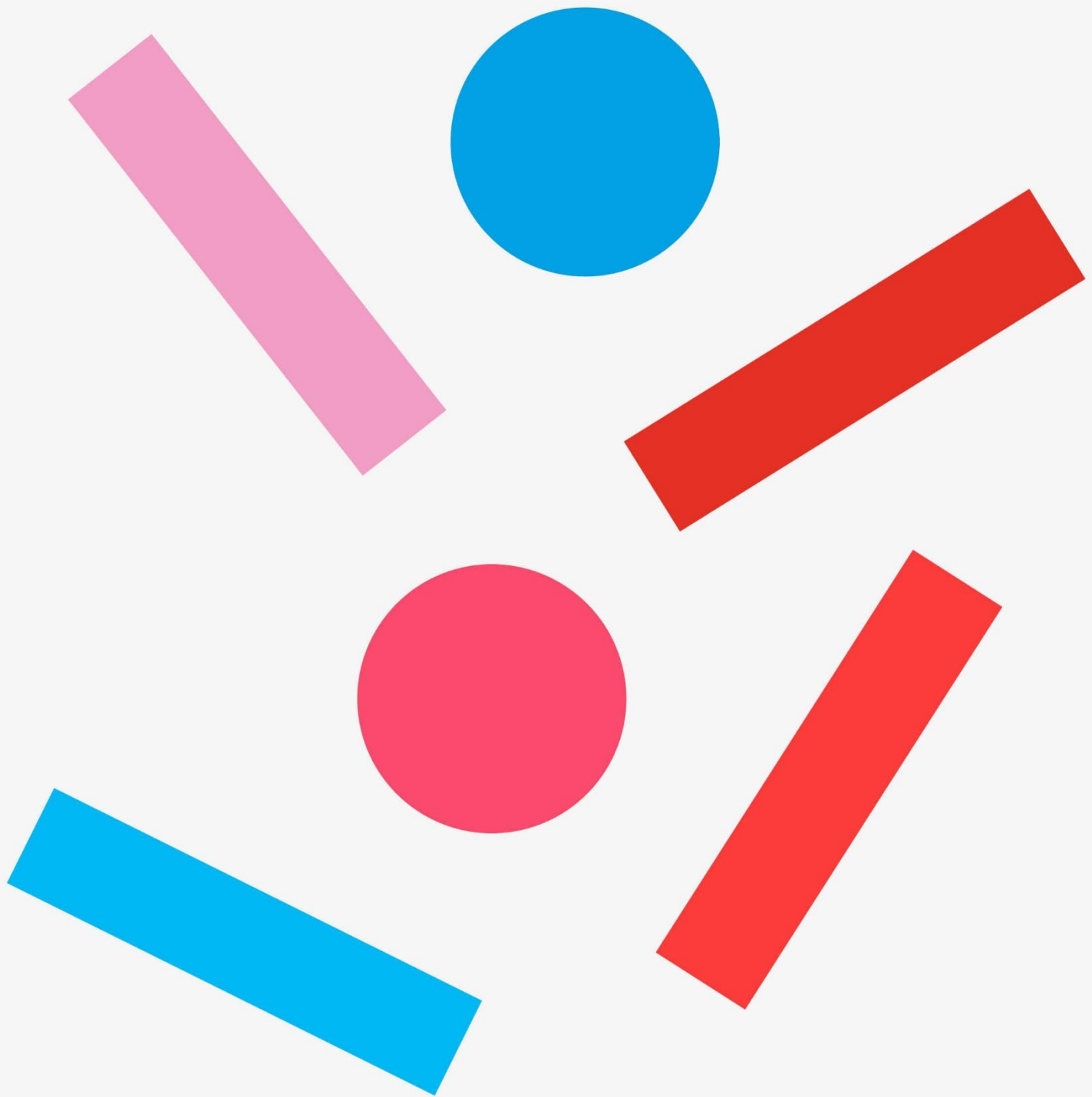




Program

Future Leaders Forum
IMEX America 2026



Future Leaders Forum Program, IMEX America 2026

Wednesday, October 14, 2026

South Pacific GH, North Convention Center, Mandalay Bay

Moderated by The Eventualists hosts: Hannah Elston, Senior Manager, Partnerships, Marketing & Communications and Taylor Smith, Content Manager, Destinations, Meetings Today

9:30 – 10am

Breakfast and registration

Network with fellow Future Leaders before the program begins - breakfast snacks and coffee provided.

10 – 10:30am

Welcome and icebreaker

Ray Bloom, Chairman, IMEX Group

Rachel Benedick, Chief Revenue Officer, Meeting Professionals International (MPI)

Hannah Elston, Senior Manager, Partnerships, Marketing & Communications, The Eventualists

Taylor Smith, Content Manager, Destinations, Meetings Today

Hannah Lee, Operations Manager, IMEX Group

Meet the team behind the Forum, the Future Leaders community and fellow Future Leaders. Learn how to make the most of your experience.

10:30 – 11:15am

Starting your journey in events: Career and skills workshop, part 1

10:35 – 10:55am

Access granted: Building relationships that open doors

Sherron Washington, CEO, The P3 Solution; Founder, Discovering Butterflies

Learn how to build authentic relationships, expand your professional visibility and create meaningful industry connections that support long-term career growth. Gain practical strategies to strengthen communication, build credibility and navigate networking and professional spaces with confidence and intention.

10:55 – 11:15am

Resumes and interviews that turn opportunities into offers

Gwendolyn Hood, Founder, Butterscotch Cloud

You have six seconds and one shot to make an impression and stop the scroll. We'll review a resume in real time so you can see exactly how to show your value in a way hiring managers can't ignore. Once your resume gets you the interview, let's get you the job. Walk away with simple, repeatable answer structures you can confidently use the very next day.

11:15 – 11:30am

Coffee break

11:30am – 12:15pm

Starting your journey in events: Career and skills workshop, part 2

Our career stories

11:30 – 11:45am

[Nicole Walker, Founder and CEO, Lightning Bolt Consulting](#)

Award-winning Australian business events leader and university lecturer, Nicole progressed from junior operational event delivery to executive leadership and company ownership. She'll share insights on diverse industry pathways, personal branding and the skills needed for long-term success.

11:45am – 12pm

[Speaker to be confirmed](#)

12 – 12:15pm

[Stacey Shafer, VP Community Engagement, PCMA](#)

With extensive experience in member engagement and professional development, Stacey will share her insights on building community, leadership and launching your career in business events.

12:15 – 12:45pm

Career catalyst: Case study activity

[Anthony Vade, Chief Innovation Officer and Co-Founder, Strategy Table Pathways](#)

[Ryan Hill, Chief Operations Officer and Co-Founder, Strategy Table Pathways](#)

Take part in an action-packed case study challenge. Collaborate in teams to refine event execution plans alongside industry experts. Pitch your innovative solutions, explore dynamic career pathways, and bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world practice.

12:45 – 2pm

Lunch break

Enjoy lunch with fellow Future Leaders at the Mandalay Bay food court. Don't forget your IMEX voucher (one-time use only, no change given).

2 – 3:15pm

Career catalyst: Case study activity

[Anthony Vade, Chief Innovation Officer and Co-Founder, Strategy Table Pathways](#)

[Ryan Hill, Chief Operations Officer and Co-Founder, Strategy Table Pathways](#)

Refine your event ideas with experts across key industry areas, including food and beverage, audiovisual, educational content and travel services.

Teams will share their ideas with industry area experts, who'll pick the top two concepts to present to the group.

3:15 – 3:30pm

Networking break

3:30pm – 4pm

Career catalyst: Group presentations

Teams will present their ideas to the group and industry experts will share their feedback. Vote for your favorite concept using Slido.

Subject matter experts:

Joost de Meyer, Chairman & CEO, First Incentive Travel

Ananth Mullanpudi, Head of Revenue, Snapsight

Zak Roby, Vice President of Strategy & Growth, Show Gear Productions

Anna Abdelnoor, CEO & Founder, isla

Cory Brown, Senior Manager of Events, Catering, Mandalay Bay

4 – 4:15pm

Reflection and end of day one

Thursday, October 15, 2026

South Pacific GH, North Convention Center, Mandalay Bay

Moderated by The Eventualists hosts: Hannah Elston, Senior Manager, Partnerships, Marketing & Communications and Taylor Smith, Content Manager, Destinations, Meetings Today

9:30 – 10am

Show floor 101: Let's prepare together

Robyn Davis, Trade Show Trainer/Consultant, Exhibitors WINH LLC

Learn quick tips to help maximize your show-floor experience. Discover how to approach exhibitors, perfect your personal introduction and come away with smart questions to ask.

10am – 12pm

Guided show floor experience

Choose from five curated tracks (details coming soon), visit exhibitor booths and explore our education program.

Industry professionals will be available to guide you, or you can explore on your own. Make notes as you go to share with the group later.

Curious Minds Theater, Inspiration Hub

12pm – 12:30pm

Show floor reflections

Share key insights and discoveries from your show floor experience.

12:30pm – 12:45pm

Maintaining and building on your new connections

Learn how to maintain your new connections and how you can use them to support your career growth and next steps in the industry.

12:45 – 1pm

Wrap up and program close

Feel free to continue exploring the show floor after the program finishes.