

The People Equation.

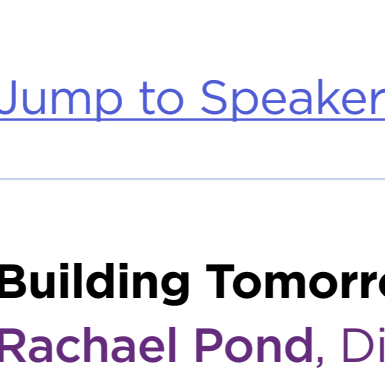
BALANCING TECH, POLICY AND COMMUNITY

Schedule of Events and General Session Program

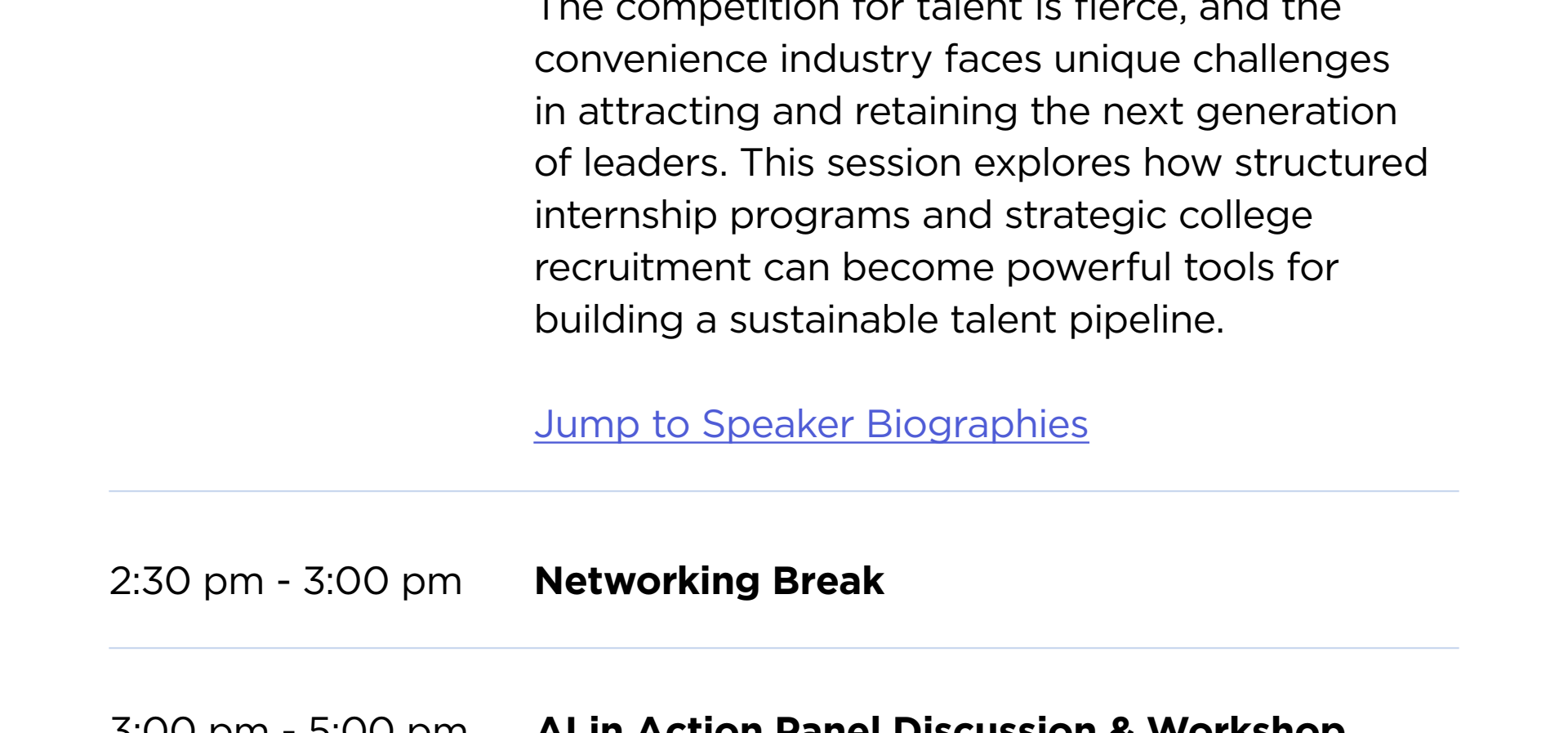
Jump to: [Monday](#), [Tuesday](#), or [Wednesday](#) sessions

All sessions to be held in the Daisy room on the second floor of the West Tower in the Galt House Hotel unless otherwise noted.

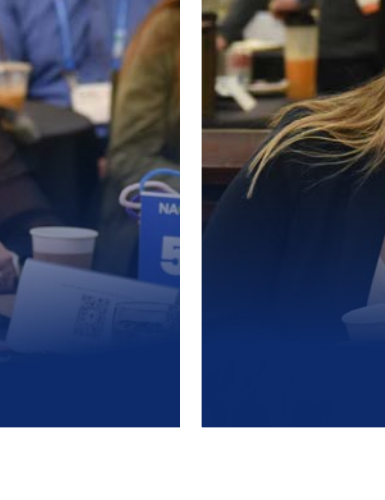
MONDAY, MARCH 16

1:30 pm	Registration Open
2:30 pm - 2:45 pm	<p>Opening Remarks Julie Jackowski, Former NACS Chair</p> <p>Moderator Julie Jackowski will kick off the 2026 NACS HR Forum by highlighting key themes, goals, and HR's evolving role in the convenience industry.</p>
2:45 pm - 3:00 pm	<p>Vendor Introductions NACS HR Forum Partners</p> <p>We're excited to welcome our event partners to the stage, where they will share insights into their products and services designed to support and enhance HR operations for your organizations.</p> <p>Jump to Speaker Biographies</p>
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	<p>Compliance in Motion: Hot Topics for 2026 Julie Jackowski, Former NACS Chair</p> <p>Kick off the HR Forum with a fast-paced, interactive session that tackles the most pressing legal issues impacting HR leaders today. Our moderator, Julie, will guide you through key updates on a variety of topics, such as AI, immigration, DEI, wage and hour, and various compliance matters. You'll leave with: A clear understanding of emerging legal risks and trends; Practical steps to strengthen compliance in your organization; and Insights from peers during roundtable discussions.</p> <p>Jump to Speaker Biographies</p>
4:00 pm - 4:15 pm	Networking Break
4:15 pm - 5:00 pm	<p>Looking Ahead: Workforce Lessons from 2025 Chris Wise, Research Analyst, NACS</p> <p>The labor market continues to shift, and understanding the forces shaping 2025 is essential for HR leaders. After years of volatility, marked by wage pressures, talent shortages, and evolving workforce expectations, what's different this year? In this session, the NACS Research team will break down the latest macroeconomic labor trends, share fresh insights from NACS 2025 Talent Insights survey, and highlight what these changes mean for the convenience industry. Walk away with actionable insights to navigate today's labor challenges and prepare for what's ahead.</p> <p>Jump to Speaker Biographies</p>
5:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Breakouts by Topic
5:30 pm - 5:45 pm	<p>Day One Wrap-up Julie Jackowski, Former NACS Chair</p>
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	<p>Opening Reception Join us for an evening of appetizers, drinks, and connections. The reception will be held in the Waterford room located on the 25th floor (West Tower). Brought to you by:</p> 

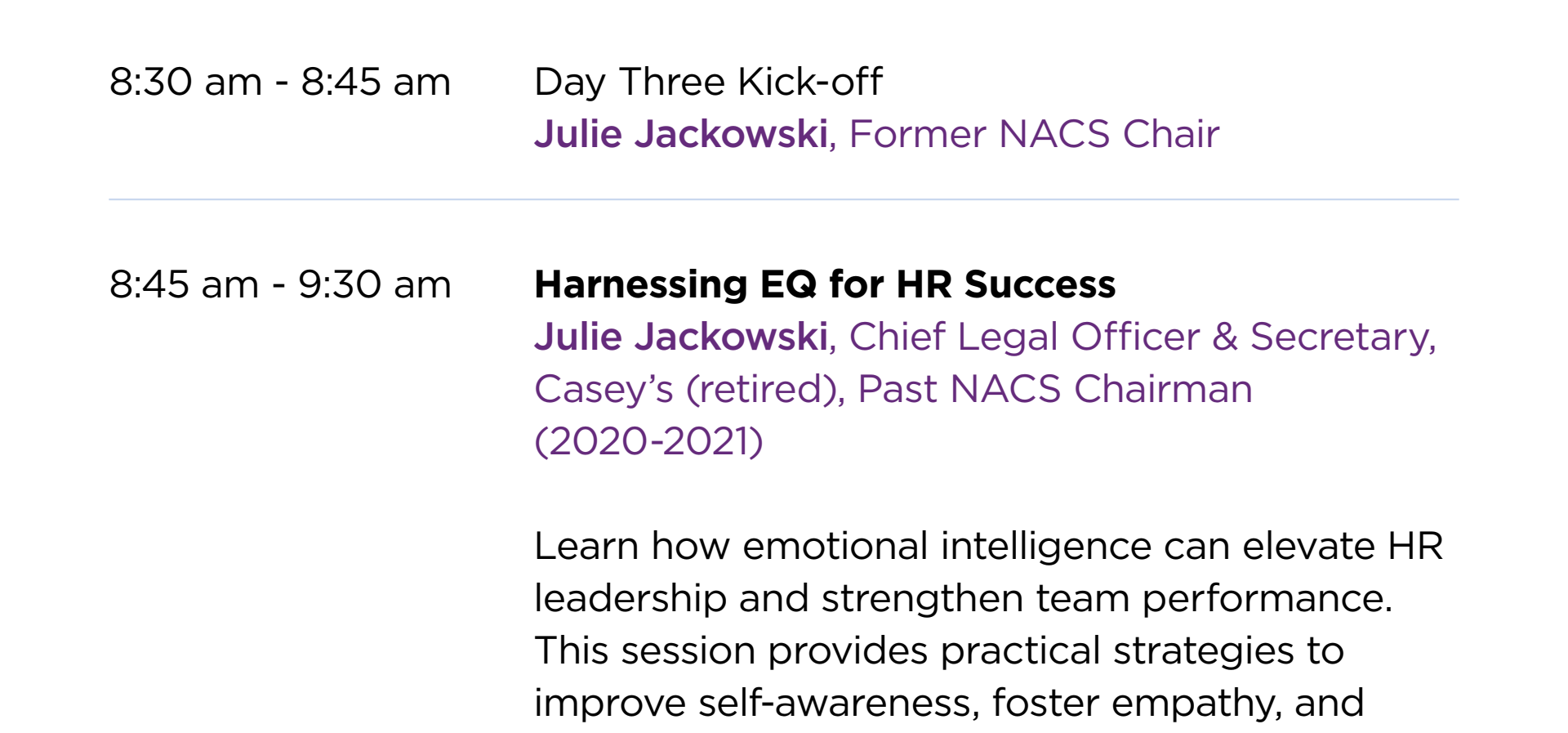
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TUESDAY, MARCH 17

8:00 am - 8:30 am	Breakfast
8:30 am - 8:45 am	<p>Day Two Kickoff Julie Jackowski, Former NACS Chair</p>
8:45 am - 9:30 am	<p>From Task to Trust: Why Connection Beats Transaction Melanie Disney, Director of Human Resources, EZ Stop/Calloway Oil Company</p> <p>In today's fast-paced, screen-driven workplaces, many leaders fall into the trap of running transactions instead of building connections. The result? Rising disengagement, higher turnover, and teams that do the bare minimum. In this session, we'll explore the cultural and technological trends that push leaders away from authentic connection—and practical ways to reverse it. You'll walk away with simple, actionable tools to transform everyday interactions into moments of trust, loyalty, and engagement.</p> <p>Jump to Speaker Biographies</p>
9:30 am - 10:15 am	<p>Selling Your Benefits Laura Varn, Founder, Laura Varn and Associates</p> <p>Learn how to position your benefits package as a competitive advantage. This session explores strategies for communicating value to employees, demonstrating ROI to leadership, and highlighting unique perks that drive engagement and retention. Walk away with practical tips and real-world examples to make your benefits program stand out</p> <p>Jump to Speaker Biographies</p>
10:15 am - 10:30 am	Networking Break
10:30 am - 11:15 am	Breakouts by Store Count
11:15 am - 12:00 pm	<p>From Potential to Pipeline: Developing Your Future Leaders Alison Laporte, Senior Director of Talent Development and Learning, The Wills Group/Dash In Food Stores, Inc.</p> <p>In today's fast-moving organizations, success depends on more than filling roles. It depends on building a deep, ready bench of capable leaders who can step forward, grow others, and sustain momentum. This session tells the story of how organizations can intentionally grow their future leaders from within — turning everyday moments into leadership opportunities and potential into performance.</p> <p>Through practical insights and real-world lessons, participants will discover how to spot leadership early, invest in meaningful growth, and create a culture where developing people is everyone's responsibility. Walk away with a clear, actionable approach to building the "next layer" — and the confidence that your future leaders are already on the path.</p> <p>Jump to Speaker Biographies</p>
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm - 1:45 pm	<p>Level Up Learning: How Circle K Uses Gamification to Transform Training Kristian Planke Styrrno, Director Strategic Projects North America, Circle K</p> <p>Discover how Circle K is redefining employee engagement through gamified training. In this case study, you'll learn how the retailer integrated game mechanics into its learning programs to boost participation, improve knowledge retention, and drive measurable business results. The session will cover: Why gamification works in today's workforce; Circle K's approach to designing and implementing gamified learning; and Lessons learned and best practices for scaling across multiple locations.</p> <p>Jump to Speaker Biographies</p>
1:45 pm - 2:30 pm	<p>Building Tomorrow's Workforce Rachael Pond, Director, Human Resources, Campbell Oil Company & BellStores Lydia Scherholz, Recruiting Coordinator Majors Management, LLC. Julie Jackowski, Former NACS Chair</p> <p>The competition for talent is fierce, and the convenience industry faces unique challenges in attracting and retaining the next generation of leaders. This session explores how structured internship programs and strategic college recruitment can become powerful tools for building a sustainable talent pipeline.</p> <p>Jump to Speaker Biographies</p>
2:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Networking Break
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	<p>AI in Action Panel Discussion & Workshop Maria Lamb, Head of HR & Safety, Coen Markets, Inc. Alisha Black, Vice President of Human Resources, Huck's Market Nathan Graham, Director of Human Resources, TXB Stores Amber Millwood, Field Training Manager, The Spinlux Company</p> <p>Explore how AI can transform HR and learning strategies in this interactive workshop. Using real-world case studies from retailers, participants will hear practical examples of AI in action. Then, in a hands-on session, attendees will apply these tools themselves, experimenting with approaches that can be implemented immediately in their own organizations. Walk away with actionable insights, new ideas, and strategies to leverage AI for stronger people and business outcomes.</p> <p>Jump to Speaker Biographies</p>
5:00 pm - 5:15 pm	<p>Day Two Wrap Up Julie Jackowski, Former NACS Chair</p>
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm	<p>Evening Networking Activity Join us for a fun night with Trolley De'Ville that will give us of a tour of Louisville. Please meet outside the Galt House Hotel for the trolley pickup at 6:00pm. Tour will drop off back at the hotel. Brought to you by:</p> 

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

8:00 am - 8:30 am	Breakfast
8:30 am - 8:45 am	<p>Day Three Kick-off Julie Jackowski, Former NACS Chair</p>
8:45 am - 9:30 am	<p>Harnessing EQ for HR Success Julie Jackowski, Chief Legal Officer & Secretary, Casey's (retired), Past NACS Chairman (2020-2021)</p> <p>Learn how emotional intelligence can elevate HR leadership and strengthen team performance. This session provides practical strategies to improve self-awareness, foster empathy, and enhance collaboration across your organization.</p> <p>Jump to Speaker Biographies</p>
9:30 am - 10:30 am	<p>Simplicity in Multi-Generational Teams: How to Attract and Retain Talent of All Ages Matt Havens, Founder, Matt Havens Speaking</p> <p>In this engaging, entertaining, and actionable presentation, Matt Havens will bring decades of experience helping organizations navigate generational differences to audiences looking to finally understand how to truly engage each other and how to simplify (not complicate) the solutions.</p> <p>Attendees will learn how to understand, recognize, and resolve their generational issues by harnessing the power of Simplicity.</p> <p>What attendees come away with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools for replacing the complicated five-generation model with a workable dichotomy between older, more experienced workers and their younger, less-experienced counterparts. An understanding of the key cultural, technological, and social changes that have conspired to create a disconnect between team members from these two groups. Practical strategies for reducing complexity and maximizing action capital. Methods for navigating and thriving in change across age-diverse groups. Tactics for hiring and retaining the best talent, regardless of their age. <p>Jump to Speaker Biographies</p>
10:30 am - 10:45 am	Networking Break
10:45 am - 11:15 am	Breakouts: Final Connections & Reflections
11:15 am	<p>Closing Thoughts Julie Jackowski, Former NACS Chair</p>

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