



Program agenda

IMEX-MPI-MCI Future Leaders Forum
IMEX America 2024



Program agenda

Wednesday, October 9, 2024

South Pacific GH - Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas

Moderated by Thuy Diep, Senior Meeting Planner, CWT Meetings & Events

9:15 – 10am

Breakfast/poster presentations and registration

Start your Future Leaders experience by networking with lecturers participating in the co-located Faculty Engagement Program. View their poster presentations and ask them questions—you may even be inspired for an essay topic. Plus breakfast snacks and coffee.

10 – 10:30am

Welcome and icebreaker

Ray Bloom, Chairman, IMEX Group

Drew Holmgreen, Chief Experience Officer, Meeting Professionals International (MPI)

Pam Baker, Director, Corporate Division, MCI Canada

Cory Brown, Senior Manager of Events, Mandalay Bay

Thuy Diep, Senior Meeting Planner, CWT Meetings & Events

Meet the organizers behind the Forum and prepare for the day ahead. We tell you more about the Future Leaders community and how to make the most of your experience. And get to know your fellow Future Leaders.

10:30 – 11:15am

The XYZ of networking: How to build authentic connections across generations

Taylor Smith, Content Developer - Destinations and Features, Meetings Today

Mandi Graziano, Vice President Global Accounts, Hospitality Performance Network Global

The meetings and events industry runs on being social and connecting people, and sometimes it really is more about *who* rather than *what* you know—which makes knowing how to network an invaluable skill.

But what does networking even look like today? How do you make an impression on someone who's been shaking the hands top industry names for 20-plus years? What happens when Gen X meets Gen Z, and how do we make those cross-generational introductions less awkward? Pick up the tips and tricks you need to build authentic connections with industry professionals of all ages and backgrounds.

11:15 – 11:30am

Coffee break

11:30am – 12:15pm

Our journey into the industry and beyond

Kelly Truitt, Director of Sales, Terramar (and past Future Leader)

Lexi Quilty, Learning Operations Specialist, Meeting Professionals International (MPI)

Kate Jansen, Senior National Sales Manager, Raleigh Convention Center

Explore the different sides of the industry and all the opportunities that lie ahead of you. Kelly, Lexi and Kate share their individual experiences and backgrounds of working across various sectors and businesses—including destination management, incentives, associations and more. Learn about growing your career and navigating the twists and turns of meetings and events.

12:15 – 12:45pm

Lessons for success in your event planning career

Heidi Bianchi, Founder and CEO, The Bridge Event Academy

Heidi shares lessons learned throughout her event planning career, from starting out to managing large-scale events, highlighting her experiences and the lessons that have shaped her path.

Heidi provides real-life examples of challenges faced and how to overcome them, along with tips and strategies for networking and building a career in events. She also offers advice on running your own event planning business, from getting started to sustaining growth.

12:45 – 2pm

Lunch break

Enjoy lunch with other Future Leaders at the Mandalay Bay food court. Don't forget your vouchers provided by IMEX (one-time use only – no change given).

2 – 2:10pm

Quick energizer/recap

2:10 – 3:45pm

Roundtable session: Meet the experts

Get first-hand industry insights, hear personal stories, discover potential career opportunities and network with some of the best in the business. Ask all your burning questions to a group of industry experts—such as their job responsibilities and how they have progressed in their careers.

After a short introduction to the experts involved, four discussion rounds of 20 minutes each give you the opportunity to meet with four industry professionals of your choice in smaller groups.

Participating industry professionals:

Hannah Elston, Community and Events Marketing Executive, Event Leaders Exchange

Devon Pasha, Director North America, Event Design Collective

Taylor Smith, Content Developer – Destinations and Features, Meetings Today

Jordan Lacey, MBA, CMP, Senior Specialist of Events and Experiences, North America, Schneider Electric

Eric Wallinger, Director of Sustainability, MeetGreen

Kelly Truitt, Director of Sales, Terramar

Joost de Meyer, Chairman & CEO, First Incentive Travel

Thomas Whelan, Director of Operations / General Manager - Levy Restaurants

Sophie Pink, Digital & Social Media Manager, IMEX Group

3:45 – 4 pm

Reflection and close