



Program

IMEX-MPI-MCI Future Leaders Forum
IMEX America 2025



Program

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

South Pacific GH - Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas

Moderated by Christy Renee, Communication Consultant, Ignite | Coach, Consultant and Magnetic Storyteller, IMC Strategies

9:15 – 10am

Breakfast/poster presentations and registration

Start your Future Leaders experience by networking with lecturers from the co-located Faculty Engagement Program. View their poster presentations, ask questions and spark ideas—you might even discover your next essay topic. 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)

Patrick Colomer, Director of Group Sales – Northeast, Loews Miami Beach Hotel and Chair of MPI'S CMAC (Chapter Member Advisory Council)

Pam Baker, Director, Corporate Division, MCI

Christy Renee, Communication Consultant, Ignite | Coach, Consultant and Magnetic Storyteller, IMC Strategies

Meet the team behind the Forum and prepare for the day ahead. We'll introduce you to the Future Leaders community and share tips on making the most of your experience. You'll also have the chance to connect with fellow Future Leaders.

10:30 – 11:15am

Why you need to build your Business Bedside Manner®

Mandi Graziano, Vice President Global Accounts, HPN Global; Sales Coach, Facetime Coaching Company; Podcast Host

Who do you want to be in business? How do you want to show up? Develop your own Business Bedside Manner® to be a better future leader, a better future businessperson and a better future human. Walk away with tools to be more effective in the meetings business and in life.

11:15 – 11:30am

Coffee break

11:30am – 12:15pm

Speak with power: Master high-pressure conversations with confidence and clarity

Sammi Sadicario, Founder, Voice Experts

Whether you're walking into a job interview, pitching an idea, or introducing yourself to someone influential—how you use your voice matters. Sammi shows you how to overcome speaking anxiety and step into your next opportunity with calm, clarity and confidence. Gain science-backed tools to regulate nerves, build instant connection and speak like a leader, even when the pressure's on.

12:15 – 12:45pm

Ask me anything: Finding our paths into the events industry

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

Thomas Whelan, Associate Managing Director, Access DMC

Laura Lewis, Senior Operations Manager, IMEX

Explore the many sides of the industry and the opportunities ahead. Thuy, Thomas and Laura share their individual experiences across destination management, venues, event agencies and more. Learn how to grow your career and navigate the twists and turns of meetings and events.

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 – 2:10pm

Recap and speed networking

Christy Renee, Communication Consultant, Ignite | Coach, Consultant and Magnetic Storyteller, IMC Strategies

2:10 – 3:45pm

Roundtable session: Meet the experts

Get first-hand insights, hear personal stories, discover career opportunities and network with some of the best in the business. Ask your questions—from job responsibilities to career progression.

After a short introduction, join four 20-minute discussion rounds with industry professionals of your choice.

Participating industry professionals:

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

Hannah Elston, Community & Event Marketing Executive, Event Leaders Exchange (ELX)

Barkley Gamble, Senior Director of Operations, Freeman

Devon Pasha, Emcee and Chief Experience Officer, DMP Creative

Joost de Meyer, Chairman & CEO, First Incentive Travel

Chriss Fortier-Rolfe, Senior Director, Innovation Experiences, Schneider Electric

Eric Wallinger, Director of Sustainability, MeetGreen

Cory Brown, Senior Manager of Events, Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino

Brian Mushakwe, Co-founder and CEO, Engage MICE

Sharon Mills, Mentor, The Annabelle Project | National Sales Manager, Shepard

3:45 – 4pm

Reflection and close