



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES

Business Development & Marketing Forum

Hilton Cleveland Downtown – 100 Lakeside Ave E, Cleveland, OH
September 27 - 29, 2026

- Daily Schedule of Events -

Sunday, September 27, 2026

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm **All Forum Opening Reception**
Cocktails & hors d'oeuvres

Monday, September 28, 2026

7:30 am - 8:00 am **Breakfast & Networking**

8:00 am – 9:00 am **Introductions – Open Roundtable**
Superior A

9:00 am - 10:00 am **Opening Topic 1 – Digital Transformation & Technology**
(Speaker tbd)

- Using AI and automation to enhance marketing efficiency.
- Digital tools for proposal management, CRM, and client engagement.
- Adapting to new digital channels as traditional marketing funnels loses relevance.

10:00 am – 10:15 am **Coffee Break & Networking**
Superior A Foyer

10:15 am – 11:00 am **Roundtables**
Superior A
Table Topics: Tools, Emerging Trends, AI for Research, Risk Management, AI agents & prompting

11:00 am – 12:00 pm **Topic 2 – Data Management: Building a Culture of Accessible, Actionable Information**
Superior A
Moderator: Holly Painter, Associate, Client Account Manager, KCI
Karen Cotton, Senior Marketing Manager at The Timmons Group
Elizabeth Scarce, Chief Marketing Officer, Dewberry
(Speaker tbd)

- Clarify what “the right information” is for A/E firms and how to capture and maintain it effectively.
- Ensure that accurate, reliable data is easily accessible across the organization through thoughtful workflows, governance, and tools.
- Drive the cultural shift needed to motivate engineers, architects, and project managers to contribute consistently, overcome



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resistance, and build healthy data habits into daily work.

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| 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm | Buffet Lunch & Networking |
| 1:00 - 1:45 pm | Roundtables Superior A Table Topics: CRM Selection, Integration, Data Quality, Client Insights, User Adoption, Business Development, Emerging Trends |
| 1:45 pm - 2:45 pm | Topic 3 – Leading Culture Through Change Panel Superior A <i>Moderator: Maxinne Leighton, Senior Vice President Marketing/Communications and Business Development, JB&B John Lavey, Vice President Director of Strategic Marketing, Morrison-Maierle Stefany Barone, Chief Marketing Officer/Senior Vice President, Wilson & Company, Inc. Meghan Stiklestad, Director of Communications, Mead & Hunt</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Understand how organizational culture shifts during growth, mergers, acquisitions, and evolving political climates.○ Apply communication and change-management strategies that strengthen alignment, trust, and employee engagement.○ Identify approaches to attract, integrate, and retain talent while preserving cultural cohesion during expansion. |
| 2:45 – 3:00 pm | Coffee Break & Networking Superior A Foyer |
| 3:00 – 4:00 pm | Roundtables Superior A Table Topics: M&A Culture, Onboarding, Talent Attraction, Internal vs External Communications |
| 4:00 – 4:30 pm | (Sponsor Session & Happy Hour tbd) Superior A |
| 4:30 – 5:30 pm | All Forum Reception |

Tuesday, September 29, 2026

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| 7:30 am - 8:00 am | Breakfast & Networking |
| 8:00 am – 9:00 am | Topic 4 – Back Office to Boardroom Panel Superior A <i>Moderator: Diana O’Lare Jamie Mabile, Principal, Senior Manager, Communications & Engagement with CDM Smith Laurie Lumish, Principal, Director of Marketing & BD, Degenkolb Cecilia Tran Arango, Principal, Marketing Director, Thomas & Hutton</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Explore career journeys and success stories that illustrate how |



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professionals advance from back-office and administrative roles to influential leadership positions.

- Identify pivotal turning points that help emerging leaders gain credibility, expand influence, and elevate their strategic impact within the firm.
- Structure and lead effective teams that support organizational growth, enhance client service, and strengthen firmwide business development efforts.

9:00 am – 10:00 am

**Roundtables
Superior A**

At your table discuss career pathways, credibility building, influential moments, team structure, training and support.

10:00 – 10:30 am

**Coffee Break & Networking
Superior A Foyer
Check out**

10:30 am – 11:30 am

**Topic 5 – Strategic Public Relations for A/E/C Leaders
Superior A**

Jeff Lavery, Managing Principal, Pedigree PR

- Master essential PR skills in media relations, crisis communication, and public-facing messaging.
- Strengthen government relations by engaging elected officials, coordinating with agencies, and leveraging their communications teams to amplify your message.
- Enhance BD impact by training teams to communicate strategically and build relationships that elevate your firm's visibility and credibility.

12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

**Economic Outlook 2026: Trends, Risks, and AEC Industry
Sentiment – Buffet Luncheon
Superior A**

Joe Bates, Head Researcher, ACEC Research Institute, Economic Assessment and Thomas Grogan, Chief Economist, ACEC

- Gain a clear understanding of current U.S. economic trends and their implications for the AEC sector.
- Interpret the latest AEC industry sentiment data to identify emerging opportunities and risks.
- Apply insights from ACEC economists to inform strategic planning and decision-making within your organization.

Adjourn