



2026 Emerging Leaders Conference

July 15 -16, 2026 | Viceroy Hotel in Chicago, IL

DETAILED AGENDA

Wednesday, July 15, 2026

6:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Summer Social - Dinner & Game Night (Optional)

Kick off the conference with an evening that's all about food, fun, and friendly competition. We'll gather at Lux Bar Chicago in the chic Fireplace Room, where stunning views set the mood for great food and even better conversation. After dinner, put your pop culture prowess to the test in our Pop Culture Brain Olympics. Registration is required.

Thursday, July 16, 2026

7:30 am – 8:30 am

Breakfast & Registration

Stop by the registration desk for your name badge then enjoy a healthy breakfast fueling you for a day of leadership learning.

8:30 am – 8:45 am

Welcome & Introductions

Begin a productive day filled with conversation and connection as we come together to learn.

8:45 am – 10:00 am

The Changing Psychology of Influence: How to Overcome Resistance to Move Your Ideas Forward in the Modern Era

Presented by Henna Pryor, Workplace Performance Expert & Author

Workplace performance expert Henna Pryor will help you learn why even strong ideas often stall and what to do about it. You'll identify the hidden friction points that create resistance and walk away with practical strategies to gain buy-in, move ideas forward, and turn momentum into execution.

10:00 am – 10:15 am

Morning Break

Enjoy refreshments, stretch your legs & network with fellow attendees!

10:15 am – 11:30 am

AI + The Human Edge: Leading with Both Hands

Presented by Henna Pryor, Workplace Performance Expert & Author

AI is changing how we work, but it's also exposing gaps in how we lead and communicate. Learn how to use AI to strengthen your leadership, prepare for tough conversations, and fuel more connected, effective teams.

11:30 am – 12:00 pm

From Ideas to Action: Roundtable Discussions

Continue the conversation in small-group roundtables designed to turn morning insights into actions you can bring back to your organization. Share perspectives, explore real-world applications, and leave with practical next steps you can put to work immediately.



12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Lunch

Enjoy a delicious lunch and continue the conversations with fellow attendees.

1:00 pm – 1:15 pm

Give Back - Cake4Kids

Cake4Kids is a nonprofit organization that delivers free, personalized birthday cakes and treats to underserved children, including those in foster care, living in shelters, or facing financial hardship, so they can feel recognized and celebrated. As part of the Emerging Leaders Conference, attendees will have the chance to write heartfelt birthday cards, helping each child feel seen, valued, and special.

1:15 pm – 2:30 pm

The Myth of Multitasking® Increase Your Value with the Power of Hidden Time

Presented by Dave Crenshaw, LinkedIn Learning Trainer & Author

What could you do with a 20% increase in productivity? Learn how to uncover hidden time, eliminate distractions, and focus on the work that drives the most value for you and your organization.

2:30 pm – 2:45 pm

Afternoon Break

Enjoy refreshments, stretch your legs & network with fellow attendees!

2:45 pm – 4:00 pm

Material Handling Business Trends: Roundtable Discussions

Participate in roundtable discussions with your industry peers. Tables will be organized by different roles and careers in the industry. Great way to connect with others like you.

4:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Maximize Your Membership & Conference Wrap-Up

End the conference with learning more about MHEDA, MHI and WERC Member programs, resources and more!

4:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Networking Reception

Cap-off your Emerging Leaders Conference experience with a fun Happy Hour networking reception. After a busy day of learning, relax with your industry colleagues by enjoying drinks and lively conversation.

MHEDA would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our event sponsors for their generous support. Their commitment helps make this event possible and ensures a valuable experience for all attendees.

