



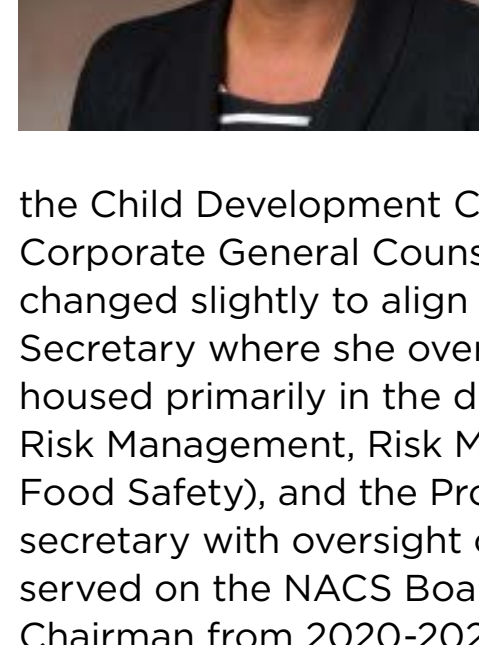
Featured Speakers

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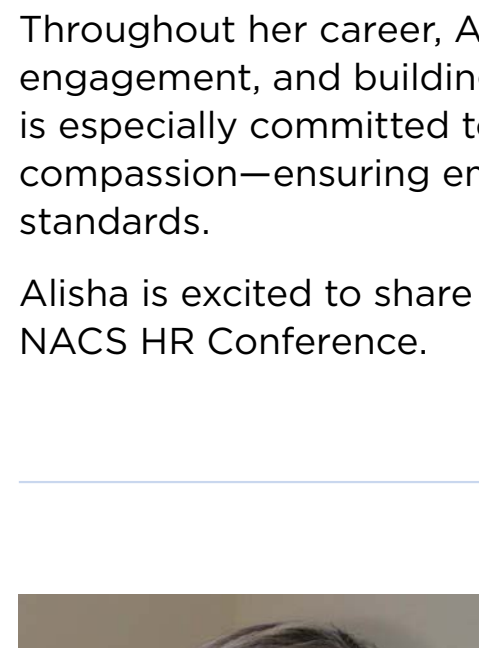
HR FORUM MODERATOR
JULIE JACKOWSKI
 Chief Legal Officer & Secretary
 Casey's (retired),
 Past NACS Chairman (2020-2021)

Julie joined Casey's in 1994 as Legal Counsel as its first employed law counsel. She became Vice President of Human Resources/Legal Counsel in 2003 with oversight, in part, of the departments of Human Resources, Payroll, and the Child Development Center. In 2010, Julie was promoted to Senior Vice President, Corporate General Counsel and Human Resources. In August of 2015, her area of focus changed slightly to align with her last position of Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary where she oversaw the Company's legal, compliance, regulatory and risk areas housed primarily in the departments under her direct supervision of Legal, Enterprise Risk Management, Risk Management (including Worker's Compensation, Security and Food Safety), and the Project Management Office. She also served as the Company's secretary with oversight of SEC compliance and coordination of Board matters. Julie served on the NACS Board of Directors for many years culminating with the position of Chairman from 2020-2021.

Before joining Casey's, Julie was an attorney for Shearer, Templer, Pingel & Kaplan. Julie has been active in a number of organizations including the Association of Corporate Counsel (Iowa Chapter), Iowa State Bar Association (past chair of the Corporate Counsel Section), Drake University Law School Board of Counselors and Delta Theta Phi International Law Fraternity, where she served four years as its president. She currently serves on the non-profit Boards for the Wildwood Hills Ranch of Iowa, the James Arthur Albert Foundation, and the Affiliated House Corporation of Gama Phi Beta at Iowa State University. She is also a board member of SuckerPunch Gourmet LLC.

Julie earned a J.D. from Drake University Law School and a B.A. in political science from Iowa State University. She and her husband Tom are the parents of four children and 1 granddaughter.

About Casey's: Headquartered in Ankeny, Iowa, Casey's General Stores, Inc. operates more than 2,400 convenience stores in 16 Midwestern states. Casey's offers self-service fuel, a wide selection of grocery items and an array of freshly prepared food items. Among the most popular of Casey's prepared food are its made-from-scratch pizzas, donuts, subs and sandwiches. Casey's operates from three company distribution centers, enabling an approximate delivery of 90% of in-store products as well as 55% of fuel.

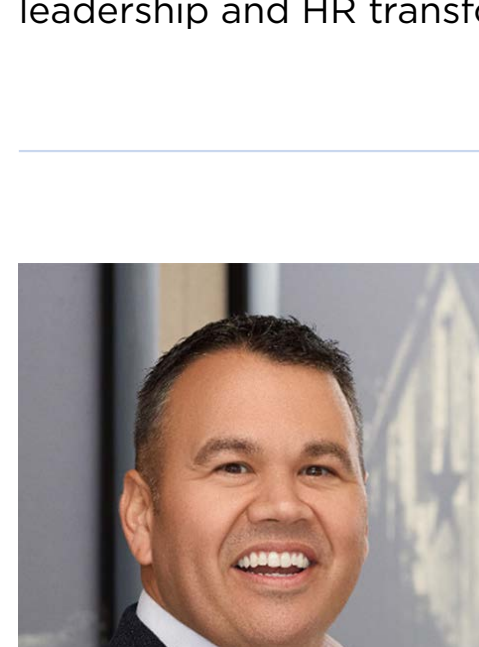


ALISHA BLACK
 Vice President of Human Resources, Huck's Market

Alisha Black is the Vice President of Human Resources for Huck's Market, a Midwest-based convenience retailer known for its strong focus on people, culture, and operational excellence. With a passion for developing teams and creating practical, people-first HR strategies, Alisha partners closely with operations leadership to support frontline employees while driving business results.

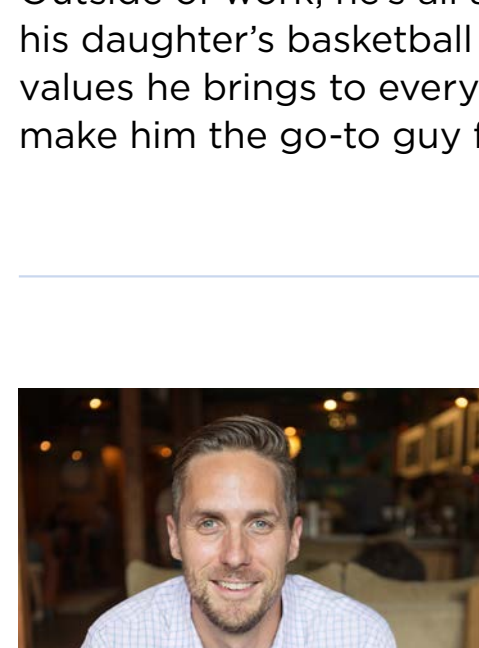
Throughout her career, Alisha has focused on leadership development, training, engagement, and building processes that work in real-world retail environments. She is especially committed to helping organizations balance compliance, culture, and compassion—ensuring employees feel supported while maintaining high operational standards.

Alisha is excited to share insights and learn alongside fellow HR professionals at the NACS HR Conference.



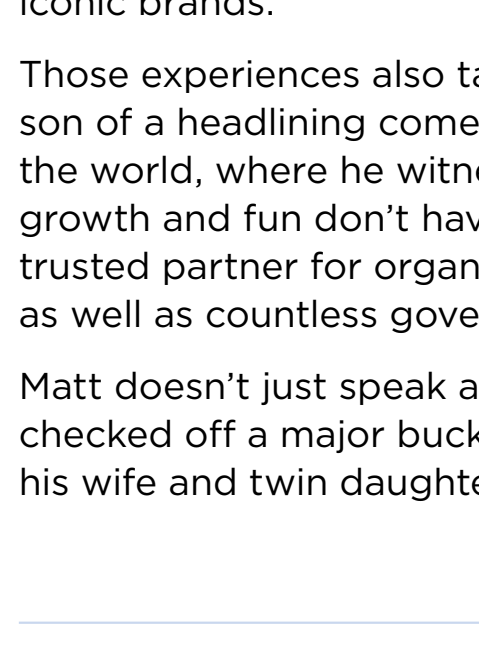
MELANIE DISNEY
 Director of Human Resources, EZ Stop/Calloway Oil Company

Melanie Disney is a seasoned Human Resources leader with over 20 years of experience in the hospitality and retail industries. Known for her practical approach to workforce development, leadership training, and employee engagement, she has helped shape strong teams and cultures across a variety of high-volume, customer-focused organizations. Melanie currently serves as the Head of Human Resources for Calloway Oil Company - EZ Stop, where she leads people strategies for a growing network of convenience stores. Her insights are grounded in real-world experience and a deep understanding of frontline operations, making her a trusted voice in operational leadership and HR transformation.



NATHAN GRAHAM
 Director of Human Resources, TXB Stores

Nathan Graham, Director of Human Resources, TXB (Texas Born) is a seasoned human resources professional with more than 20 years specializing in the convenience store industry. Nathan brings a down-to-earth approach to building workplaces where everyone feels at home. He's a whiz at talent acquisition, employee relations, and performance management, having fine-tuned hiring to snag great people and boosted team morale with creative ideas that help cut turnover. Nathan's got a knack for keeping human resources running smoothly while making sure everything lines up with company goals and complies with rules like FMLA. Outside of work, he's all about family, cherishing time with his loved ones and coaching his daughter's basketball and volleyball teams, where he teaches teamwork and grit—values he brings to every workplace. Nathan's friendly vibe and genuine care for people make him the go-to guy for creating tight-knit, thriving teams.



MATT HAVENS
 Founder, Matt Havens Speaking

Matt Havens is an international keynote speaker, former corporate leader, son of a comedian, and firm believer we overcomplicate work by overthinking the solutions. Matt's high-energy, engaging presentations deliver insightful, actionable strategies - all with a surprisingly entertaining twist.

With 14 years of leadership experience in finance, sales, and customer service at a multi-billion dollar company, Matt gained invaluable in-the-trenches experience that informs his approach to solving business challenges and ensures his message relates with his audiences. Whether tackling change management or building dynamic team cultures, Matt has done it firsthand - including leading a massive strategic overhaul which transformed one of America's most iconic brands.

Those experiences also taught Matt something was missing in the working world. As the son of a headlining comedian, Matt grew up in the back room of comedy clubs around the world, where he witnessed the infectious impact of laughter. He believes business growth and fun don't have to be mutually exclusive - a philosophy which has made him a trusted partner for organizations like RE/MAX, Lockheed Martin, Baker Tilly, and Allstate, as well as countless government and industry associations from nearly every trade.

Matt doesn't just speak about personal and professional growth - he lives it. He recently checked off a major bucket list item by completing an Ironman triathlon, cheered on by his wife and twin daughters. They currently reside in Dallas, TX.



MARIA LAMB
 Head of HR & Safety, Coen Markets, Inc.

Maria Lamb, SPHR is a results-driven human resources executive with more than two decades of experience advancing workforce strategy, operational excellence, and the application of agentic AI to enhance organizational performance and value creation.

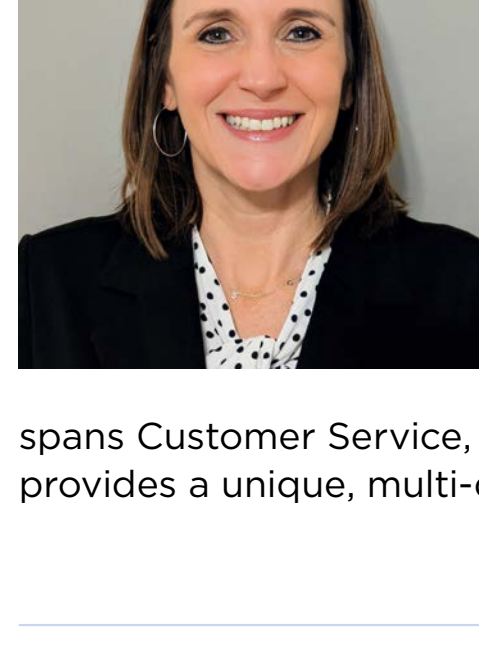
She currently serves as Vice President of Human Resources at Coen Oil Company and Coen Markets, where she is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and leads enterprise-wide people strategies across a complex, multi-site retail and petroleum equipment operation. A trusted advisor to the CEO and executive leadership, Maria partners across the organization to align talent strategy with business growth, strengthen organizational capability, and drive scalable, high-performing cultures.

Maria holds graduate training from Carnegie Mellon University and PROSCI, bringing a practical, systems-oriented perspective to organizational design, transformation, and change leadership. She is also a member of the Strategic Advisory Board for ChangeEngine, an AI-powered platform transforming HR communications and employee engagement. In this role, she advises on emerging technologies that enable people leaders to deliver more personalized, connected, and effective employee experiences.

Earlier in her career, Maria held senior global HR roles with GlaxoSmithKline and U.S. Steel, where she led large-scale talent management and organizational design initiatives. She has also advised venture capital and private equity firms, supporting leadership teams through mergers and acquisitions, change management, and operational scaling.

An early adopter of AI in HR, Maria has integrated advanced technologies across recruiting, performance management, total rewards, benefits administration, employee relations, safety programs, succession planning, stock plan management, and workforce analytics, while maintaining strong governance, ethical AI practices, cultural alignment, and regulatory compliance.

Based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Maria enjoys exploring emerging technologies, mentoring future leaders, and contributing to community initiatives.



ALISON LAPOINTE
 Senior Director of Talent Development and Learning, The Wills Group/ Dash In Food Stores, Inc.

Alison Lapointe is the Senior Director of Talent Development and Learning for Dash In, a Maryland-based convenience retailer operating more than 60 stores across the Mid-Atlantic, with expansion underway into North Carolina. Alison's primary focus is building leadership capability across the organization — strengthening succession pipelines, expanding bench readiness, and creating development strategies aligned to a rapidly growing portfolio. She partners closely with operational leaders to ensure talent development is not a standalone function, but a business driver. She also leads the Retail Training Team, overseeing new store opening training and initiatives that support both operational excellence and long-term growth.

Prior to joining Dash In, Alison spent 25 years in Learning and Development with Marriott International, most recently serving as Vice President of Learning for the U.S. and Canada. Throughout her career, she has led initiatives across the full talent lifecycle — from onboarding and frontline training to leadership development, executive coaching, and strategic workforce planning.

Alison is deeply committed to cultivating strong in-store cultures and elevating the guest experience. She believes exceptional service begins with empowered team members and is passionate about helping individuals recognize and leverage their strengths to grow meaningful, lasting careers.

Alison lives in Washington, DC with her husband Neil and her daughter Vivian (14) and son Ben (12). While much of her time is spent shuttling kids to various sports and activities, her favorite hobbies include snow skiing, reading, great food and wine. She grew up in Michigan in the Detroit area, loves U of M football and is also a long-suffering fan of the Detroit Lions.

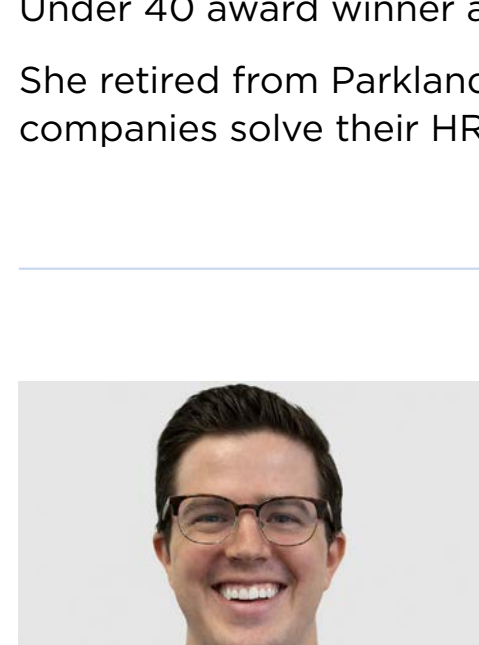


AMBER MILLWOOD
 Field Training Manager, The Spinx Company

Amber Millwood has dedicated more than 18 years to the convenience industry, beginning her career at Spinx as a part-time cashier at just 16 years old. Over the years, she has held nearly every store-level role, from Food & Beverage Manager to General Manager, before moving into Training & Development.

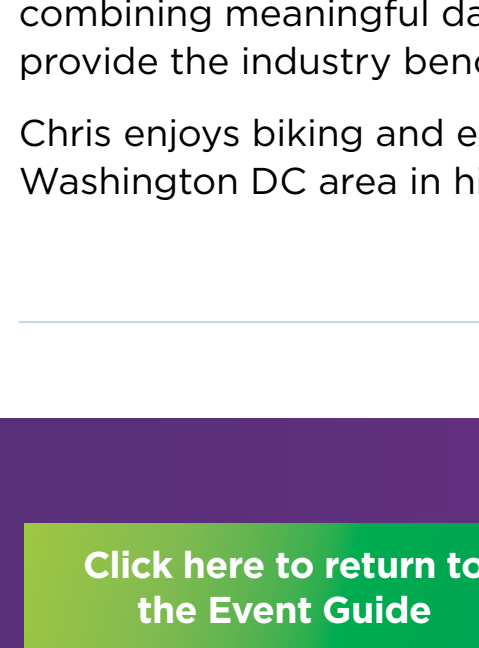
Today, as Field Training Manager, Amber leads new hire orientation and field development programs that shape the next generation of Spinx leaders. She is passionate about building people-first training experiences, fostering growth, and creating opportunities for teammates to thrive.

Amber's career reflects her belief that investing in people is the key to driving both individual and company success. Outside of work, she balances her professional accomplishments with her most important role, being a devoted wife and mom.



RACHAEL POND
 Director, Human Resources, Campbell Oil Company & BellStores

Rachael Pond is the Director of Human Resources for Campbell Oil Company/BellStores, an Ohio-based convenience retailer. BellStores operates nearly 80 convenience stores and 30+ food service locations, with an emphasis on being family-focused and employee-centered. Rachael and her team partner closely with operations leadership to support BellStores employees. Rachael's career spans Customer Service, Leadership and Human Resources. Her cross-functional experience provides a unique, multi-disciplinary perspective of HR leadership.



LYDIA SCHERHOLZ
 Recruiting Coordinator, Majors Management, LLC.

Located just outside of Atlanta, Majors Management utilizes a mix of operating models to manage convenience stores and supply fuel to approximately 1600 sites across 20+ states. I joined Majors in June of 2024 as a Recruiting Analyst, a new role within the company. During this time I sourced candidates, coordinated the corporate hiring process, and was provided the opportunity to establish our internship program. In January of 2025, I was promoted to Recruiting Coordinator, where my role expanded to include leading the hiring process for 220 company operated sites and driving compensation analysis for hiring initiatives.

I hold a BBA in Management from Georgia Southern University. In my spare time I love to play volleyball, explore restaurants & coffee shops all around Atlanta, watch hockey, and host the company pickleball league!

KRISTIAN PLANKE STYRMO
 Director Strategic Projects North America, Circle K

Couche-Tard is a global leader in convenience and mobility, operating in 29 countries and territories, with close to 17,000 stores, of which approximately 13,000 offer road transportation fuel. With its well-known Couche-Tard and Circle K banners, it is one of the largest independent convenience store operators in the United States and it is a leader in the convenience store industry and road transportation fuel retail in Canada, Scandinavia, the Baltics, Belgium, as well as in Ireland. It also has an important presence in Luxembourg, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, as well as in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. Approximately 146,000 people are employed throughout its network.

Since 2022, Kristian has been a Director of Strategic Projects in North America with Circle K. He is responsible for identifying and executing high impact people and operations related projects across all North American Business Units with focus on improving store performance, team engagement and employee retention.

Kristian was responsible for the global roll out of gamified training across all stores in Europe, US and Canada. For this effort Circle K was awarded Best HR Technology Strategy by HR Excellence awards and was featured on the cover of NACS magazine in 2021.

LAURA VARN
 Founder, Laura Varn and Associates

Laura Varn has more than 25 years of executive leadership experience in the energy industry, focused on Human Relations and Corporate Communications.

As the former VP of People & Culture and Communications and as a member of the Parkland USA executive leadership team, she helped grow the US division tenfold, growing the employee base from 300 to 3000 via 20 acquisitions and organic growth, while building the US HR and Communications divisions from scratch and shaping the culture and systems.

Previously, she served as an executive with South Carolina's largest electric utility and also served in leadership roles with Delta Air Lines and Southern Company. She served as a spokesperson for the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta with MARTA.

Varn is a Past Chairman of the Board of the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce. She is an Ashpen Institute Liberty Fellow, a Leadership South Carolina alumnus, a 40 Under 40 award winner and serves on several community boards.

She retired from Parkland USA and formed Laura Varn & Associates to help energy companies solve their HR and communications challenges.

CHRIS WISE
 Research Analyst, NACS

Chris Wise brings his attention to detail and precise writing style to the NACS Research team to help craft the reports and analysis that NACS Research is known for. He manages the Talent Insights Dashboard, the HR focused metrics benchmarking tool from NACS. Chris started working for NACS in the Products and Services department selling and managing products such as reports and training before moving over to the Research team over a year ago. By combining meaningful data with insightful analysis, Chris helps the NACS Research team provide the industry benchmarks that many rely on.

Chris enjoys biking and exploring the historical monuments and institutions of the Greater Washington DC area in his free time.