

# kirbyjones

managing and representing influential speakers



## PY Gerbeau

Business Leader & Turnaround Specialist

Book PY Gerbeau for your event: 020 3713 7291 / 07855 774508 / [penny@kirbyjones.co.uk](mailto:penny@kirbyjones.co.uk)



# PY Gerbeau

## Business Leader & Turnaround Specialist

With one of the most varied business careers around, PY Gerbeau has a track record of taking on big corporate challenges and turning around struggling organisations. His businesses have always placed customers at their centre, whilst also addressing profit, reputation, and frequently issues such as regulation, planning and government involvement. As well as practical, cultural and leadership challenges, many of PY's projects have been highly visible, subject to intense media and public scrutiny, even extending to a sense that some people were willing them to fail.

Today, he is President of the French Ice-Hockey Federation and a member of the French Olympic committee. His latest accomplishment is to have played a key role in the team which successfully bid to award the Winter Olympic games to France in 2030, a huge task executed in record time, which the international sports media called a 'sports miracle'.

Originally an Olympic-qualifying ice-hockey player, injury saw him turn his attention to the corporate world, PY focused on tackling turnaround and transformation projects. He first came to wider public attention with his pivotal Vice President role at Euro Disney (now Disneyland Paris). The culmination of a decades-long search for a European Disney theme park, Euro Disney encountered significant local and national hostility, and commercial scepticism from the start. Its early years saw problems from local traffic jams to high staff turnover to financial losses, but PY's approach to customer experience was key to transforming the park's fortunes.

Disney's then-CEO Michael Eisner recommended PY to the UK government to take charge of their ambitious but controversial landmark Millennium Dome project. Haemorrhaging money and goodwill, the project appeared confused and directionless, but as Chief Executive PY created a positive culture for both staff and visitors. His leadership resulted in over six million guests and financial solvency for the venue that would go on to become the O2 Arena.

PY then worked on a range of leisure, property and entertainment turnarounds, building a formidable reputation for his willingness to take on difficult businesses and projects. He went on to co-found, and serve as CEO of X-Leisure, which he grew into a £1.2billion



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business. He helped make the business a real estate pioneer and one of the leading leisure property groups in Europe, before overseeing its sale to the commercial property giant Land Securities.

More recently PY led the much-vaunted yet ultimately doomed London Resort. He steered the ambitious attempt to create the UK's first tier 1 theme park destination over the course of three years and with over £2billion in investment. He developed a bullet-proof business for a world-class, sustainable destination only to see the project collapse after the major investor pulled out at the very last moment.

PY has lectured for over two decades on the London Business School's MBA programme, and as a visiting Professor of Entrepreneurship and Corporate Rescue at Imperial College.

With humour, insight and self-deprecation, PY considers the ups and downs, challenges and triumphs of the major projects he's led, from planning to execution to everyday operations. He explores lessons for anyone leading a turnaround or complex project, as well as those dealing with the pressure of stakeholder expectations. He draws thoughtful parallels between the many industries he's been involved with, and in particular the often unpredictable, recession-sensitive businesses of leisure, sport and tourism.



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“PY lifted everyone’s spirits with a delicate balance of humour and serious content.”

**Institute of Chartered Accountants**

“The most motivational corporate speech we have ever heard.”

**Liberata UK**

“Thank you for a fantastic presentation at our Excellence in Innovation course. What pleased me most is that virtually everything you said fitted perfectly with the rest of the day and offered real practical advice on how and why we need to drive innovation forward in our business.”

**Allianz**

“PY was very well received and was able to inject some humour into what could have been a very corporate presentation.”

**Royal Mail**

“Good solid business sense told in a passionate, engaging style that will be hard to forget. Excellent.”

**Double-Barrelled Ltd**

“PY more than met our objectives with an informative and entertaining presentation very much on message. The audience reaction was very positive with many delegates saying that they had tangible points to take away from PY's presentation.”

**ECA**



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“The feedback for PY was excellent - he was inspirational and motivational!”

**Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors**

“His remarks around teamwork, leadership and accountability really resonated.”

**Eversheds LLP**

“PY communicated very strong business messages and went down exceptionally well.”

**Catering Equipment Distributors Associates**

