

SUMMIT FLORIDA RESTAURANT & LODGING ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 12-14, 2025 | SEMINOLE HARD ROCK HOTEL & CASINO

TUESDAY, AUGUST 12TH – WELCOME RECEPTION

5:00PM-7:00PM

WELCOME RECEPTION (COCKTAILS PROVIDED)

OUTDOOR TERRACE

- ENTERTAINMENT: Bridgette Tatum, Nashville Singer Songwriter

Sponsored by:



WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13TH – DAY # 1

7:00AM-9:00AM

SPONSOR SET-UP

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

9:00AM-5:00PM

REGISTRATION

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

9:00AM-11:30AM

BLOODY MARY BAR

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

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9:00AM-11:30AM

MIMOSA BAR

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

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10:00AM-11:00AM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

- Innovating Hospitality: Transforming Restaurant Technology

TERRACE BD

Moderator:

GJ Hart, Managing Partner | EMERGING Fund

Panelists:

Sam Caucci, CEO | IHuddle

Jarrett Whitlow, SVP Beverage Strategy | Botrista

Avi Stoller, Co-Founder & CSO | Taiv

Michel Benjamin, VP Marketing | Leasecake

EMERGING Fund is a top growth equity firm specializing in restaurant-entertainment concepts and restaurant technology. This session will cover the latest restaurant technologies that assist operators in optimizing their back-of-house processes, ultimately contributing to significant long-term savings.

Sponsored by: EMERGING Fund



- PART 1: Keeping It Real: Money Doesn't Buy Happiness (But It Sure Helps!)

SALON EAST

Speaker: Michael DeNunzio, Culture Strategist, Speaker, Restaurant Turnaround Expert & Co-Founder | Fine Folk Pizza

"In 2008, my family lost our house to foreclosure. The restaurant was a few weeks away from shutting down. I was burnt out, broke, and barely hanging on. If something didn't change, we were done." — Mike DeNunzio

This isn't the glossy version of entrepreneurship. It's the real one where you've maxed out credit cards, can't make payroll without a panic attack, and you're still clocking in, open to close. In this first session, Mike walks through the mindset shifts and real-time financial tactics that saved his family's business and later helped him launch a second thriving concept in Florida.

You'll leave with:

- Immediate profit plays to generate six-figure gains and buy back your time (Hint: It's not raising prices or cutting corners.)
- A framework for moving out of the labor line and into strategic action
- Tools to pay yourself first and stop reacting to daily chaos
- The confidence to restructure your business to support your life, not the other way around

This is not about theory, it's about survival and building something that lasts.

Sponsored by:



- AI Unlocked: Elevating the Guest Journey with Intelligence and Impact

SALON WEST

Moderator: Peter Ricci, Director, Hospitality & Tourism Management Program | Florida Atlantic University

Panelists: Steven Barr, Sr. VP of Sales | Timeshark
Christina Davis, Sr. VP of Operations | Tambourine
David Viteri, Senior SEO Manager | Marriott International
Patrick Rhone, Co-Founder | U.S. Commerce & Communication Company

Timothy Shields, Technology, Data Privacy, & Social Media Attorney |
Kelley Kronenberg

Join us for an insightful breakout session with an esteemed panel of experts where we explore how artificial intelligence is revolutionizing the guest experience from start to finish. From search engine optimization to streamlining operations and crafting personalized touchpoints, discover how smarter AI strategies can drive both efficiency and excellence throughout the guest journey. Learn from industry leaders who are pushing boundaries and unlocking the full potential of AI to delight guests and deliver results.

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- The Off-Premises Sales Trifecta: Catering Tech, Digital Advertising, and Marketing Tactics

TERRACE AC

Moderator: Monique Waldrop, CMO | 4 Rivers Restaurant Group/4Roots

Panelists: Courtney Banfield, Director of Marketing | 4 Rivers Restaurant Group/4Roots
Bobbie Deverall, Director of Catering Sales | 4 Rivers Restaurant Group/4Roots

As off-premises dining continues to surge, restaurants that master the trifecta of catering technology, digital advertising, and targeted marketing tactics are unlocking powerful new revenue streams. In this dynamic session, industry experts will explore how to streamline catering operations with smart tech solutions, amplify reach through effective digital advertising strategies, and engage customers with marketing campaigns that convert. Whether you're refining your off-prem playbook or just getting started, this session will equip you with actionable insights to drive growth beyond your four walls

11:00AM-11:30AM

LUNCH

SEMINOLE BALLROOM

11:30AM-1:00PM

WELCOME & KEYNOTE SPEAKER

SEMINOLE BALLROOM

- Welcome: Carol Dover, President & CEO | Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association
- State of the Industry: Fred LeFranc, Chaos Strategist & Founding Partner | Results Thru Strategy
- The Science of Momentum
Keynote
Speaker: Don Yaeger, Hall of Fame Keynote Speaker, Business Leadership Coach, & 12-Time New York Times Best-Selling Author

Is momentum real? Leaders across business, politics, sports, and the military overwhelmingly believe it is – and that it can be the decisive factor in outcomes that matter most. Yet, until now, few have taken the time to truly study momentum, to uncover its science, and to learn how it can be systematically generated, manipulated, or even reversed.

Drawing on eight years of research conducted alongside General Bernard Banks (USA Ret) whose last duty station was as Chairman of the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at West Point, we have worked to reveal a groundbreaking model for harnessing momentum as a true multiplier of success. Our journey included more than 250 interviews with founders, CEOs and elite leaders from companies like NVIDIA, Lumen Technologies, Google and Amazon. We also conducted thousands of surveys with leaders across multiple organizations.

You'll discover:

- *How to recognize the early spark of momentum and act on it before it fades*
- *How to reignite momentum when it begins to wane*
- *Actionable strategies and powerful stories that will help you turn moments of opportunity into breakthrough results*

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1:00PM-1:15PM

GET CONNECTED-NETWORKING BREAK!

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

1:15PM-2:15PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

- **Bold Leadership in a Transforming Industry- What Operators Can't Ignore**

SALON WEST

Moderator: Chris Rollins, President & CEO | CR Development

Panelists: Mary Rogers, Executive Vice President, Hospitality Operations | Turnberry
John Sullivan, Market Vice President, U.S. East | Marriott International
Carlos Garcia, General Manager | Nautilus/Sonesta Miami Beach

Explore the future of hospitality leadership, innovation, and adaptability through the lens of market shifts, guest expectations, and AI transformation. Learn to ignite action among hospitality leaders and inspire strategic thinking for the next decade.

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- **PART II: Culture That Pays: Leadership**

SALON EAST

Speaker: Michael DeNunzio, Culture Strategist, Speaker, Restaurant Turnaround Expert & Co-Founder | Fine Folk Pizza

"I blamed every slip-up on broken systems until I realized our poor culture was costing us thousands, burning out our best people, and chasing guests away. Once we turned that around, I stopped firefighting and started future-building." — Mike DeNunzio

In this session, Mike will show you how to shift culture from a hidden profit drain into your restaurant's biggest growth driver. You'll leave with a practical playbook—including hiring best practices, leadership coaching frameworks, and simple daily rituals—that strengthens team engagement, enhances both guest and staff experiences, and supports a healthier bottom line.

You'll leave with:

- *A deeper understanding of how burnout and churn quietly drain revenue, stall growth, and steal your time*
- *Practical tools to mentor supervisors into confident, accountable leaders without micromanaging*
- *Easy routines and recognition loops that keep team member morale and performance sky-high*
- *A step-by-step plan you can roll out tomorrow, regardless of your restaurant's size*
- *A proven system for recruiting, onboarding, and retaining the right people for your culture*

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- The Wolf in Your Walk-in: Harassment in the Hospitality Workplace

TERRACE BD

Speaker: Kevin Johnson, Shareholder | Johnson Jackson, LLC.

Workplace harassment can cripple your culture and expose your business to legal liability. Even experienced operators are not immune. Kevin Johnson will share insights gained from thirty years in the trenches of harassment litigation to go beyond the basics and help you understand where your potential problems are hiding, what operational steps you can take to address them, and how to build a culture that is resistant to harassment.

BONUS: Kevin will also provide a short legislative update on new legislation that will affect operators, including the latest on Florida's new service-charge law.

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- Ownership Mentality- Getting It, Giving It, Losing It

TERRACE AC

Speaker: Joe Kadow, Founder | JJK Advisory, LLC. & Partner | Advent Allen International

Join a discussion on the "operating partner" models and the cultural elements necessary to instill an ownership mentality in managers and staff.

2:15PM-2:30PM

GET CONNECTED-NETWORKING BREAK!

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

2:30PM-3:30PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

- Tokenizing the Restaurant & Lodging Industry: How Tokenization Takes Your Hotel, Restaurant, Real Estate and Business into the Worldwide Digital Age

SALON WEST

Speakers: Chef Jim Shirley, Owner | Jim Shirley Enterprises
James Strait, Co-Founder | Repository RWA
Ross Shemeliak, Co-Founder & COO | Stobox

How tokenization applies to your upcoming venture, owned assets or existing business. Using tokenization to fundraise and launch a new business, unlock liquidity in an existing business, automate regulatory and compliance, and reach global investors 24/7. We'll explain how the Repository RWA Platform will help you raise capital, provide liquidity, or sell a portion of your business, real estate or assets with confidence using our institutional-grade tokenization & AI. From business owners to investors, everything is streamlined to launch your STO, (Securities Token Offering) in weeks. Leave the outdated world of traditional finance and business organization behind and adapt to the worldwide audience waiting to be your partner. This breakout session will show you how to unlock the hidden potential in your existing business, proposed venture and assets. Prepare your business or venture for the digital age of AI by adapting to the blockchain rails it will run on tomorrow.

Sponsored by:



- AI Transformation in the Restaurant Industry

TERRACE BALLROOM BD

Moderator: Fred LeFranc, Chaos Strategist & Founding Partner | Results Thru Strategy
Panelists: Adam Engel, VP of Product | SignalFlare.ai
Matt Wampler, Co-Founder & CEO | ClearCOGS
Cameron Long, Co-Founder & CRO | Virnika.ai

Artificial intelligence is fundamentally reshaping the restaurant landscape at an unprecedented pace. From optimizing kitchen operations and personalizing customer experiences to streamlining supply chains and enhancing food safety, AI technologies are creating new possibilities that seemed unimaginable just a few years ago.

While the full scope of AI's potential remains vast and evolving, early adopters are already seeing transformative results. We've brought together a dynamic group of emerging companies that are at the forefront of this revolution—innovative startups and scale-ups that are challenging traditional approaches and setting new standards for what's possible in food service.

Join us as these industry disruptors share their insights on how AI is solving real problems for restaurants today and explore what the future might hold for dining, operations, and customer engagement. Whether you're a restaurant owner, operator, or industry professional, you'll discover practical applications and emerging trends that could reshape your business.

Sponsored by:



- Food for Thought: Strategies for Managing Supply Chain Disruptions in the Food & Beverage

SALON EAST

Moderator: Steven Carnovale, PhD, Professor & Program Director Supply Chain Management | Florida Atlantic University

Panelists: Justin Armstrong, VP of Procurement & Administration | Seminole Hard Rock Support Services
Sanjeev Gokhale, VP of National Foodservice Distribution | Coca-Cola North America
Kyle Greene, President | Kyle G's Restaurants

Recent changes have reshaped international trade policy and the hospitality industry has not been immune to its impacts. From decreasing availability of materials, to increasing costs associated with what's left; what are the best practices for navigating these supply chain disruptions? Will impacts be felt differently at different size companies? Where will they be felt next?

- From Insights to Action: Traveler Trends Shaping Florida's Future

TERRACE AC

Speakers: Silvia Camarota, Sr. Director-Market Management | Expedia Group
Keri Spivey, Director-Market Management | Expedia Group

Unpack the latest traveler insights and demand trends across Florida's diverse markets. This session will explore what's fueling travel growth across the state—from shifting booking windows to emerging traveler preferences—and how these patterns can guide smarter marketing and revenue strategies. Attendees will walk away with a clear picture of what's happening across the state and how to align their efforts with current demand

Sponsored by:



3:30PM-3:45PM

GET CONNECTED-NETWORKING BREAK!

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

3:45PM-5:00PM

AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

SEMINOLE BALLROOM

- Your Brand Is Not About You

Keynote Speaker: Bruce Turkel, Branding & Creativity Expert, Author & Speaker
Crafting messages that build your business and make you money.

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5:00PM-7:00PM

HOSPITALITY HAPPY HOUR

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

Network with supplier partners, speakers, and attendees.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 14TH– DAY #2

8:00AM-9:30AM

BREAKFAST

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

8:00AM-10:00AM

REGISTRATION

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

8:30AM-11:30AM

BLOODY MARY BAR

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

Sponsored by:



8:30AM-11:30AM

MIMOSA BAR

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

Sponsored by:



8:30AM-9:30AM

MORNING KEYNOTE

SEMINOLE BALLROOM

- Backstage Pass: The Science Behind Hospitality that Rocks

Keynote Speakers: Dr. Melissa Hughes, Keynote Speaker & Author | The Andrick Group
Ready to amp up your guest experience? "Backstage Pass" pulls back the curtain on the neuroscience of hospitality, revealing what makes service memorable—and what makes it miss. Neuroscientist and speaker Dr. Melissa Hughes uses real-world examples and rock-and-roll energy to help hospitality teams train their brains (and their teams) to think, feel, and serve smarter. This isn't your average training—it's a full-stage experience that transforms ordinary service into encore-worthy moments.

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9:30AM-9:45AM

GET CONNECTED-NETWORKING BREAK!

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

9:45AM-10:45AM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

- Turning Your Story Into Sales

SALON WEST

Speaker: Bruce Turkel, Branding & Creativity Expert, Author & Speaker
Learn to build messaging strategies that full room and tables.

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- 2025 Legislative Wins & What's Next for Florida's Hospitality

SALON EAST

Speaker: Samantha Padgett, VP of Government Relations & General Counsel | Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association

Join us for an inside look at FRLA's major 2025 legislative victories. From cracking down on restaurant reservation bots to simplifying the removal of non-paying guests, we delivered big results that will impact your business. You'll learn crucial information about "operations charges", and we'll touch on seafood menu labeling, food additives, and the business rent tax. You'll also get preview of what's on the horizon for the 2026 legislative session, including credit card fee regulations and hemp food and beverage regulations.

- Taking Care of Your Expenses with Minimal Effort. The Low Hanging Fruit...

TERRACE BD

Speaker: Ben Lapscher, Principal | Expense Reduction Coaching

When thinking on cost reduction, management often focuses their strategies on staffing, cost of goods or downsizing. This session intends to provide an alternative approach, with insights on managing indirect costs in the Hospitality industry. It will also outline ideas for identifying attractive opportunities to improve operational efficiency and profitability in a methodical way without compromising on quality, service or employee morale.

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- Higher Impact - Why Cause Based Companies are More Successful

TERRACE AC

Moderator: Travis McGilvary, Senior Director of Workforce Relations | Better Together

Panelists: Javier Gonzalez, Florida Regional Director | bartaco

Rebecca Smith, VP Sales Training & Development | Monin Gourmet Flavorings

Mason Engstrom, SVP | Ole Smoky Distillery & Tanteo Tequila

Engaging with your community and having a clear purpose is beneficial because it motivates employees, attracts customers, and ultimately leads to improved business performance.

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10:45AM-11:00AM

GET CONNECTED-NETWORKING BREAK

SPONSOR MARKETPLACE

11:00AM-12:00PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

- Complaint to Compliment

SALON WEST

Moderator: Michael Cheng, PhD, Dean | FIU Chaplin School of Hospitality

Panelists: Joy Boyd, Area General Manager | The Islander Resort

Chris Kapatais, General Manager | The Edition Miami Beach

Ani Meinhold, Owner & Chef | Mad Phucs Hospitality Group

Learn how to personalize the guest experience at scale, empower staff, and how to recover on the spot. This session will offer ways to realistic personalization strategies without huge tech budgets. Make service recovery a strategic advantage.

Sponsored by:



- A Sales Revolution: Turning Operational Data into Recovery

TERRACE BD

Moderator: Fred LeFranc, Chaos Strategist & Founding Partner | Results Thru Strategy

Panelists: Kaleb Harrell, CEO & Co-Founder | Hawkers Asian Street Food

Ken Baker, CFO | Hawkers Asian Street Food

Mike Traylor, VP of Operations | Hawkers Asian Street Food

Many restaurant operations are down in sales with few exceptions. This condition is challenging with no end in sight. However, Hawkers has found success within its four walls.

Discover how Hawkers Asian Street Food's leadership transformed sales losses into operational excellence through data-driven precision and cultural transformation. When faced with significant revenue hemorrhaging, the company's senior leadership didn't just cut costs—they revolutionized their approach to peak-hour operations.

This high-impact session reveals the methodology behind identifying \$6 million in "lost sales" hidden within turnover rates, wait times, and throughput inefficiencies during their most critical weekend rush periods. Learn how granular financial analysis by location became the foundation for targeted operational interventions that delivered immediate results.

*The panel will unveil their three-pillar recovery strategy: **culture & operational focus, relentless intensity, and strategic incentive alignment**—showing how they moved from devastating losses to break even in just six weeks. Founders and senior operations leaders will share the Cultural Impact meetings that became the catalyst for organization-wide transformation, demonstrating how leadership-driven change management accelerated results in the dining room.*

Restaurant and hotel owners will gain actionable insights into revenue recovery methodologies, data-driven operational optimization, and the leadership frameworks that turn crisis into competitive advantage. This isn't just a turnaround story, it's a blueprint for sustainable operational excellence in high-volume hospitality environments.

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- Creating Marketing that Converts

TERRACE AC

Speaker: Natasha Ahuja, Founder | Swish Creatives Inc.

Standing out in a “saturated” market by leaning into storytelling, authenticity, and community-building content.

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- From Policy to Profit: How Hoteliers Can Influence the Rules that Shape Their Business

SALON EAST

Moderator: Troy Flanagan, EVP of External Affairs | American Hotel & Lodging Association

Panelists: Marilou Halvorsen, SVP of State & Local Government Affairs | American Hotel & Lodging Association

Greg Cook, General Manager | The Ritz-Carlton Amelia Island

Lisa Lombardo, President | ARK Holdings Group

In this session, you'll learn how to stay informed on key policy issues affecting the hospitality industry and why proactive engagement with government and your trade associations is critical to your hotel's success. Discover practical steps to make your voice heard and protect your business in an evolving regulatory landscape.

Sponsored by:



11:30AM-12:30PM

LUNCH

SEMINOLE BALLROOM

12:30PM-1:30PM

CLOSING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

SEMINOLE BALLROOM

- Remarks by Tim Tebow

Keynote Speaker: Tim Tebow, Entrepreneur, College Football Analyst for ESPN and SEC Network, the author of five New York Times bestsellers, and the founder of the Tim Tebow Foundation—dedicated to bringing Faith, Hope and Love to some of the most vulnerable people around the world. Prior to his current endeavors, Tim was an NFL quarterback, a two-time NCAA national champion, Heisman Trophy winner, and College Football Hall of Fame inductee.

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