
Emily Lewis: Not that I could be on stage, but that I could talk about that that I knew something to share.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Emily Lewis: But it was only until someone reached out and specifically asked.

Jess D'Amico: Yeah. Well, I think that's important, and I think that in the beginning of Peers, there was definitely more of an invitation process. However, one of the things that I think we've tried to do is move away from that as our conference has gotten a little bit more popular, we have more and more submissions every year.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: And then when you spoke about support, I think the other thing, so this goes back to sort of hitting people over the head, although I really don't want to do that to Peers. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: But in terms of hitting people over the head with the understanding that their ideas are valid and will be taken seriously.

Lea Alcantara: Yes.

Jess D'Amico: I think that some people have had a negative experience applying to speak and let that experience color their future in thinking that if it went poorly once, it may not go well again.

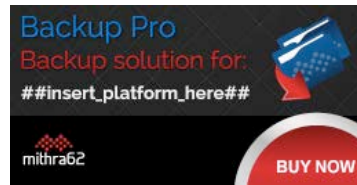
Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: And so to overcome that, we actually instituted a whole system that I'm very proud of that is a blind review process of our applicants.

Emily Lewis: Cool.

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Jess D'Amico: And that has kind of grown and been redefined over the years as we've kind of – not redefined as much as fine-tuned it – but essentially, similar to a web project that we're all familiar with where we think there are personas using and being involved in the process, we kind of have some personas for attendees at Peers and then we've been able to build a content review panel based on



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those personas to sort of say, “Who’s coming at Peers? What are they looking for? Let’s have representative people that are then reviewing our content, but let’s take it one step further and review it blindly.”

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D’Amico: So this year there are four people on the content review panel. There are two women and two men. There are front-end and back-end and on-staff and not and the deciding vote is my own, so that when a talk comes into our review panel, all we see is the title and the abstract of the talk and then we throw in a tidbit about why that person wants to speak at Peers, and in doing that, we are really comparing apples to apples because each application really needs to stand on its own, and I feel like that has really put us in a different place. I realize we’re not the only conference to do this, but it really came back to us last year when we had a speaker sort of stand up and say that they had been told the only reason they were speaking in another event was because they were a woman.

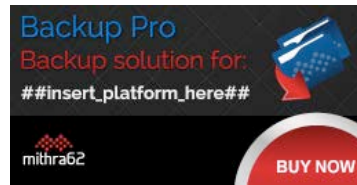
Emily Lewis: Oh.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jess D’Amico: And she mentioned that it really kind of took the air out of her sales and that here she was arriving to do her talk and put her best foot forward and then have this organizer sort of turn around and say, “Well, you’re here because we need to fill a spot.”

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Jess D’Amico: And what I feel like is we’re not really talking about filling spots. We’re talking about producing the best content we can year after year, and by getting known for that, I think having more applicants and getting better content as a result, and no one was more excited about this than me



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when last year, through again our blind content review panel, we ended up with an entire dev track of women.

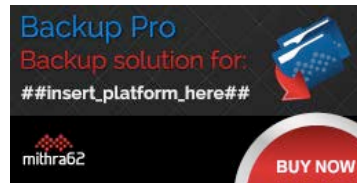
Emily Lewis: Nice.

Lea Alcantara: Awesome.

Jess D'Amico: And I was like, “Whoohoo! Tell me you can’t do this, you can do this.” And so that was very exciting. For anyone who’s listening, if you were at Peers, you will know that we didn’t have an all-female dev track because one of our speakers had to back out and there was a conflict with her company in something and so she couldn’t actually come to Peers, so that ended up changing, but it was an exciting moment where it felt like something that I had been working towards for a long time was being realized by sort of trying to tweak and refine the system year after year.

Emily Lewis: I feel like what I’m hearing from you is really a different approach from what I think we’ve more traditionally hear about tech conferences trying to have a diverse speaker representation where you’re creating an environment where everyone is welcome to start with, and like you’re walking the walk. You’re not just saying you’re doing it, you’re doing it, and by creating this type of environment, it’s naturally attracting a diverse group of people, of speakers, of attendees, that it’s this mentality versus some formula. Do you think that’s fair?

Jess D'Amico: I hope so. I think that that, again, would obviously be the goal. It’s not enough, I feel, to just want to do something or say you’re going to do something, but you have to actually do it. And obviously, I’m not perfect, we’re not doing everything right, and these goals aren’t fully realized. We still have a long way to go. Our audience/attendees are mainly male and I would love, love, love to see more women in the audience at Peers. I think they would find that they are welcome at this event and that they have something to share and something to learn. But certainly, I think what really helps drive Peers is people’s experience and the fact that they come home and share it and tweet it

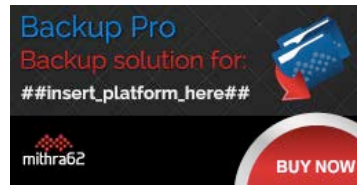


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and talk about it with their colleagues and they leave feeling different maybe than in different event. We are not a large corporate event, and you can feel it, and you're going to feel it by being welcomed by the people at the event. You're going to feel because we ask a lot of our speakers and that we want them to stick around and be part of the community for two to three days and meet people and find as much value in the audience as the audience gives back to those on the stage. So in trying to do things maybe a little bit differently, hopefully then maybe we get a different result.

Lea Alcantara: So I feel like this next question has already been semi-answered since you explained your thorough blind application process, but I want you to consider the question yourself. Basically, our listener Pat Pohler was talking about how some people in her industry actually complained that actively organizing for speaker diversity or wider representation runs counter to good conferences because speakers "should be judged by merit, technical, experience, et cetera." As someone who runs a great conference, do you think about this attitude, and does it match up with your actual experience?

Jess D'Amico: Well, sure, I can't do my job well and not be aware of attitudes that exist, both in the world and sort of attendee context. I would say within the Peers' realm, I think there's less of that. I think someone recently wrote some kind of crappy article about how if someone else got a spot instead of their idea of who should be getting a spot then it's a terrible thing. You know, it's a hard situation only to me in the context that when we insisted everything happen for merit, we are ideally sort of looking at a kind of perfect world scenario that we don't always live in, and I think that when you realize that different people get to the table at different speeds, if at all, for me I feel like again, by trying to have different voices represented, be they age, color, gender, identity, what have you, is that something more actively going out and seeking, like we're trying to check little boxes? No, but what we are trying to say is chances are someone like you has been on our stage and/or in our room and we want you here too.



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I'm not sure that I fully answered the question in the context of do you take something away from someone and give it to someone else. To me that sounds like a terrible attitude to kind of in the context of scarcity, like there's only so much to go around.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Emily Lewis: But it also presumes what makes a good conference. I mean, my god, like I was talking earlier, I'm so sick of seeing the same people. Like it doesn't matter they've doing it for 20 years. Like I don't care anymore. And a good conference for me would be like a really refreshing presentation from someone who's got a totally different take on it. I think that the person who wrote that post, and I know who it is and I think he's an asshole. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

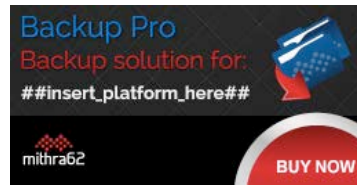
Jess D'Amico: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: And I basically think that it's all ego, and it's a presumption of what makes a good conference for everyone else based on *his* definition, it's ridiculous. That kind of mentality is why we have these kind of problems in our industry.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. And I think, Jess' point about the scarcity myth is a big one.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. It's a myth, yeah.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. Well, because just as I mentioned, I feel like conferences have exploded right now.



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Jess D’Amico: Conferences have exploded. I think a lot of people have felt like there’s an opportunity to make a lot of money. Buyer beware, that is not true. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Yeah. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: FYI, no. [Laughs]

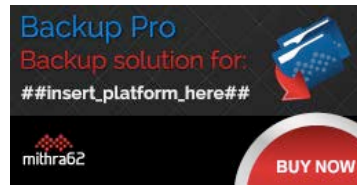
Jess D’Amico: You’ve got to do it really well and you’ve got to scale quickly. Go with God, good luck. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Jess, you mentioned that thus far your audience is mostly male. What are you doing to try and change that? You mentioned that you sometimes offer like discounted tickets to different groups.

Jess D’Amico: We certainly do that. So I think probably we aren’t doing it as much publicly as we should be as opposed to private channel. I do a lot in the context of private channels, whether it’s just reaching out to women in the community and asking them if there’s a way I can help get them to Peers, or I’m part of a lot of different Slack groups and organizations where I’m talking about Peers from the context of, “Hey, you might not know about this event, check it out.” If you’re a special group, whether you’re a Meetup group, there’s Women Who Code. DC has a huge Slack group, and so for organizations like that, I’ll usually be in the Slack room and talking about the fact that Peers exist and we’re going to give a promo code to this organization and hope that that helps.



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So it's building awareness through different channels and then also like anything else in life, it's sort of like, "If you like this, tell your friend, tell your friend, tell your friend," so any way that we can sort of say to people. Again, I think it comes down to visibility, and this is something that, well, we talk about for the stage and for any group that feels marginalized or feels like they are a minority, part of that key is feeling visible, feeling like they see themselves there, and so again, I want women to come to Peers and realize that there are women in the room, there are women in the audience, and they're going to feel comfortable there.

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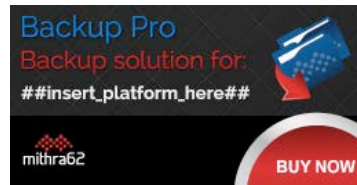
Lea Alcantara: Speaking of comfort level, one of our listeners, Pat still, Pat Pohler, he had a question about what can organizers and attendees do to help make sure conferences are safe for everyone, especially at after-hour events.

Jess D'Amico: Right. So it's a big topic, and rightly so.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: I think that everyone's approach is different so I can only speak for my own end as it sort of reflects my own expectations as an attendee. One of the things that we do, obviously, is have a code of conduct. I say "obviously" because I feel like we've promoted that, and you can see it on our site, but for those who don't know or for those who feel like that's not obvious, I think at this moment in time where we are, events should have a code of conduct. There are people again in the larger universe who feels that that's a waste of time or it isn't needed. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but again, to me, that harps back to the idea of perfect world scenario.

So in a perfect world, we may not need a code of conduct. I don't believe, as a professional, that if other events are embracing a code of conduct, I can afford not to. And on a personal level, it seems



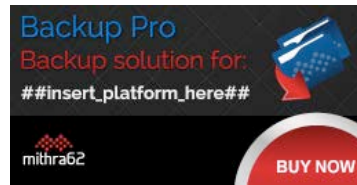
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like a good thing to do. I do think that there is a level of expectation that has to be met on both sides. I have learned in life and as an organizer, I'm probably still learning this in life, there's very, very little I can control, and so I have to go into it with that expectation when I throw an event and instead of thinking about guaranteeing a certain experience or guaranteeing one's safety or comfort level in the context of what I can control, I have to instead approach it as "what can I prepare for," and so instead, that is how I approach it and I take it extraordinarily seriously. I take it seriously because we have insurance for every venue that we go to, but more than that, I take it seriously because I would feel terrible if I thought somebody was having a terrible time at Peers.

I've been through my own shit at conferences where people have been crappy to me and way unprofessional, and I don't want that to happen to anybody else at my event no matter what they look like. So beyond having a code at conference, again, when it comes back to walking the walk, I will say at the onset, we have never had an incident that I'm aware of during Peers at an event or after that I'm aware of, and I tell every year our speakers and our sponsors and our supporters that we are the best community in tech, and I absolutely believe that.

Having said that, knowing that we live in the real world and having a code of conduct, when I interview a venue, when I contract with a venue, I sit down with their security team, I sit down with the planners and I'm going to look those people in the eye and shake their hand and we're going to have a conversation about what it means to provide security at the event. They're going to understand that we have a code of conduct. They're also going to understand that like I'm a 5-foot-4 person and unless you really piss me off and I'm going to throw you over my shoulder, chances are I am not equip to evict someone from my own event, and that's the point of having security. That's the point of hiring and contracting with a professional venue.

And then that conversation carries over not just from our conference space, but it also happens at the hotel that we contract with to provide rooms where we do a room block and get people a discount on a specific hotel. It's the reason why, if we serve liquor at an event, that's tied to the conference, we



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do that in a public space that is licensed to serve liquor. We don't serve it ourselves, and we're using professional bartenders at a professional restaurant or a professional bar to create, again, a safe space in the context of serving liquor, and making a judgment call isn't my job. There are people who do that for a living, we're going to hire those people.

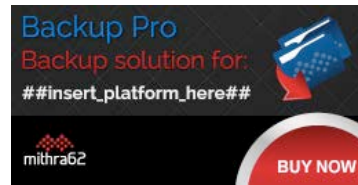
So approaching it from a context of, again, I can't guarantee, there's a lot of liability potentially, but what I can try to do is imagine the things that could go wrong. Have I checked out the venue? Is there lighting? Are there bathrooms? Are they nice? If we're asking people to take public transportation or if we're recommending cabs or if we're recommend that they walk because we're providing different venues, is it safe? I'm a city person. I live in the middle of Washington, DC, and so I'm very used to walking and being aware, but I realized that that isn't the case of some of my attendees, so I want to make sure that if I am asking people to walk around a place they've never been before, they're going to be okay.

Emily Lewis: I think it's the point about having a code of conduct, people may suggest it's not necessary. It makes me think back to [our episode with Dan Mall](#), Lea. He basically said that unless you know what the rules are, you don't know whether you're following them or not.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Jess D'Amico: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: And it applies in a team environment, it applies in an agency, it applies everywhere. Someone needs to establish what's expected of you so that you can live up to that expectation. It doesn't presume negative or positive. It's just that this is what we expect, and once that's known, then you can enforce it if necessary, but it has to be known to start with, not just so you can force it, but also so people know what's expected of them.



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Jess D'Amico: Right. And then also, I think there is the responsibility of expectation also on the part of the attendee in the sense that for a conference like ours and for smaller events, your expectations can't be wildly out of line with the event.

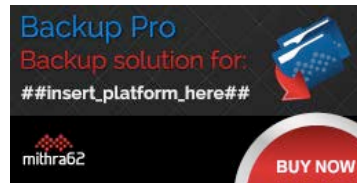
Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: I'm going to do my best to provide a safe and enjoyable experience during the conference hours and at the places we go and everything else. If you, however, are having a great time and suddenly something happens to you at a public place in 4 in the morning, I'm going to be upset and I'm going to want to help you, but I don't know that I can reasonably be expected to have prevented that in any grand scheme of things.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So Emily kind of mentioned the enforcing the particular rules. How would you enforce the rules? Because I do understand that a lot of people can have a code of conduct, copy paste something from several different things, but unless people feel like the code of conduct will be enforced if/when an incident occurs, then like the code of conduct is just useless otherwise. So how would you enforce the rules, and how do you impress upon attendees that the rules are going to be enforced?

Jess D'Amico: That's a good question. I think it's hard to imagine without really saying that it would have to be a case-by-case basis. However, in the sense of if something were to happen at our main venue and during our event, like I said before, that's one of the reasons that I try to approach and work with security so that there's an understanding from an event. If I say something has happened and this person has created a disturbance or done something to someone else and they need to be removed maybe today or maybe forever, we have to find out more, they're prepared to do that



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because we've already imagined that scenario and gone beyond imagining it to actually talking and planning for it.

So in that sense, I feel not prepared, but I do feel like it is not beyond the scope of my imagination that we might need to deal with something. I think a harder thing to imagine how you will sort of react in the moment is when things get out of line online, and again, I think some of it is how you set your tone and how you deal with your audience, and I always want to be sort of a sphere of positivity online as it relates to the events so that even if something is going wrong, I'm not going to take it online. I would prefer to try to deal with it in person. So again, it's sort of thinking about it in that case by case. If somebody was tweeting or there was a problem, we would have to try to deal with an individual, I think.

Emily Lewis: So just in five years of running Peers, what mistakes have you learned from/

Jess D'Amico: Oh gosh, well, I've made a ton of mistakes.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

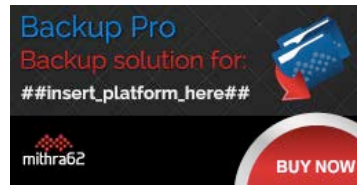
Jess D'Amico: I don't know if I've learned from any of them. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: But probably the biggest one is just assuming that people pay more attention than they do, whether it's on Twitter or online or the idea that if you build it, people come.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Jess D’Amico: So I think that understanding that for a marketing perspective, you have to be doing everything you can, and from a content or intention perspective, you’re always trying to put your best foot forward.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

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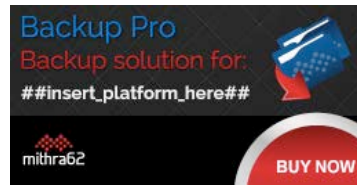
Jess D’Amico: And then I think there’s a bit of sort of like Boy Scout motto “be prepared” aspect to event running that has helped me in the sense of approaching it logistically, and part of that is just trying to plan for every possible disaster that you can imagine, not because you’ll be able to prepare for all of them, but if you try to imagine as many bad things as possible that could go wrong, you won’t imagine like the exact scenario, but maybe you’ll have prepared for the ones you can imagine so you’re better prepared to handle the other things.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D’Amico: I got some great advice from Allan Branch when I was starting out.

Lea Alcantara: All right.

Jess D’Amico: So a shout out to Allan who, again, ran me through that kind of scenario of like everything that can possibly go wrong and everything – in a Murphy’s Law context – that could happen will happen, so your catering get delivered to the wrong place and a speaker will back out, and this will happen or there will be a problem with your building or your Wi-Fi or your temperature or what have you or somebody that you wouldn’t expect will get on stage and they’ll have a strange case of stage fright, and so sometimes things that people grumble about are actually ways that organizers are trying to protect themselves because maybe if they call in the slides, it isn’t so much to



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say, “Hey, I want to review your content,” but it’s, “Hey, I want to have a familiarity with your talk so that if you need any prompting, maybe I can help you.”

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jess D’Amico: Because there have been all kinds of crazy scenarios even so much as like we thought my laptop died in the middle of some sort of presentation. I think when we were in DC and it wasn’t actually something that was affecting the conference, but I personally was thinking, “Oh, please don’t be dead, laptop, I need you.” [Laughs]

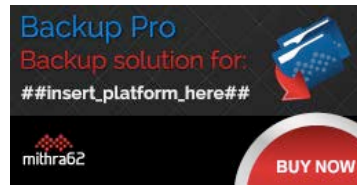
Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jess D’Amico: So all kinds of things can happen. I think you can’t be too prepared. So in terms of learning from your mistakes, it’s just trying to pay attention to every single little detail and everything everybody else does so that maybe you can learn as much as possible.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So in regards to planning all of this, what resources did you rely on to help you create a more diverse, inclusive event? Are there any other events you modeled Peers after?

Jess D’Amico: I think again it more comes back to the idea of building a people-focused event and a feeling rather than seeking out the ideas of either diversity or sort of again filling boxes. I think it comes back to having been to events that are either boring or not inspiring. I try to seek out events that I feel are what I kind of call “full-person” event where maybe they’re not about a specific language or a specific software, but they’re, again, sort of embracing a more positive side to humanity and what



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we do as people in addition to just what we do at work. Over the years I have attended some great events like Brooklyn Beta and/or XOXO. Both of which, I think in some ways, they have elements of what I'm trying to achieve or vice versa. I don't know that I could say I'm modeling Peers on anything specific because I feel like we are such a high breed in so many ways, which is why sometimes it's very hard to actually explain well what Peers is, which is why I love that whole entrepreneur's aspect. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: We also have a business track. Very few conferences take business seriously.

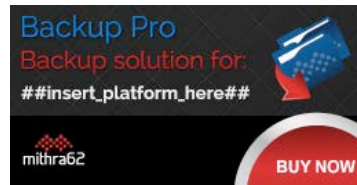
Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: And I feel like in a community of business owners and people who care about what they do, Peers is a thinking person's conference. It's a Craft's person conference in the sense of I don't get a sense of like lackadaisical cynicism from our audience. People would want to be there and they want to be there year after year to learn something new and to see each other and be present in that community, so that's the feeling that I want, and it has to do as much with that when people walk into the room, they're also happy to see each other.

Emily Lewis: So before we finish up, what advice would you give to a budding conference organizer with the perspective of trying to have a people-focused, inclusive event?

Jess D'Amico: I think, first and foremost, I would say run, just do not try this. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



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Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: No, I'm kidding. My first then, honestly, is pay attention, like try to pay to everything. Keep your eyes and ears open. There are so many great sources, podcasts, groups, meet-ups, chats going on, and so if you really feel like you can't "find people," I don't believe you.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

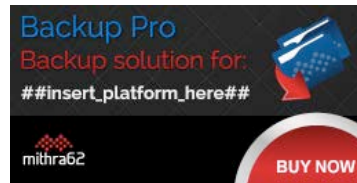
Jess D'Amico: And not to shame anyone or make anyone feel guilty, but just along the lines of saying there are so many sources in so many places that we can look for input, and if you tell people that you take it seriously, they will come and give you their great ideas, and when you talked before about seeking content, our applications and the content that we get from our speakers are so much better than anything I could ever imagine. Every year I'm always blown away and I'm excited and humbled by the fact that such smart people want to be part of this.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: So paying attention to absolutely everything and everyone that you can because at an event, the devil is in the details.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: And those details are things from does the lock on the bathroom door works to am I freezing and miserable so that I can't focus on the content, to is a tall person going to be able to fit in this chair and are they going to block the short person behind them, to do the person who's gluten-free have something to eat at lunch, and so on and so forth. There are a lot of small details and they



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all really relate to people, so I think if you can frame it and keep it in mind in the sense of people, that will really help.

Emily Lewis: And what about advice for a conference speaker or someone who wants to get in to speaking?

Jess D'Amico: I think hopefully it's both get into it for the right reasons in the sense of sharing perhaps.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

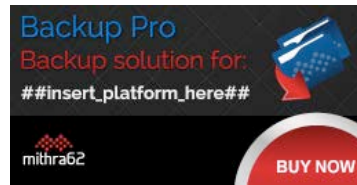
Jess D'Amico: I think that that's sometimes a challenge too. Like in every industry, once people become part of a "speaker circuit," chances are they may speak more than they do other things, and so it really depends on your audience. Some audiences want an extremely polished, prepared speaker that's presenting in a very high level in terms of – I'm going to say – again like that polished sense. I think at Peers, there's a tremendous value of knowledge and experience over perhaps the number of times that you've spoken and whether or not you're wearing a blazer.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: So I think that sometimes it's a Catch 22 as an organizer. Big names help sell tickets.

Lea Alcantara: Right.



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Jess D’Amico: At the same time, anytime I think I’m sort of scoring a coup sometimes because it’s like, “Wow, this is going to be so great,” sometimes the audience comes back to me with “That really wasn’t a good fit for us or this speaker seems to really just be interested and motivated by their speaking and not so much by what they do.”

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jess D’Amico: And so that’s a challenge too. There are what I like to call “drive-by speakers” who cluster events together and they do five events in five days and they go from one to the next, and they give a really nice talk and shake a few hands and move on.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

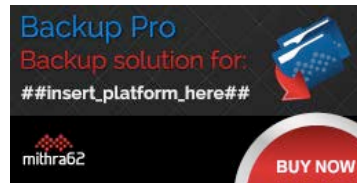
Jess D’Amico: And that’s totally their prerogative. Generally, that is not what we ask of our speakers and our audience responds differently to those kinds of situations.

Emily Lewis: And then any advice for attendees?

Jess D’Amico: I think for attendees, part of it is also having a goal maybe of what you want to get out of your conference.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Jess D'Amico: I mean, again, one of the reasons that I started Peers was as a small business owner, money and time are what we live and die by.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Jess D'Amico: And so I felt that I couldn't afford to attend a conference that I didn't learn something and that didn't bring some value to me and to my business, and again, my advice to everybody is take it seriously. I take it really seriously. I think when you attend an event, you're spending money and you're spending time, and as a small business owner, you can lose time in the process and that lost time costs you. So what do you want to get out of it? If you want to get work, if you want to get connections, you actually have to show up and shake a few hands and say hi to people.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

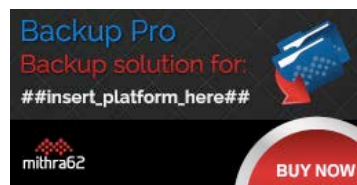
Jess D'Amico: And people don't believe me that that works. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: But I promise that work every year. Huge connections are made at Peers and people go home and build things together. They build software together. They work together or somebody gets hired, and people don't believe me that that happens, and I'm here telling you that absolutely happens.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Jess D'Amico: So if you want somebody to hire you as a freelancer down the line and everyone is hanging out at the end of the day, go say hi to that person and let them know you exist. Again, maybe you're both following each other on Twitter, but people aren't really paying attention, make the connection.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, absolutely.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. And as you know, side note, Emily and I met at a conference.

Emily Lewis: We sure did. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: In 2009 South By Southwest (SXSW). [Laughs]

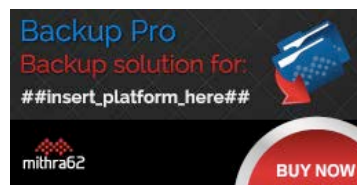
Lea Alcantara: Whoohoo!

Jess D'Amico: Wow!

Lea Alcantara: All right. So before we finish up, we've got our Rapid Fire Ten Questions, so our listeners can get to know you a bit better. Are you ready, Jess?

Jess D'Amico: Yikes. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]



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Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

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Lea Alcantara: Okay. First question, introvert or extrovert?

Jess D'Amico: Oh, extrovert. I'm so extroverted.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: All right, the power is going to be out for the next week, what food from the fridge do you eat first?

Jess D'Amico: Well, the ice cream.

Lea Alcantara: Nice. [Laughs]

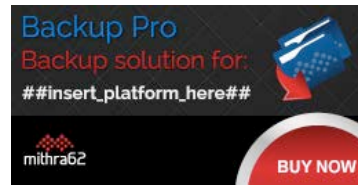
Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: That's sort of a given no matter what.

Lea Alcantara: What's your favorite website for fun?

Jess D'Amico: Oh, gosh. I don't know. I don't think I have enough fun on the internet, which is sad.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



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Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: I will say this, I'm following a cake decorator on Instagram.

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Jess D'Amico: And I am tranced by these cake decorating videos that are then spit up and you can watch this elaborate cake be formed in about 30 seconds. I just sit there and yeah, that's what I'm doing.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] What's the last thing you read?

Jess D'Amico: Oh gosh, I don't know, something probably from the Times Magazine this weekend, but nothing ever comes to mind when you guys asked me this question.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

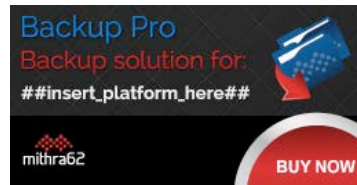
Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: I will say I read entire too much news, especially lately online and not enough sort of reading for pleasure.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jess D'Amico: So that probably says a lot about me, unfortunately.



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Lea Alcantara: What's the best piece of professional advice you've ever received?

Jess D'Amico: Ask for what you want.

Emily Lewis: Good one. What's the worst piece of professional advice you've received?

Jess D'Amico: Maybe someone recently who didn't hire me because they thought I trash talked the software they wanted to use, but I just couldn't help myself. You've got to stay true to your convictions.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: What's your favorite color?

Jess D'Amico: Purple.

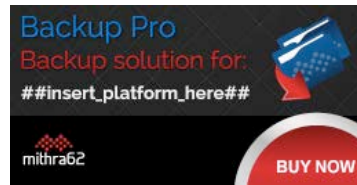
Emily Lewis: If you could take us to one restaurant in DC, where would we go?

Jess D'Amico: Oh, my God.

Emily Lewis: I know it's a hard one. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jess D'Amico: Lately, I might take someone to a restaurant of choice is – I'm not sure I'm pronouncing this right – it's called China Chilcano by José Andrés and it's sort of a mixture of Peruvian, Japanese, Asian fusion food with fantastic drinks and amazing Pisco. Oh, it's really good.



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Lea Alcantara: What's your favorite board game?

Jess D'Amico: Oh, I don't know. Maybe Monopoly.

Emily Lewis: Right. Last question, Hulu or Netflix?

Jess D'Amico: Oh, Netflix. I'm lame.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: So that's all the time we have for today. Thanks for coming back on the show, Jess, and best of luck with Peers this April.

Jess D'Amico: Thank you so much for having me. It's always a pleasure.

Emily Lewis: In case our listeners want to follow up with you, where can they find you online?

Jess D'Amico: They should probably find me on Twitter. My personal Twitter is [@justjustdc](https://twitter.com/justjustdc). Peers Conf is on Twitter [@PeersConf](https://twitter.com/PeersConf). You can also reach out to us through peersconf.com and send us an email there and tell us all of your secrets.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] Awesome. Thanks, Jess.

Jess D'Amico: Take care.

[Music starts]



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Lea Alcantara: CTRL+CLICK is produced by [Bright Umbrella](#), a web services agency obsessed with happy clients. Today's podcast would not be possible without the support of this episode's sponsors! Thank you, [BackupPro](#) and [WIX](#)!

Emily Lewis: We'd also like to thank our partners: [Arcustech](#) and [Devot:ee](#).

Lea Alcantara: And thanks to our listeners for tuning in! If you want to know more about CTRL+CLICK, make sure you follow us on Twitter [@ctrlclickcast](#) or visit our website, [ctrlclickcast.com](#). And if you liked this episode, please give us a review on [iTunes](#), [Stitcher](#) or both! And if you really liked this episode, consider donating to the show. Links are in our show notes and on our site.

Emily Lewis: Don't forget to tune in to our next episode when Lea and I are going to talk about retrofitting desktop sites for mobile. Be sure to check out [ctrlclickcast.com/schedule](#) for more upcoming topics.

Lea Alcantara: This is Lea Alcantara ...

Emily Lewis: And Emily Lewis ...

Lea Alcantara: Signing off for CTRL+CLICK CAST. See you next time!

Emily Lewis: Cheers!

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