

SYMPOSIUM AGENDA



ECEP SYMPOSIUM *South Beach*



MAR 15 - MAR 19, 2026

Ritz Carlton South Beach
1 Lincoln Road
Miami Beach, FL 33139



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MARCH 15TH - MARCH 19TH, 2026

INFORMATION

ECEP Symposium is our annual gathering and it's packed with educational sessions, guest speakers, immersive breakouts and unique experiences that allow your teams to dive deep with their peers and curate long-lasting connections. ECEP Symposium is perfect for Principals, Executive Leadership, Finance, Human Resources, Culinary, Sales, Marketing, Operations and other crucial leadership team members to come together, share ideas and leave with more than you came with.

EDUCATION

We've curated a lineup of leaders who are the best in their fields, from a diverse range of industries, to bring you a deeper level of thought leadership and insights. Keynotes, Breakout Sessions, and more will be held throughout the event. Go ahead and explore!

CONVERSATION

One of the best parts of Symposium is the opportunity to break into small groups and dive into issues with peers (not always like-minded, but definitely like-motivated). Check out the roundtable discussions, and prepare to share ideas and learn fresh perspectives from across the industry.

RELATIONSHIPS

There's so much to look forward to when it comes to building your network at Symposium. We've stacked this event with team-building activities, dinners, and parties - and we guarantee you'll leave this event with meaningful new contacts and friends.





2026 KEYNOTE SPEAKER



SIMON T. BAILEY

WEDNESDAY 3/18 @ 9:15 AM - General Session



KEYNOTE SESSION
**Accelerate Leadership Resilience: Strategies to
Increase Productivity and Well-Being**



Simon T. Bailey is a globally recognized leadership strategist, resilience researcher, and author whose work has transformed the organizational culture of over 2,500 companies in more than 55 countries.

Business is changing at the speed of light. Disruption is the new normal, and expectations never stop rising. In this environment, resilient leadership isn't optional—it's your competitive edge.

Join Simon T. Bailey, internationally recognized leadership catalyst and researcher, as he shares how to navigate change, inspire teams, and lead with clarity amid constant uncertainty. Drawing from the State of Working America - Thriving in Resilience and Brilliance study, Simon reveals how high-performing leaders and organizations strengthen culture, boost productivity, and sustain well-being. Most importantly, he shows how to create a hope-centric culture that innovates rather than hesitates.

You'll walk away with practical tools to help your people perform at their best—without burning out—and leave ready to amplify resilience and brilliance at every level of your organization. In this session, you will:

- Accelerate Team Productivity - Apply evidence-based strategies to motivate your workforce, optimize performance, and drive sustainable growth.
- Strengthen Organizational Resilience - Build financial, cultural, and emotional agility to stay adaptable in times of disruption.
- Protect and Amplify Well-Being - Implement simple, powerful frameworks that help leaders care for themselves and their teams while maintaining excellence in service and execution.



MARCH 15TH - MARCH 19TH, 2026

FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

REBECCA GRINNALS & KATHRYN ARCE

Co-Founders of Engage! Summits



TUESDAY 3/17 @ 9:15 AM - General Session

FEATURED GENERAL SESSION

Leading with Luxury: The Future of High-End Weddings & Events

Join event industry experts Rebecca Grinnals and Kathryn Arce of Engage! Luxury Wedding & Event Summits for an inspiring session as they unveil the most innovative trends shaping the future of luxury weddings and events. Drawing from their unparalleled access to global tastemakers and elite creatives, Rebecca and Kathryn will share exclusive insights into what's next in elevated guest experiences, design-forward event storytelling, and next-level personalization. Attendees will gain a unique perspective on how high-end clients are redefining celebration and how catering professionals can stay ahead of the curve in an ever-evolving market.



MARCH 15TH - MARCH 19TH, 2026

FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

DAVE RILEY

Professional EOS Implementer® and Entrepreneurial Coach



FEATURED GENERAL SESSION

Monday 3/16 @ 9:45 AM: Getting a Grip on Your Business- How You Run It with EOS

Objectives: Recognize the five common frustrations business leaders face; Understand and apply the Six Key Components™ of a strong business; Use practical EOS tools (Rocks, Scorecard, Accountability Chart); Identify the organization's top priority for improvement

BREAKOUT SESSION - PRINCIPLES & NEXT GEN LEADERSHIP

Monday 3/16 @ 1:00 PM: Are you Living the Life You Imagined? Why You Have a Business

Objectives: Assess alignment with the EOS Life® framework; Identify barriers such as head trash, wrong people, and firefighting; Explore tools to regain freedom (Delegate & Elevate™, Clarity Break™, Rocks™); Commit to a clear 30-day personal action plan.



FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS



**TUSHNEEM
DHARMAGADDA**

CEO & Founder of HubEngage

*Click [HERE](#)
for Tushneem's LinkedIn
Profile*

BIO

Tushneem Dharmagadda is the CEO and Founder of HubEngage, an AI-powered employee experience platform designed as a digital hub for workforce communication, recognition, feedback, and engagement. HubEngage brings together multi-channel communication and modular engagement tools into one unified platform, enabling organizations to reach employees wherever they are while simplifying how teams manage engagement. With over two decades of experience building technology solutions, Tushneem is passionate about helping HR and internal communications teams strengthen workplace culture and deliver measurable employee experience outcomes using AI, automation, and gamification.

GENERAL SESSION, TUESDAY 3/17 @ 1:15 PM



ERIC BARTHOLOMEW

Director of Procurement Operations
CSM Cost Solutions

*Click [HERE](#)
for Eric's LinkedIn Profile*

BIO

Eric brings over 20 years of experience in the food service industry with Executive Chef and management experience in corporate, upscale, and multi-unit restaurants. With expertise in multi-unit operations, Eric has a strong business acumen specifically the ability to identify opportunities where customers can become more efficient, increase sales and profit, and provide a memorable guest experience.

Eric is extremely proficient in back of house programs and software, team building, staff training and development, inventory management solutions, kitchen design and layout, and in-depth culinary skills and techniques.

BREAKOUT SESSION WITH CO-SPEAKER DARRIN DICKERSON, TUESDAY 3/17 @ 10:45 AM



DARRIN DICKERSON

Director of Culinary Development
CSM Cost Solutions

*Click [HERE](#)
for Darrin's LinkedIn Profile*

BIO

Darrin Dickerson brings over 35 years of experience in the food service industry, with leadership roles spanning corporate, restaurant, and educational settings. He began his career in a restaurant dish room, earned a culinary degree from Mitchell Technical Institute, and holds a Bachelor's in Hospitality Management and Business Administration from Graceland University.

Darrin advanced through higher education contract management, serving as Director at several universities and in various district and regional positions. Over the past seven years, he has specialized in group purchasing, assisting clients with their food and equipment procurement needs. Darrin's expertise includes contract management, business development, procedural training, and extensive hands-on kitchen experience.

BREAKOUT SESSION WITH SPEAKER ERIC BARTHOLOMEW, TUESDAY 3/17 @ 10:45 AM



FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS



**WENDIE
PETERSON**

Vice President Emerging
Concepts, New Business
Development, Sysco
Foodservice

*Click [HERE](#)
for Wendie's LinkedIn
Profile*

BIO

At the helm of Sysco's South Market Emerging Concept Business Development, my focus is on nurturing professional relationships that bridge divisions, ensuring operational excellence. With a culinary background and expertise in the hospitality industry, I've successfully spearheaded initiatives in new business development, emphasizing sustainable food cost management.

Over the past 10 years, my leadership at Sysco and Supplies on the Fly have been instrumental in expanding our national footprint. Our team has collaborated to identify and cultivate new business avenues, leveraging my multilingual abilities to connect with diverse stakeholders and deliver tailored solutions that drive growth and profitability.

GENERAL SESSION, MONDAY 3/16 @ 3:00 PM



ANTHONY LAMBATOS

CEO of
Footers Catering & MIBE

*Click [HERE](#)
for Anthony's LinkedIn
Profile*

BIO

Anthony Lambatos believes heart-led leadership isn't just good for people — it's good for business.

Since purchasing Footers Catering from his father in 2010, Anthony and his wife April have quadrupled revenue, maintained retention 50% better than the industry average and opened an event center called Social Capitol. Footers has been recognized nationally for innovation in both catering and culture, earning "Best Places to Work" honors eleven years running.

In response to industry demand, Anthony founded MIBE, a leadership development and culture-building organization that helps leaders grow people-first organizations. An award-winning speaker, Anthony inspires leaders to create workplaces where fulfilled employees fuel unstoppable results.

GENERAL SESSION, MONDAY 3/16 @ 4:00 PM



FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS



**KEN
BARRETT-SWEET**

Vice President of Catering
The Catered Affair

*Click [HERE](#)
for Ken's LinkedIn Profile*

BIO

Ken Barrett-Sweet is Vice President of Catering at The Catered Affair, one of Boston's most celebrated hospitality companies and the exclusive caterer for several of the city's most iconic venues. With more than three decades of experience in the hospitality and events industry, Ken is known for his thoughtful leadership, exceptional service standards, and deep understanding of the evolving art of entertaining.

Ken earned his MCA in Culinary Arts at Le Cordon Bleu Paris, bringing a classically trained foundation to his work in luxury hospitality. Today, he helps shape The Catered Affair's creative vision while guiding teams to deliver extraordinary events and unforgettable guest experiences.

GENERAL SESSION, TUESDAY 3/17 @ 2:30 PM
GENERAL SESSION, WEDNESDAY 3/18 @ 10:45 AM



LATOSHA MARKS

Chief People Officer
Proof of the Pudding

*Click [HERE](#)
for LaTosha's LinkedIn
Profile*

BIO

LaTosha Marks is a seasoned Human Resources professional with over 20 years of experience in the hospitality, food, and beverage industry. Specializing in employee relations, training and development, and payroll administration, she has built a strong track record of leadership and management training within the sector. Her expertise spans recruitment, conflict resolution, and compliance investigations, ensuring operational excellence in fast-paced hospitality environments.

With a deep understanding of labor and employment law, LaTosha has been instrumental in driving organizational change and fostering strategic partnerships that enhance workplace culture. Her ability to cultivate a positive employee experience and strengthen employee relations has made her an invaluable

GENERAL SESSION, WEDNESDAY 3/17 @ 3:15 PM



MARCH 15TH - MARCH 19TH, 2026

SPEAKERS & MODERATORS



SUSAN LACZ

CEO & Hospitality Maven
Ridgewells Catering, Washington, D.C



JOHN CRISAFULLI

President & CEO
Behind the Scenes, San Diego, CA



MICHAEL STAVROS

VP of BizDev
MCulinary, Phoenix, AZ



BRANDON MAXWELL

CEO/Founder, MCulinary
Phoenix, AZ



ADAM NOYES

CEO, Proof of the Pudding
Atlanta, GA



BEN WITTE

Chief Operating Officer
Proof of the Pudding, Atlanta, GA



JENNIFER PERNA

Owner, Fulton Market Consulting
Chicago, IL



JEFF WARE

COO, Catering by Michaels
Chicago, IL



CRYSTAL JOHNSON

Director of Sales, Behind the Scenes
Catering & Events, San Diego, CA



MARCH 15TH - MARCH 19TH, 2026

AGENDA, SUNDAY 3.15



3:00 PM - 6:00 PM Welcome & Registration

Ritz Carlton - Foyer Salons 1 & 2

Welcome to South Beach! Visit the Foyer Salons for an Open-House style check-in and to connect with other members.

Sunday Afternoon & Evening Personal Time

South Beach

For recommendations, check out the “Know Before You Go” document emailed to you prior to the event.

Explore the local shops and restaurants on your own time, or indulge in the fantastic amenities right onsite at the Ritz Carlton - including a fabulous pool and direct beach access.

Stay in touch on Instagram for recommendations in our stories, and to share moments from your own travels by tagging us @ecepglobal #WeAreECEP #ECEPSymposium





MARCH 15TH - MARCH 19TH, 2026

AGENDA, MONDAY 3.16

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM
Breakfast

Ritz Carlton - Courtyard



ECEP BOARD

www.ecep.org

9:15 AM - 9:45 AM
ECEP Opening General Session

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

Welcome to our Annual Symposium! The Board talks about what's new this year, introduces our 2026 Sponsors, and sets the tone for an engaging and fun week of learning and camaraderie.



DAVE RILEY

Professional EOS Implementer® and
Entrepreneurial Coach

9:45 AM - 11:45 AM
**General Session: Getting a Grip on Your Business-
How You Run It with EOS**

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

A deep dive into the world of EOS. Join Dave Riley for this transformational working session with strategic objectives to drive change in your organization.

11:45 AM - 12:45 PM
Lunch

Ritz Carlton - DiLido South



DAVE RILEY

Professional EOS Implementer® and
Entrepreneurial Coach

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM
**Principals & Next Gen Leaders Breakout: Are you Living
the Life You Imagined? Why You Have a Business**

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

Assess alignment with the EOS Life® framework; Identify barriers such as head trash, wrong people, and firefighting; Explore tools to regain freedom (Delegate & Elevate™, Clarity Break™, Rocks™); Commit to a clear 30-day personal action plan.



AGENDA, MONDAY 3.16



JENNIFER PERNA

Fulton Market Consulting

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Sales & Marketing Breakout: Hot Topics for 2026

Ritz Carlton - Tuttle/Ocean

Sales hot topics, sales rock stars, and sales meetings - this is a deep dive working session for sales & marketing.



JEFF WARE

COO
Catering by Michaels, Chicago, IL

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Culinary & Ops Breakout: Hot Topics for 2026

Ritz Carlton - McArthur

Operations hot topics for 2026.

2:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Break/Personal Time

Ritz Carlton



WENDIE PETERSON

Vice President Emerging Concepts,
New Business Development, Sysco

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

General Session: End to End Distribution

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

Join Wendie Peterson for an insider look and Q&A into end to end distribution.



ANTHONY LAMBATOS

CEO of
Footers Catering & MIBE

4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

General Session: Leadership Impact & Growing Your Team

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

Get ready to be inspired! In this energized session, Anthony talks all things leadership, culture, and growth.



MARCH 15TH - MARCH 19TH, 2026

AGENDA, MONDAY 3.16

5:00 PM - 5:30 PM
Break/Refresh

Ritz Carlton

5:45 PM - 9:30 PM
Dinner

Mila

Transportation Provided (Bus departs hotel at 5:45 PM)

Attire is Smart Casual - See Know Before You Go Guide





AGENDA, TUESDAY 3.17



**REBECCA GRINNALS
& KATHRYN ARCE**

Engage! Summits



JENNIFER PERNA

Fulton Market Consulting



**ERIC BARTHOLOMEW
DARRIN DICKERSON**

CSM Cost Solutions



**TUSHNEEM
DHARMAGADDA**

CEO & Founder
HubEngage

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM
Breakfast

Ritz Carlton - Courtyard

9:15 AM - 10:30 AM
General Session: Leading with Luxury, The Future of High-End Weddings & Events

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

Join event industry experts Rebecca Grinnals and Kathryn Arce of Engage! Luxury Wedding & Event Summits for an inspiring session as they unveil the most innovative trends shaping the future of luxury weddings and events.

10:30 AM - 10:45 AM
Break

Ritz Carlton

10:45 AM - 11:45 AM
Sales Breakout: Lead Management

Ritz Carlton - Tuttle/Ocean

Distribution, Fairness, and Spreading the Wealth
(Stop Feeding the Beast)

10:45 AM - 11:45 AM
Principals/Next Gen Leaders/CULinary/Ops Breakout: The Future of Procurement: From Buying Power to Buying Intelligence

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

Join Eric for an insightful session and insider look on how AI & Technology are shaping the next era of food service procurement.

11:45 AM - 1:00 PM
Lunch

Ritz Carlton - DiLido South

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM
General Session: Beyond Communication: Driving Labor Efficiency and Team Performance

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

Unlock the full potential of HubEngage to power-forward your employee experience programming.



MARCH 15TH - MARCH 19TH, 2026

AGENDA, TUESDAY 3.17



KEN BARRETT-SWEET

Vice President of Catering,
The Catered Affair, Boston, MA

2:15 PM - 2:30 PM
Break

Ritz Carlton

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM
General Session: Rethinking Etiquette

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

The rules of etiquette are changing! Ken talks about what's next and how it impacts business.

3:30 PM - 5:30 PM
Extended Break/Personal Time

Hit the pool, or grab a cortadito and take an Art Deco stroll down Ocean Drive! Need ideas? Check out the Know Before You Go Guide!

5:45 PM - 9:00 PM
Dinner

Queen Miami

Transportation Provided (Bus departs hotel at 5:45 PM)

Attire is Elegant Chic- See Know Before You Go Guide





MARCH 15TH - MARCH 19TH, 2026

AGENDA, WEDNESDAY 3.18



SIMON T. BAILEY

Founder & CEO
The Brilliance Institute



KEN BARRETT-SWEET

Vice President of Catering,
The Catered Affair, Boston, MA



MICHAEL STAVROS

VP of BizDev
MCulinary, Phoenix, AZ

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Breakfast

Ritz Carlton - Courtyard

9:15 AM - 10:30 AM Accelerate Leadership Resilience: Strategies to Increase Productivity and Well Being

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

Join Simon T. Bailey, internationally recognized leadership catalyst and researcher, as he shares how to navigate change, inspire teams, and lead with clarity amid constant uncertainty.

10:30 AM - 10:45 AM Break

Ritz Carlton

10:45 AM - 11:45 AM General Session: Profits & Pains of Exclusive Venue Relationships

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

An elevated discussion on exclusive venue partnerships.

11:45 AM - 12:30 PM General Session: Tantalizing Trends, Captivating Concepts, Inspired Interactivity

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

A rapid-fire look into the best of the best from across our industry, with open floor for discussion.

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM Lunch

Ritz Carlton - DiLido South

1:45 PM - 2:45 PM Principals Only Breakout Session

Ritz Carlton - Lincoln/Lummus

Owners- Hot Topics - A Conversation!

1:45 PM - 2:45 PM Next Gen Leaders Breakout Session

Ritz Carlton - McArthur

Hot Topics - A Conversation!

2026 SYMPOSIUM AGENDA



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AGENDA, WEDNESDAY 3.18



CRYSTAL JOHNSON

Director of Sales, Behind the Scenes
Catering & Events, San Diego, CA

1:45 PM - 2:45 PM Sales/Marketing/Ops/Culinary Breakout Session

Ritz Carlton - Tuttle/Ocean

Selling FOOD. How to Inspire our Sales Teams to Sell Great Food (and make more profit thru the process).

2:45 PM - 3:15 PM Break

Ritz Carlton



LATOSHA MARKS

Chief People Officer
Proof of the Pudding, Atlanta, GA

3:15 PM - 4:15 PM General Session: Let's Talk to HR

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

LaTosha brings her wealth of experience to an enlightening and transformative HR discussion.

4:15 PM - 5:00 PM ECEP Closing General Session

Ritz Carlton - Salons 1 & 2

2026-2027 outlook and planning, an open discussion on programming and feedback, and surveys.

5:45 PM - 11:00 PM Dinner

Casa Neos

Transportation Provided (Bus departs hotel at 5:45 PM)

Attire is Elegant Chic - See Know Before You Go Guide



ECEP BOARD

www.ecep.org





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C S M | **Cost Solutions®**

 **HubEngage**

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