

UW EBC



2025 YEARBOOK

Contents

Setting the Stage

Introduction from Director Doug Barton	3
UWEBC Team	5
Advisory Board	8
Member Companies	10
2025 Statistics	12
Favorite Memories	14

Practice Area Highlights

Customer Service	16
Human Resources	21
Marketing	26
Supply Chain	30
Technology	35

Moments & MVPs - Superlatives!

Featured Articles

Founder Raj Veeramani	45
2025 Annual Conference	46
Board Chair Adrienne Hartman	49
Wisconsin CX Symposium	52
Wisconsin Digital Symposium	55
UWEBC Member Visits	58

Looking Ahead

What to expect in 2026	62
------------------------	----



Dear Friends and Members,

This has been a remarkable year for the UWEBC community. Throughout 2025, one theme has been unmistakable: **our ability to learn from one another is our greatest strategic advantage.** The future isn't something that arrives—it's something we build together through shared insight, experimentation, and courageous leadership.

Six Decades of Evolution

The environment around us continues to shift rapidly—from the digital era of social, mobile, cloud, and big data to an emerging age defined by AI, automation, experiences, and intelligent agentic systems. **Alone, this change can feel overwhelming. In community, it becomes navigable.**

The Real Work Ahead

Across our member companies, leaders are trying to accomplish two things at once: **innovate quickly while keeping people, ethics, and long-term capability at the center.** That tension is real. But peer learning—our core mission—reduces the cost of discovery and accelerates application. When one member learns something, every member benefits.

Moving Forward Together

Our work this year focused on doing what the UWEBC does best:

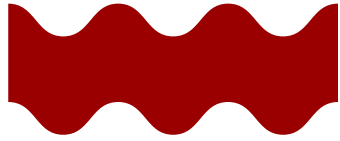
- **creating** spaces where leaders can safely explore new ideas,
- **sharing** practical, validated strategies, and
- **helping** entire organizations take steps forward—together.

These “longer levers” of collective learning are why this consortium exists.

You Are the Difference

Your openness, generosity, and willingness to share experiences across industries are the engine of this community. As UWEBC's founder Raj Veeramani has reminded us, **“As you join us, you change us.”** That remains as true today as it was at our founding in the e-business era. A special thanks to our [Advisory Board](#) for always keeping us focused on what matters most to you.





Looking Ahead

Your feedback this fall is already shaping our 2026 program priorities—from the future of work and talent transformation to manufacturing excellence to data, analytics, and AI. These aren't abstract trends; they're real challenges our members are facing right now.

Thank you for being part of this journey. **Together, we're creating a future worth wanting for all of us.**

This Yearbook: Our Shared Journey

The pages that follow tell the story of what we created together this past year. You'll find the insights we explored, the connections we forged, the challenges we tackled, and the innovations we championed. This yearbook is a testament to our collective accomplishments—proof that **when we come together with purpose, we can shape the future we want to see.**

As you flip or click through these pages, I invite you to **reflect** on how far we've come and to draw inspiration for the journey ahead. The conversations captured here, the colleagues who walked alongside you, and the moments of breakthrough and discovery are the building blocks of the future we're creating together.

Keep this yearbook close. Let it remind you of what's possible when we **learn together, grow together, and move forward together.** Thank you for the trust you place in this consortium.

With gratitude and excitement for what's ahead,

Doug Barton
Director, UWEBC

"People who regularly make room for both types of learning—mastery and peer and social learning—make every space a learning space. And that is where the competitive advantage comes from for the future of learning."

(Source: Learning for a Living, Gianpiero Petriglieri)

Meet the

Staff



Doug Barton

Director



Pema Bhutia

Events Coordinator



Taryn Johnson

Marketing Manager



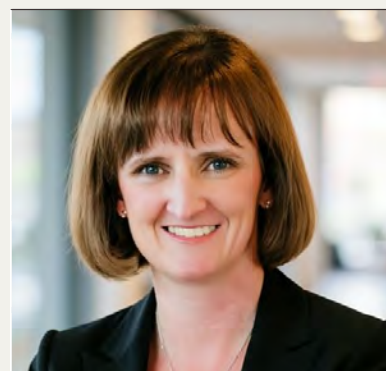
Matthew Cone

Customer Service & Marketing
Practice Director



Jenny Patzlaff

Supply Chain
Practice Director



Heidi Rozmiarek

Technology
Practice Director

Team!



Events Student Assistants



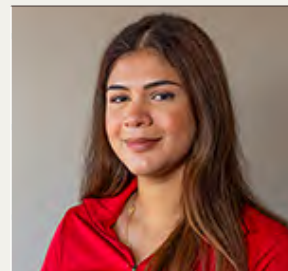
Kaden Cerdena



Maren DeSonia

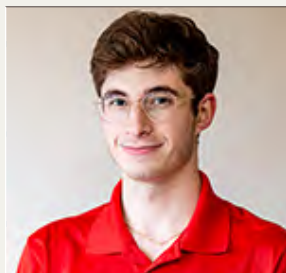


Jennifer Doine



Amrita Sohail

Membership & Sales Student Assistants

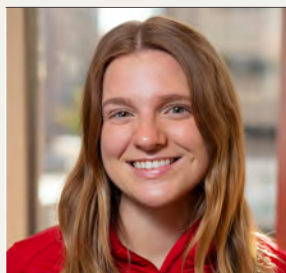


Shea Finkel



Daniel Mukana

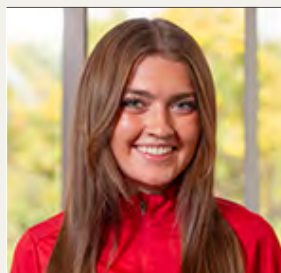
Marketing Student Assistants



Ella Corcoran



Meadana Douhore



Calla Norsman



Lucia Ricker

Team Members During the Year

These students and staff were part of the UWEBC team during some portion of 2025, and we're thankful for the impact they made!



Raj Veeramani

Founder and Executive
Director



Tom Hershberger

Marketing Practice
Director



Roger Paulson

Director of Membership
Operations &
Engagement
Transformation



Beth de Garcia

Membership & Sales



Dylan Kopf

Marketing Student
Assistant



Summer Yang

Marketing Student
Assistant

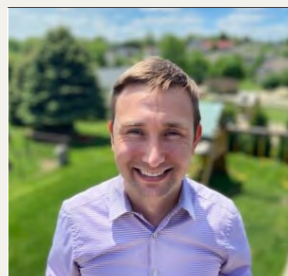
We're also thankful for all our numerous campus and community partners who help make our work even more impactful. Thank you!

Advisory



Adrienne Hartman

**Board Chair, EVP,
Marketing
J.J. Keller &
Associates, Inc.**



Adam Compton

**VP, Contact Strategy
Integrated Marketing
Solutions, Inc.**



Mike Hoge

**SVP Operations
Exact Sciences**



Ginger King

**Chief Human
Resources Officer
Kohler Co.**



John Kreul

**Chief Information &
Digital Officer
Jewelers Mutual
Insurance Company**



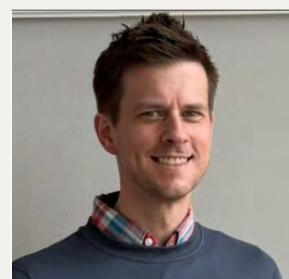
Sidd Kuckreja

**SVP, Chief
Technology Officer
TruStage**



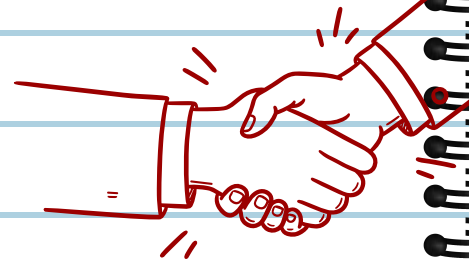
Michael Kukiela

**SVP Operations,
Supply Chain and
Distribution
Management
Schneider**



Tom Murray

**General Manager,
Digital Marketing
Harley-Davidson**

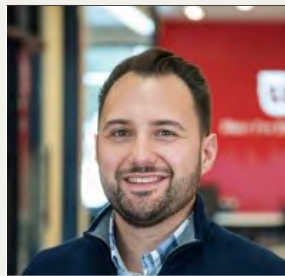


Board!



Joe Nett

AVP, Integration
Engineering
American Family
Insurance



Dave Poeschl

VP, Member
Solutions Center
UW Credit Union



Craig Schaefer

Executive, Supply
Chain/Global Services
Capability & Talent
Development
GE HealthCare



Tina Seashore

EVP & Chief Human
Resources Officer
Menasha Corporation



Kim Stoll

VP, Sales & Marketing
Badger Meter



Pam Sviatoslavsky

VP, Customer Service
Kohl's



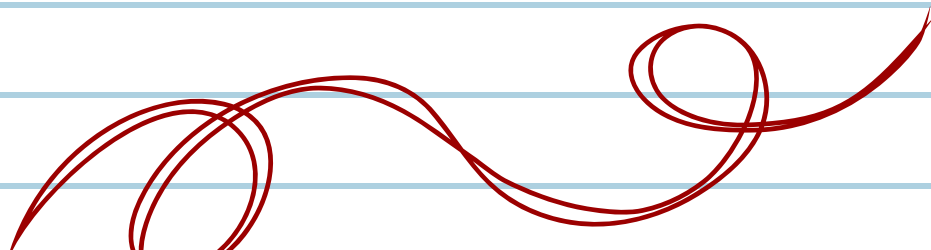
Carrie Toth

VP, Customer
Experience
Generac



Matt Vandebush

Chief Information
Officer
Brady Corporation



Our Member Companies

Accuray
AE Business Solutions
Alliant Energy
Amcor Flexibles North America
American Family Insurance
Associated Bank
Badger Meter
Brady Corporation
Brunswick Corporation
C.H. Robinson
Clarios
CNH Industrial
Colony Brands
Compeer Financial
CROPP / Organic Valley
Delta Dental of Wisconsin
Endries International
Exact Sciences
FarWell
Findorff
First Supply
Fiskars
GE HealthCare
Gebrüder Weiss
Generac
Godfrey & Kahn
Greenheck
Harley-Davidson
Husco
Hy Cite
Ideal Industries
Inpro
ITW
J.J. Keller & Associates
Jewelers Mutual Insurance Company
KI
Kohl's
Kohler Co.
Komatsu

Lakeside Foods
Lands' End
LeMans Corporation
Mason Companies
Menasha Corporation
MGE
Milwaukee Tool
National Guardian Life Insurance Company (NGL)
Northwestern Mutual
nvisia
OMRON
Oshkosh Corporation
Pacific Cycle
Palmer Johnson
Plexus
Promega
Regal Rexnord
Rockline
Rockwell Automation
SAP
Sargento Foods
Sartori
Schneider
Sentry Insurance
Spectrum Brands
Springs Window Fashions
Stoughton Trailers
Sub-Zero Group, Inc.
The Alliance
TruStage
UW Credit Union
UW Health
Vollrath
WEC Energy Group
Werner Electric
Wick Buildings
Wisconsin ETF
Wm. K. Walthers, Inc.

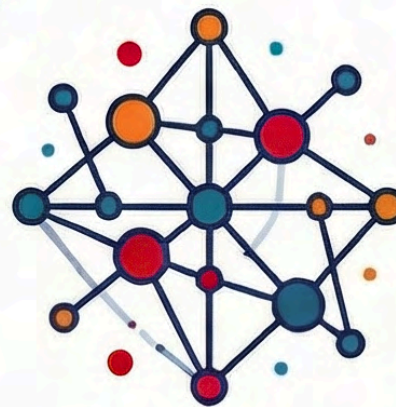
Our Members In Action

Pictures from the 2025 Annual Conference



UWEBC: A Year of Connection

Our Community by the Numbers

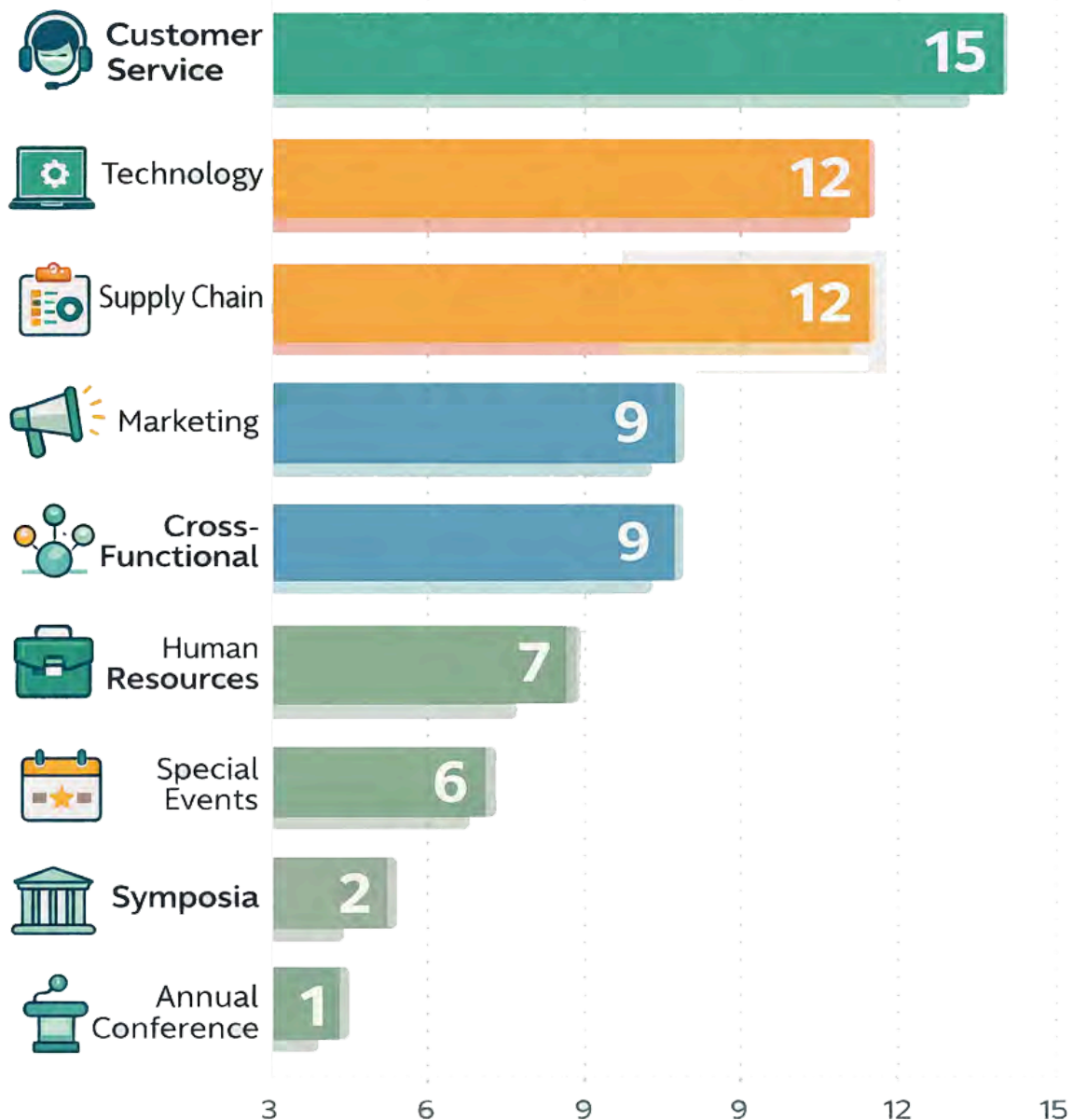


2025 Annual Conference Stats





2025 UWEBC Events by Practice Area



Most Active Practice Areas:

Customer Service led with the highest number of events, followed closely by **Technology** and **Supply Chain**.

Poll the Staff:

"WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE UWEBBC MOMENT OR EXPERIENCE THIS YEAR?"



Doug Barton

"There are literally too many to choose from, but I will pick one that was out of the limelight, not recorded but transformational and that was the September 29, 2025 Executive Summit that examined the Future of Work. The delegates participated in a conversation that is on everyone's heads and hearts. Much gratitude for their openness and commitment to designing a future we can be proud of."

"My favorite UWEBBC moment this year was helping members navigate this fast-moving moment in AI. So many companies are trying to find the right balance between curiosity, caution, and real value. Seeing our members open up, ask honest questions, and support each other as they sort through what comes next has been the most rewarding part of my year."



Heidi Rozmiarek



Matthew Cone

"My favorite UWEBBC moment this year was bringing to life our first Wisconsin Customer Experience Symposium!"

Poll the Staff:

"WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE UWEBC MOMENT OR EXPERIENCE THIS YEAR?"



Jenny Patzlaff

My favorite UWEBC experience from 2025 was being a resource for the leaders in our Trade Compliance special interest group. Tariffs have been a major part of the news in 2025, and trade professionals have been very busy understanding and evaluating tariff changes, and sharing business implications with their executive teams. UWEBC has been a place for trade leaders to openly discuss challenges and seek new ideas. As one of our global trade leaders shared, 'I think these events are very meaningful... the networking was very valuable.'

"My favorite UWEBC moment this year is actually a series of ongoing moments: I love helping lead the behind-the-scenes team of student assistants who support our members. Seeing them grow while contributing to UWEBC programming is a win-win-win: members get an even stronger experience today, the students gain relevant work experience, and Wisconsin businesses get a glimpse of the next generation of talent."



Taryn Johnson



Pema Bhutia

"My favorite UWEBC experience this year has been leading efforts to streamline our event asset production process. Watching our turnaround times become faster, more reliable, and more consistent has been especially rewarding, as it directly enhances the value we deliver to our member community. This progress reflects a true team effort, supported by strategic technology investments from UWEBC and driven by the exceptional dedication and hard work of our student assistants."



Customer Service

PRACTICE DIRECTOR



Matthew Cone

The Customer Service Peer Group brings members together to share expertise and compare approaches across similar business models. Sessions blend presentations, peer discussions, and case studies on topics like virtual training, onboarding, and user experience. The practice area also includes three Special Interest Groups: **Future of Contact Centers**, **Contact Center Quality Monitoring**, and **Contact Center Workforce Management**, offering deeper collaboration around key contact center priorities.

SOME FAMILIAR CX FACES FROM THE YEAR

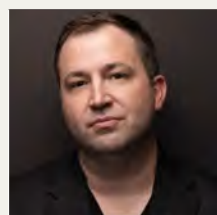
Annual Conference Speakers



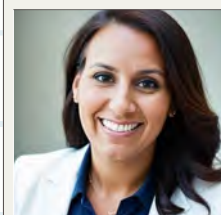
Aarthi Murali



Paulo Savaget



Zack Hamilton



Sara Taheri

Customer Experience Symposium Speakers



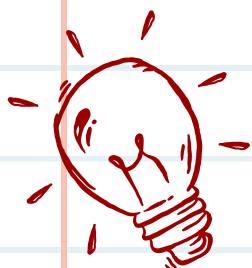
Natalie Petouhoff



Tom DeWitt



Michelle DiTondo



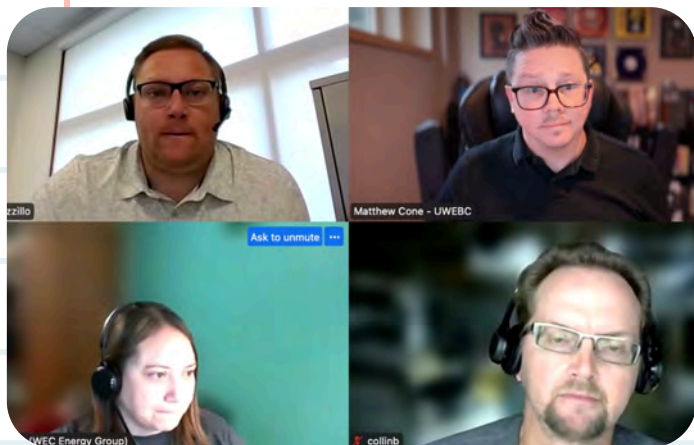


Customer Service



FUTURE OF CONTACT CENTERS

The Future of Contact Centers SIG brings together practitioners exploring the tools and trends shaping tomorrow's customer interactions. Members compare emerging technologies, share challenges, and discuss forward-looking strategies to stay ahead of change.



CONTACT CENTER WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

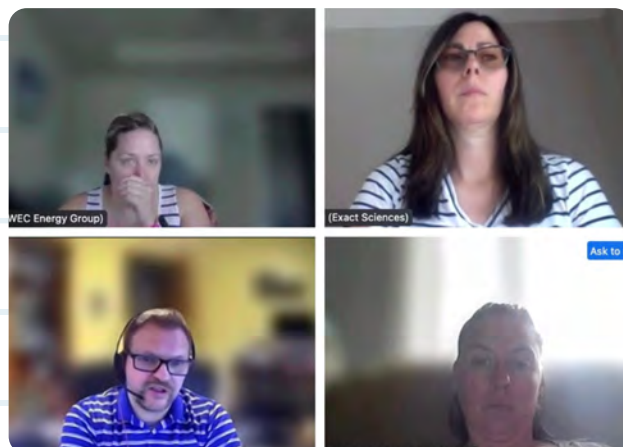
The Contact Center Workforce Management SIG brings practitioners together to share tools, challenges, and strategies for forecasting, staffing, and optimizing operations. Members learn from each other's approaches and connect with peers focused on strengthening workforce management practices across contact centers.

MEET THE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS!



CONTACT CENTER QUALITY MONITORING

The Contact Center Quality Monitoring SIG connects practitioners to share tools, challenges, and strategies for strengthening quality programs. Members learn from each other's approaches and explore ways to improve consistency and performance across contact centers.



Finding Peer Learning in the Pages

As the acceleration of growth and change continues, with no signs of slowing, we need to embrace ways to learn from one another. This is why I love the work I get to do with this community at the UWEBC, and why I love to read. Like the experiences and examples we share with one another in our events, books become an asynchronous learning experience, sharing one perspective, usually with the support and added value of incorporating the perspectives of others to better define a possibility. I've been sharing for years the top 10 books I've read in the past year that offer significant value to our shared experiences. This has been a challenging year, not because great ideas haven't been shared, but because, with the completion of my Master's Degree in Customer Experience Management and my increased responsibility for creating value for our Marketing community, time has been a scarce resource. That said, these ten books have added value to my understanding of success, and I hope sharing them with you encourages you to find value in them as well.

If you've read any of these, I'd love to hear your takeaways.

Did you have another suggestion of a valuable read for me? I **LOVE** those too!

Please feel free to email me at matthew.cone@uwebc.wisc.edu



The Activator Advantage by Matthew Dixon, Rory Channer, Karen Freeman, and Ted McKenna

Activator Advantage highlights how the most successful sales teams create greater success through human-focused connections with their clients. As an example, the authors call out that Activators share three mindsets for business development. Self-determination (controlling their own destiny), being other-focused (empathy towards their clients and pride in their colleagues), and are extremely resilient, seeing setbacks as an opportunity to deepen relationships with clients. The author's endeavor to show that this kind of success can be built. If you are looking to better understand, kickstart, or supercharge your business development strategy, I encourage you to check out this book.

Build it: The Rebel Playbook for World-Class Employee Engagement by Glenn Elliott and Debra Corey

Build it reads like the closest thing there is to a textbook on employee engagement. As a matter of fact it was assigned reading in my Master level course on Employee Engagement. Their Engagement Bridge model helps leaders understand and build out the foundational and dependent systems that provide support and inspiration to your team. Not only does it share strong theory, but it backs it up with loads of real-world examples and case studies so you can get a realistic view of what the challenges, and what “good” looks like.

Customer Experience Wheel by Toni Krasnic, CCXP

Krasnic provides a potent reference for implementing numerous valuable CX concepts. A solid text that breaks down the values and components that create a strong Customer Experience. The CX Wheel framework enables you to assess and target specific aspects of your strategy, focusing where you need to. Whether you are looking to tune up your mature CX strategy or are looking to start your own journey to understanding a comprehensive CX strategy, this book has something for you.

The Experience Mindset by Tiffani Bova

Many organizations invest resources in improving customer experience, only to exhaust their employees and see diminishing returns (think technology implementations). In The Experience Mindset, Bova makes a compelling case that sustainable growth stems from improving both employee experience and customer experience simultaneously, rather than in silos. Leveraging research and real-world case studies, Bova shows how leading companies create a virtuous cycle in which empowered employees deliver better customer outcomes, and stronger business results follow. If you’re looking to reduce effort for both customers and employees, adopt technology that truly enables frontline teams, and measure what matters most, The Experience Mindset is an essential read.

The Experience Performance System by Zack Hamilton

Hamilton unpacks the biggest complaint about most CX strategies, their reliance on what the author calls “vanity metrics,” and the subsequent lack of connection to business-worthy outcomes. Hamilton focuses on useful and actionable player tips and resources to help CX leaders communicate the value of experience to the C-suite and become influencers of change within our organizations. Tools like the CX Case Maker, a one-page business case template to prove out the ROI of CX investment. A must-read for those looking to up their influence within the organization.

The Heart of Service by Nick Glimsdahl

Glimsdahl uses his experiences with AI implementation to tell a story that simultaneously acts as an example of what could be and a series of tools to help keep you on a productive path. The Heart of Service is a parable with useful tools that align with every step in the AI implementation process. Though the tools themselves are worth the cost of this book, you’ll value the way the story creates context and inspiration for the value you want to create with AI in your own organization.

Customer Service

The Human Culture Imperative by Dr. Linden R. Brown, Dr. Chris L. Brown, and Sean Crichton-Browne

As organizations race to invest in AI and automation, *The Human Culture Imperative* makes a timely and persuasive case that the real competitive advantage lies in human connection. Drawing on research from more than 1,000 organizations worldwide, the authors reveal how deeply engaged employees drive exponential growth, and why culture, not technology alone, will determine tomorrow's market leaders. The authors offer a clear, actionable framework for leaders who want to strengthen engagement, unlock discretionary effort, and build organizations where people and performance rise together. For executives and people leaders focused on sustainable growth, customer experience, and long-term differentiation, *The Human Culture Imperative* is a powerful call to lead with humanity in an increasingly automated world.

LEADERing by Nancy Giordano

Giordano presents a fresh take, positioning leadering as a verb in contrast to leadership. Applying her human-focused, futurist filter on how the actions of leadering can make your team more adaptable and in turn create a better future for your team and your organization. Whether it be the "Three lenses to view the future" or "The Two-Question Compass," LEADERing provides dozens of tools to help prepare us to overcome the liminal gap, and we fact significant changes across technology and the environment overall.

Reset by Dan Heath

In *Reset*, Heath highlights why sometimes you just need to stop and reset. However, we all know it's too easy to keep doing things that "we've always done this way." Marketing, Customer Service, and CX leaders are often stuck fighting fires, working hard but struggling to create meaningful change. Heath offers a practical, hopeful framework for getting unstuck without adding more resources. Instead of massive overhauls, Heath shows how to identify "leverage points" in systems, processes, and customer journeys; small changes that produce outsized impact. If you are struggling to see a clear path to progress, but know there is a better way forward, this is definitely a gem worth looking into.

Zero Complaints by Gautam Mahajan, Bill Price, and Moshe Davidow

The authors present a compelling case for applying the zero-defects mindset to the customer experience in *Zero Complaints*. How are we actively pursuing the idea that each complaint is an opportunity to improve our product or service, thereby preventing additional contacts and addressing the root cause of the frustrations? This kind of proactive customer experience thinking is unlikely to result in a literal state of zero complaints. Still, the authors demonstrate how it can lead to a more empowered and engaged workforce, a loyal customer base, and growth, thanks to a reputation for showing care, not through impeccable service, but by delivering on quality.

- Matthew Cone,
Customer Service & Marketing Practice Director



Human Resources



PRACTICE DIRECTOR



Doug Barton

The Human Resources Executives Group brings together senior HR leaders to collaborate on the strategic challenges shaping their organizations. This invitation-only group provides a confidential forum for CHROs, SVPs, VPs, and other heads of HR to exchange insights, compare approaches, and explore emerging priorities. Discussions focus on high-level issues that influence workforce strategy, organizational culture, and long-term talent planning.

SOME FAMILIAR HR FACES FROM THE YEAR



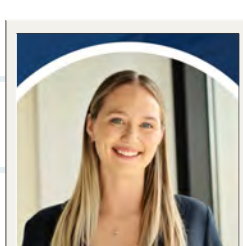
Annual Conference Speakers



Dart Lindsley



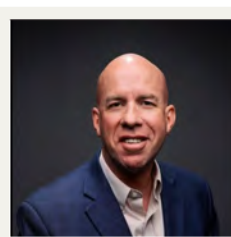
Jill Gawrych



Stephanie Haack



Andreas Hoffbauer



Adam Holton



Human Resources

Human Resources in 2025: Building Skills-First, People-Centered Organizations

If 2023 and 2024 were the years HR leaders wrestled with hybrid work, burnout, and talent scarcity, then 2025 is the year those pressures collided with something new: the rise of AI-driven tools and skills-based talent strategies that are no longer optional. Across the UWEBC community, Human Resources leaders spent this year in deep conversation about how to redesign work, grow capability, and protect culture while the environment keeps shifting around them.

Within UWEBC's five practice areas, Human Resources holds a special role: it sits at the intersection of people, technology, and strategy, touching every other discipline the consortium serves. In 2025, that role came into sharp focus through seven HR-focused events, anchored by the Human Resources Executives Group and supported by cross-functional sessions that put talent at the center of digital and organizational transformation.

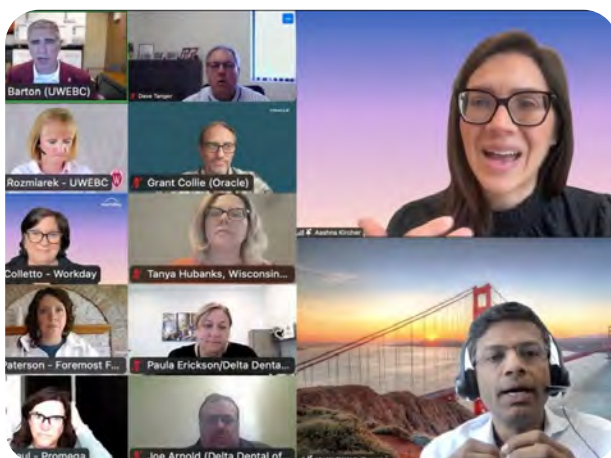
From Roles to Skills: Talent Management in Motion

A defining moment for the practice area came in November with [Dynamic Talent Management: Harnessing Skills Data for Workforce Agility and Growth](#). In that session, Dr. Steven T. Hunt and other experts walked members through the shift from job-centric talent models to skills-based approaches that can flex with the business.

Instead of treating job descriptions as fixed artifacts, the conversation focused on how [real-time skills data](#) can power workforce planning, internal mobility, and targeted development. Participants explored how skills intelligence can:

- Reveal hidden strengths and adjacent skills in the existing workforce
- Inform reskilling pathways instead of defaulting to external hiring
- Support more transparent, opportunity-rich career paths for employees

What stood out was the tone: pragmatic, not theoretical. Members compared where they are in the journey—some just beginning to inventory skills, others already using data to inform succession and redeployment decisions. The shared question underneath: How do we build a talent system that can move as fast as our strategy, without treating people as interchangeable parts?



HR Technology and Digital Transformation: Navigating New Tools Event

A March highlight, [Building Future-Ready Leadership: Manager and Leader Development](#), pulled many of these themes into one powerful conversation about what it really takes to grow leaders at every level. We framed the urgency with data: only a small share of leaders are seen as truly ready for a VUCA world, and most organizations still doubt their leadership bench, even though managers explain most of the difference in team engagement. Amanda Mickelson, VP of Talent & Employee Experience at Oshkosh Corporation, showed how a People-First culture and a clear enterprise leadership framework have evolved into a multi-level development pipeline—from frontline programs with role-played real scenarios to senior-leader experiences that tackle big strategic questions like electrification, automation, and the people implications of new technology. Nicole Rybeck Wolcott, Senior Manager of Early Talent Programs at Kohler Co., shared how a disciplined approach to early talent—strengthening the campus brand, building structured leadership development programs, and tracking metrics like intern conversion, retention, and speed to impact—is creating a durable pipeline of future leaders. Together, their stories underscored a shared conclusion: future-ready leadership doesn't happen by accident; it comes from intentional, data-informed programs that connect development directly to business challenges and give emerging leaders real ownership early in their careers.

Digital HR Gets Real

If 2025 was a year of skills, it was equally a year of [HR technology becoming truly strategic](#).

In May, the [HR Technology and Digital Transformation: Navigating New Tools](#) session brought together an impressive mix of platform providers and member companies. Aashna Kircher from Workday, Vijay Swaminathan from Draup, and Grant Collie from Oracle each offered different lenses on how cloud platforms, AI-powered talent intelligence, and embedded AI agents are reshaping the HR tech stack.

The conversation moved well beyond “which system should we buy?” and into questions like:

- How do we ensure people-first design when rolling out AI-enabled HR tools?
- How can talent intelligence platforms support better workforce planning—not just better reporting?
- How do HR and technology teams co-own change, rather than tossing projects back and forth across the fence?

The attendee list reflected that shift. HR leaders sat alongside technology peers from companies such as American Family Insurance, Kohler Co., GE HealthCare, Harley-Davidson, and others, underscoring that [digital HR is now a joint venture between HR, IT, and the business—not a back-office system upgrade](#).

This focus on raising the bar for the profession also showed up in a new benefit for members: UWEBC's participation in the [Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\)](#) now allows eligible HR and cross-functional events to offer [SHRM Professional Development Credits \(PDCs\)](#), giving HR leaders a way to maintain certifications while engaging in peer learning.

HR as Sense-Maker in a Year of Constant Change

While skills and technology were big headlines, many HR leaders described 2025 as a year of sense-making—trying to understand how all the pressures fit together and what they mean on Monday morning.

The Executive Roundtable on Current and Emerging HR Issues series captured that reality. In April's session, CHROs and senior HR leaders used the roundtable as a “virtual huddle” to surface what was really keeping them up at night:

- Building change-agile teams in the middle of ongoing transformation
- Figuring out where AI belongs in HR processes—and where it doesn't
- Navigating return-to-office and hybrid work expectations
- Strengthening leadership pipelines and rethinking how to hire for HR itself

Additional roundtables in February, August, and October allowed leaders to revisit these themes as circumstances evolved, reinforcing one of the core messages from the Yearbook Welcome Letter: peer learning dramatically reduces the cost of discovery.

Because the Human Resources Executives Group is invitation-only and limited to heads of HR in member companies, the discussions can go deep quickly—into trade-offs, missteps, and the “messy middle” of change that often doesn't show up in case studies.

The result is a practice area that doesn't just share best practices; it co-creates them, live, with leaders who are responsible for people, ethics, and capability across entire enterprises.

How Human Resources Leaders Are Responding in 2025

Across these sessions and conversations, several response patterns emerged among UWEBC HR leaders:

1. **Putting skills at the center of talent strategy:** Leaders are experimenting with skills inventories, talent marketplaces, and skills-based career paths so they can redeploy people faster, target learning more precisely, and open up new growth paths for employees.
2. **Pairing technology investments with thoughtful change management:** New HR platforms and AI tools are being rolled out with deliberate attention to communication, governance, and measurement—not just feature adoption. Members stressed that the real work is helping people trust and use these tools in ways that support the employee value proposition.
3. **Using executive roundtables as ongoing sensing mechanisms:** Rather than treating “current issues” as a once-a-year agenda item, CHROs are meeting multiple times per year to compare notes on tough calls around hybrid work, AI policy, and leadership expectations, then taking those insights back to their organizations.
4. **Integrating HR with cross-functional transformation:** HR leaders are increasingly present in technology, innovation, and analytics discussions—recognizing that adoption, capability, and culture are make-or-break factors in every major transformation, not afterthoughts.
5. **Investing in professionalization and credentials:** With SHRM PDCs available through eligible UWEBC events, HR professionals are aligning peer learning with formal recertification paths, reinforcing that continuous learning is part of the job, not a side activity.

Human Resources

6. Protecting employee wellbeing while pushing for agility: In roundtable discussions, leaders repeatedly came back to the tension between moving fast and not overwhelming people—a theme echoed across the broader UWEBC community. They are experimenting with pacing change, simplifying where possible, and making psychological safety a design requirement, not a nice-to-have.

Looking Ahead

The Welcome Letter to this Yearbook notes that “the future isn’t something that arrives—it’s something we build together through shared insight, experimentation, and courageous leadership.” Nowhere is that more visible than in the Human Resources practice area.

As we look toward 2026, several threads seem likely to continue:

- Skills-first talent strategies will move from pilot to infrastructure, influencing everything from recruiting and learning to succession and workforce planning.
- HR technologies will keep adding AI capabilities, making it even more important to align technology choices with values and employee experience.
- CHROs and HR executives will remain key sense-makers for their organizations—helping leaders navigate hybrid work, new expectations for flexibility, and the ethics of data-driven people decisions.

Through it all, the Human Resources community at UWEBC is doing what it does best: **learning together, sharing candidly, and turning complex challenges into shared progress.**

To every HR leader, practitioner, speaker, and partner who contributed to this year’s conversations: thank you. Your willingness to bring real challenges to the table, to test ideas in the open, and to support one another is shaping not just better workplaces, but a future of work that is more human, more skillful, and more resilient—for all of us.

- Doug Barton,
Director



How are you amplifying employee-listening programs?

- Adopt a continuous, multi-channel listening strategy that combines pulse surveys, crowdsourcing platforms, focus groups, and passive feedback technologies to capture diverse employee perspectives and boost engagement.
- Use AI-powered analytics to automatically analyze feedback, detect sentiment, identify engagement risks, and surface actionable insights in real time, enabling faster and more impactful responses.
- Designate “listening champions” or dedicated ambassadors in teams to embed listening into daily routines, strengthen cultural buy-in, and improve transparency around survey results and subsequent actions.
- Integrate employee-listening systems with HR and performance management platforms, allowing for automated follow-up actions, benchmarking against industry standards, and direct linkage to business outcomes.
- Measure ROI using clear metrics: track engagement scores, response rates, time-to-action on feedback, and correlate improvements with retention and productivity for data-driven decision-making.

HR Executive Roundtable [Link to Re](#)

**Executive Roundtable on Current
and Emerging HR Issues - HR
Executives Group Event**



How are skills different from competencies?

Skills	Competencies
Skills are observable and measurable behaviors.	Competencies are internal attributes, personal traits.
Examples: “Building relationships”, “Planning & organizing”, “Influencing others”, or “Doing the math”.	Examples: “Ethical conduct”, “Digital fluency”, “Communication”, “Strong customer”, or “First-stage integration capabilities”.
People are assessed on the basis of competencies.	People learn to do it, know skills.
Most competencies are context-specific; people design to assess their own competency effectiveness.	What skills can be assessed and quantified through tests, people can often accurately assess their own skill proficiency.
People learn to do it, know skills.	Skills of skills are needed to describe the knowledge required to perform all the jobs in large corporations.
Most competencies are developed through on-the-job coaching and experience and are not directly measurable.	Most skills are developed through structured training and acquisition of specific types of job experience.
Competency potential is heavily influenced by growth traits.	Skill potential is heavily influenced by existing skills.

Why this topic? Why now?

Skills Gaps Are the Biggest Barrier To Business Transformation Around The World.

2025 Future of Jobs Report
Centre for the Future Economy and Society

Converting skills data into workforce actions

Sources of Skills Data: Government Reports, Job Postings, Resumes, Job Descriptions, Organizational Charts, Employee Profiles, Training Materials.

Skills Content: Skills Frameworks, Skills Taxonomies, Skills Catalogs.

Skills Platforms: Skills Management Systems, Skills Assessment Tools, Skills Development Platforms.

Skills Actions: Skills Gap Analysis, Skills Training Programs, Skills Career Pathing, Skills Succession Planning.

**Dynamic Talent
Management: Harnessing
Skills Data for Workforce
Agility and Growth - HR
Executives Group Event**



Marketing

PRACTICE DIRECTORS



Matthew Cone



Tom Hershberger

The Marketing Peer Group was led by Tom Hershberger through October. Although we were sad to see Tom go, we are proud to have him representing UWEBC's values as part of the Connected Systems Institute at UW-Milwaukee. Matthew Cone has, over the last few months, and will continue to, bring members together to explore fresh ideas and proven strategies for today's fast-moving marketing landscape. Sessions dive into topics like cross-channel attribution, digital trends, and innovation in connected products. The practice area also includes two Special Interest Groups—Lead Generation and Sales and Product Management—offering deeper collaboration on conversion strategy, AI-driven insights, and customer-focused product development.



SOME FAMILIAR MARKETING FACES FROM THE YEAR



Scott Edmunds



Tom Murray

Annual Conference Speakers



Bryan Brandt



Anne Norman



Kim Holman

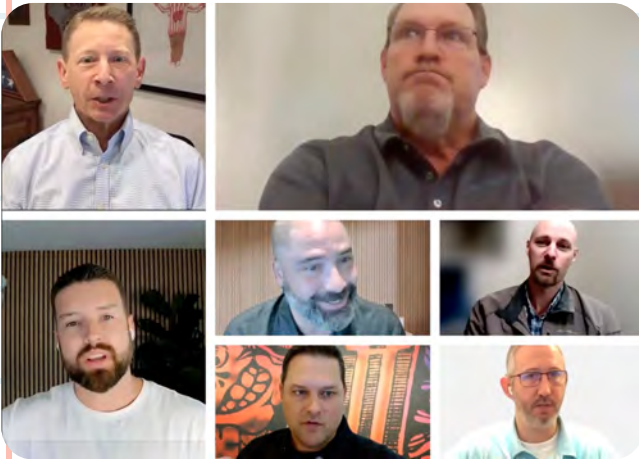


Ted Rogers



Marketing

MEET THE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS!



LEAD GENERATION AND SALES

The Lead Generation and Sales SIG brings together practitioners focused on improving lead quality, strengthening collaboration between marketing and sales, and boosting conversion outcomes. Members share challenges, compare real-world strategies, and learn from peer presentations that highlight what works. It's a collaborative space for leaders committed to driving measurable results and advancing lead-to-revenue excellence.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The Product Management SIG brings together professionals focused on building smarter, more connected products. Members explore emerging trends, compare strategies for overcoming challenges, and share proven practices that strengthen product development and marketplace success. It's a collaborative space for forward-thinking product leaders shaping the future through technology and innovation.



Marketing

As we look back on a year of learning and collaboration, this Marketing Peer Group session stood out as a powerful example of how our community comes together to explore what's next in customer experience and marketing.

On October 23, the UWEBC hosted a Marketing Peer Group event that brought together professionals from member companies to explore how customer experience (CX) can be embedded into every stage of a marketing strategy. The session focused on redefining customer relationships, elevating strategic impact, and driving business results through integrated CX. As organizations work to strengthen connections in an era of rapid digital change, this session explored how CX can serve as a unifying lens for marketing strategy.

[Jason Voiovich](#), Fractional CMO, Author, and Historian, offered a historical perspective on the longstanding relationship between CX and marketing. He referenced Marshall Field's "the customer is always right" philosophy, Alfred Sloan's engineered customer lifecycle at General Motors, and Robert E. Wood's data-driven retail strategy at Sears. Jason encouraged attendees to view CX not as a separate function but as a foundational element of marketing itself.

Building on Jason's historical framing, [Wayne Simmons](#), Global Customer Excellence Lead at [Pfizer](#), expanded the conversation from individual brands to enterprise-level transformation. [Wayne](#) outlined four structural shifts needed to embed CX across the enterprise: [leadership, operational, organizational, and commercial](#). He described how companies can move from funnel-based thinking to a flywheel model that centers on acquisition, retention, and expansion. Wayne identified three forces reshaping the landscape: [experiential commerce, trusted partnerships, and evolving customer expectations](#).

Building on these enterprise-level themes, a panel from [Alliant Energy](#), featuring [Robin Sempf](#), [Cristina Hurley](#), [Jen McMahon](#), and [Jessica Palmer](#), illustrated how embedding CX in marketing requires both cultural and structural change. Specifically, they shared how their teams are integrating CX and marketing by starting with customer needs, not just business goals. From restructuring their website to overhauling small business onboarding, they emphasized the importance of data-driven insights, cross-functional collaboration, and early marketing involvement. The panel also reflected on learning moments when execution fell short and how those experiences led to stronger alignment and storytelling.

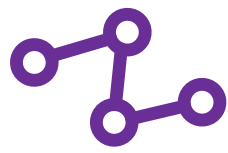
Marketing

The event concluded with breakout discussions, where participants examined how CX shows up in real organizational decisions. Conversations centered on practical examples, challenges in implementation, and the kinds of shifts that make integration stick. Attendees used the time to exchange insights and reflect on what meaningful change looks like in their own teams. The conversations underscored that CX transformation is an ongoing journey, one best advanced through shared learning, experimentation, and community dialogue, which exemplify UWEBC's commitment to fostering collaboration and growth across our member community.

Jason Voiovich will be returning in 2026 as our Marketing Practice Director in Residence to help me support this important community.

- Matthew Cone,
Customer Service & Marketing Practice Director





Supply Chain



PRACTICE DIRECTOR



Jenny Patzlaff

The Supply Chain practice area, led by Jenny Patzlaff, offers an interactive space for members to learn from experts, share challenges, and explore real-world case studies. Recent discussions have focused on risk mitigation, navigating tariff changes, and digital transformation across the supply chain. The practice area includes two Peer Groups—**Logistics & Distribution** and **Procurement**—that help members dive deeper into specialized topics. It also features two Special Interest Groups: **Trade Compliance** and **Sales and Operations Planning (S&OP)**, providing focused collaboration on critical supply chain priorities.

SOME FAMILIAR SUPPLY CHAIN FACES FROM THE YEAR

Annual Conference Speakers



Marisa Brown



Steve Jones



Josh Dolan



Eric Topp



Supply Chain

MEET THE SUPPLY CHAIN GROUPS!

LOGISTICS AND DISTRIBUTION

The Logistics & Distribution Peer Group focuses on all aspects of transportation, warehousing, fulfillment, and distribution.

Members connect with peers, learn from supply chain experts, and share real-world practices to strengthen logistics performance across their organizations.



PROCUREMENT

The Procurement Peer Group focuses on direct and indirect procurement, sourcing, and purchasing across the supply chain. Members engage in collaborative discussions, expert presentations, and real-world case studies to strengthen their strategies and improve procurement performance.



Supply Chain

TRADE COMPLIANCE

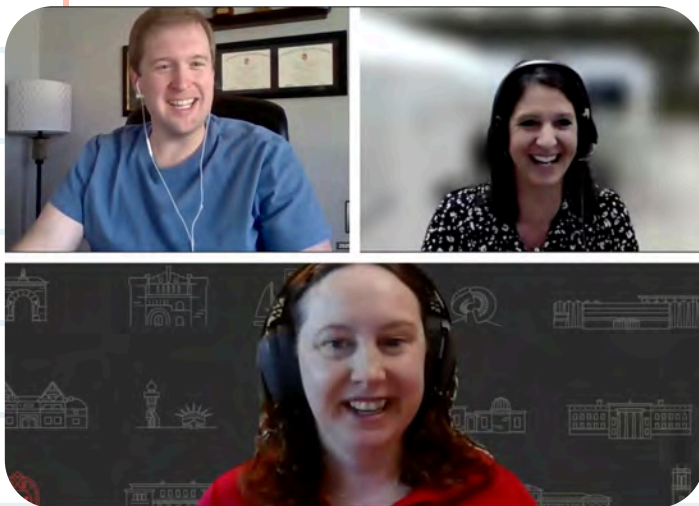
The Trade Compliance SIG brings together professionals involved in import/export activities to strengthen compliance programs, processes, and practices. Members connect with peers, customs brokers, and legal experts to share real-world experiences, identify opportunities for improvement, and validate their organization's strategies. It's a collaborative forum for building resilient, effective trade compliance operations.

MEET THE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS!



SALES AND OPERATIONS PLANNING

The Sales & Operations Planning (S&OP) SIG brings together practitioners to share tools, strategies, and real-world experiences that strengthen the planning process. Members discuss trends, compare approaches to common challenges, and learn from peer presentations across industries. It's a collaborative forum for planners and leaders looking to enhance alignment, improve decision-making, and drive more effective S&OP outcomes.



Supply Chain

As we close 2025, it was fun to look back on the UWEBC events, LinkedIn posts, and travel opportunities that filled the year. Quickly, I identified one key theme from 2025: **Connection**.

Conference Connections

Connection started at one of the largest Supply Chain conferences back in February, **Manifest**, where thousands of supply chain and supply chain technology leaders gather for keynotes, breakouts, exhibitions and lots of networking. I spent quality time with UWEBC members Gebrüder Weiss and ORBIS, and re-connected with Target Corporation CSCO and conference keynote, Gretchen McCarthy. Most importantly, two connections (one new, one old) led to 2 of our UWEBC Annual Conference Supply Chain speakers: long-time colleague Josh Dolan (we've both had a few roles since our time at Target together!), and new connection Eric Topp (who I discovered is a conference master, and fellow data pragmatist!).

In early fall, the **CSCMP** (Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals) EDGE conference in National Harbor, MD, led to deeper connections with Jake Dean, the Wisconsin School of Business Director of the Grainger Center for Supply Chain Management. I also got to meet "Mr. Supply Chain", Daniel Stanton, in person, and connect with members from InPro, ITW Welding and C.H. Robinson, and several educators from across the country.

Introducing Old Connections to New Connections

2025 also allowed me to bring more **Target alumni** into our UWEBC community! I was able to introduce our Trade Compliance group to Ted Sherman, who now leads trade at Hasbro, and has been navigating tariff uncertainty like many of our members. Matthew Trapp kicked off our Warehouse Automation event, sharing his experiences leading these projects at Target and then with clients at Honeywell. Our Leadership and Change Management group heard Ben Cook talk about the importance of Emotional Intelligence and heard about the One Team leadership model he's brought to Target, Ford, and CBRE - and coming soon to a bookstore near you!

Personal Connections

Of course, my favorite connection this summer was having my daughter, Haley Patzlaff, work with us as a student assistant! I enjoyed our drives into the Fluno Center office together, helping her get to know our full-time staff and fellow student assistants, and watching her develop an appreciation for this great UWEBC community by supporting our hybrid events and meeting members in person. It was fascinating to see our member community - and our UW-Madison campus - from Haley's point of view!

Supply Chain

Looking ahead to 2026 connections

As we turn the calendar to 2026, my goal is to continue connecting with people with intention and authenticity. I find the best connections happen organically, just by being open to new people and new ideas. By sharing my priorities and challenges with others, I quickly find kindred spirits looking to connect with others on their journey.

I hope you made a few connections through UWEBC in 2025, and I look forward to making many more in our community in 2026!

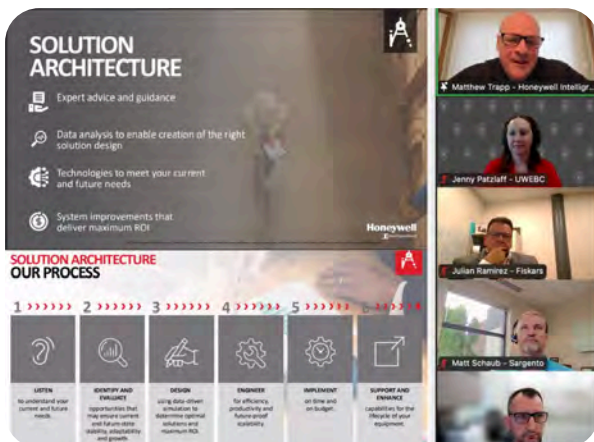
- Jenny Patzlaff
Supply Chain Practice Director



Freight Cost, Capacity and
Scenario Planning - Logistics
and Distribution Peer Group
Event



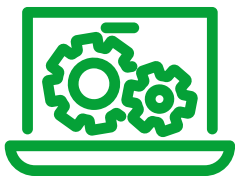
Digital Transformation in Supply
Chain - Supply Chain Peer
Group Hybrid Event



Warehouse Automation -
Logistics and Distribution Peer
Group Event



Trade Compliance Roundtable -
Trade Compliance Special
Interest Group Event



Technology

PRACTICE DIRECTOR



Heidi Rozmiarek

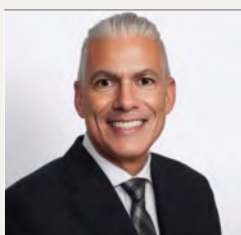
The Technology Peer Group, led by Heidi Rozmiarek, offers a sophisticated forum for peer-to-peer learning and member-driven insights on today's most pressing IT challenges. Recent sessions have explored data engineering, digital transformation, and evolving approaches to security. The practice area also includes two Special Interest Groups—**Agile** and **Artificial Intelligence**—providing deeper collaboration around modern development practices and emerging tech capabilities.

SOME FAMILIAR TECHNOLOGY FACES FROM THE YEAR

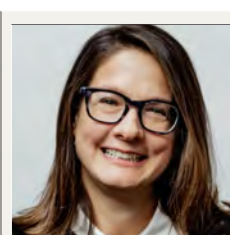
Annual Conference Speakers



Mark Benson



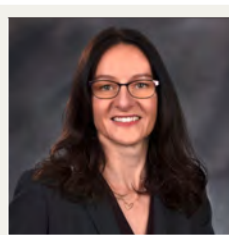
Logan McLeod



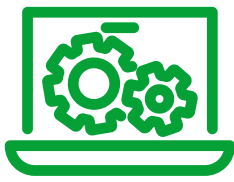
Denise Tilles



Mark Sehmer



Sandra Gardner



Technology

MEET THE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS!

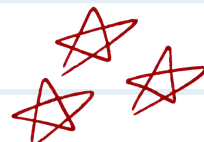
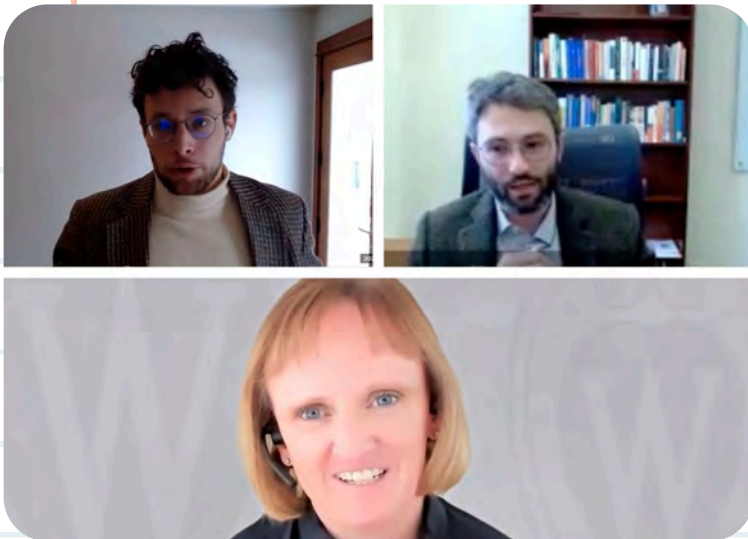
AGILE

The Agile SIG brings together team leads, coaches, and product owners to share best practices, compare experiences, and strengthen Agile delivery. Members discuss tools, challenges, and methods that support effective adoption, while learning from peers who have refined Agile practices across different environments.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The Artificial Intelligence SIG brings together practitioners exploring the full spectrum of modern AI—from predictive analytics and MLOps to generative AI and responsible governance. Members share real-world use cases, compare tools and techniques, and discuss emerging trends shaping how organizations apply AI. It's a collaborative space to learn from peers and stay ahead in a rapidly evolving field.



Technology

Adapting at the Speed of Change: What 2025 Is Teaching Us About Technology and Talent

If 2023 and 2024 were the years organizations experimented with AI, then 2025 is the year it became real. Across UWEBC member companies, leaders are seeing a combination of rapid technical shifts and equally rapid shifts in expectations for how people work. What stands out most this year is not a single breakthrough, but the stacking effect of many changes happening at once.

2025 is emerging as a year defined by three themes: acceleration, integration, and workforce pressure.

AI Moved from Pilot to Everyday Infrastructure

In 2025, generative AI is no longer something companies are trying out in isolated pockets. It is becoming embedded inside core platforms. Microsoft, Amazon, Google, Salesforce, and ServiceNow have integrated AI features directly into email creation, code writing, data exploration, customer service workflows, and more. Employees now encounter AI as part of their everyday tools, often without realizing it.

For members, this shift is creating two major challenges. First, expectations are rising more quickly than skills. Vendors can update platforms overnight, but an internal workforce cannot upskill at the same speed. Second, AI requires far better data quality and governance than many organizations currently have. Some companies began their AI work only to discover gaps in definitions, lineage, documentation, and data accuracy.

The result is new pressure on employee skills, organizational processes, and technology governance. AI is no longer something the data or IT team experiments with. It touches every role.

Automation on the Factory Floor Reached a New Stage of Maturity

Reports from Deloitte and the World Economic Forum in 2025 show substantial growth in precision automation, robotic welding, sensor driven quality control, and automated fabrication. Member companies are seeing similar trends. Automation is no longer only about reducing repetitive work. It is also about improving tolerances, increasing consistency, and capturing richer production data.

A major shift this year is the merging of automation and analytics. Machines that fabricate, measure, and inspect are producing continuous data streams that leaders use to reduce defects and improve throughput. This creates new skill demands for employees, including interpreting sensor data, troubleshooting automated systems, understanding variation, and collaborating across engineering, IT, and operations.

Cloud Modernization and Cybersecurity Increased the Skill Gap

2025 is also a year where cloud environments have grown more complex. Multi cloud architectures, container-based applications, data fabric, and automated identity systems have all advanced. At the same time, cybersecurity threats have become more automated and AI assisted, raising expectations for detection and response.

Gartner's 2024 and early 2025 reports show that cloud platforms release new capabilities at a pace that requires continuous learning. Organizations that cannot keep pace find themselves limited in system performance, scalability, or security posture.

The Real Story of 2025: Workforce Learning Is Not Keeping Up

Across industries, one insight stands out. The amount of learning required to stay current is increasing faster than employees have time available. Leaders are balancing the pressure to adopt new technologies with the need to reduce cognitive load and avoid overwhelming their teams.

There is a growing recognition that traditional annual training cycles are too slow for the current environment. Employees need ongoing exposure, hands on practice, and smaller, more digestible learning experiences built into the flow of work.

How Organizations Are Responding in 2025

While each industry faces unique pressures, several patterns are emerging among companies that are adapting successfully.

1. They are simplifying wherever possible. Many organizations are reducing the number of platforms, dashboards, and variations in workflow. Simplification is becoming a strategic advantage.
2. They are building foundational skills. Digital literacy, data literacy, and basic AI fluency are becoming core requirements for modern roles. Training people after tools change is no longer sufficient.
3. They are creating learning ecosystems. Instead of relying on traditional classes, organizations are incorporating peer learning, micro learning, coaching, and project-based development.
4. They are pacing change intentionally. High performing companies are limiting the number of major changes introduced at one time to help employees absorb new information more effectively.
5. They are aligning technology strategy with talent strategy. IT, HR, and business leaders are planning together because AI, cloud, automation, and data modernization affect every role.

Looking Ahead

The pace of change will continue through 2025 and into 2026. The layering of AI, automation, cloud expansion, and modernization will require organizations to rethink how they build and sustain employee capability. The companies that succeed will be those that develop the capacity to learn quickly, simplify aggressively, and grow their workforce skills in a way that supports both productivity and employee wellbeing.

- Heidi Rozmiarek
Technology Practice Director

SUPERLATIVES

**Most Rewatched Event
in UWEBC+**

**Avoiding Change Fatigue: Keeping Sight of
Humans with Ongoing Change**
January 28, 2025



[Members can watch
the full video here!](#)

105
replays!

**Couldn't get enough? Neither could our members.
This session drew 165 live attendees and racked up 105
rewatches, making it one of the most popular events on our
platform this year!**

SUPERLATIVES

**Most Watched Event
Clip on YouTube**

**Clip from Supply Chain Career Development:
Invest in People**



[Watch the clip here!](#)

152
replays!

This clip didn't just get attention – it took off. With 152 rewatches, the standout moment from Supply Chain Career Development: Invest in People became the year's undeniable replay champion. Members kept coming back for its energizing, people-first insights that hit home every single time.

SUPERLATIVES

Longest Event Title

Agile 2.0 for AI Innovation: Adapting Frameworks for Rapid Learning and Responsible Delivery

Agile 2.0



Shawn Belling



Renae Stewart

Wow... this title was practically its own paragraph. But the session lived up to its size, diving into how teams can rethink Agile for the fast, unpredictable world of AI. Members walked away with practical ways to experiment quickly, stay responsible, and keep their AI work moving at the speed the field demands.

SUPERLATIVES

Most Attended Event

Avoiding Change Fatigue: Keeping Sight of Humans with Ongoing Change



165
attendees!

With 165 participants, **Avoiding Change Fatigue: Keeping Sight of Humans with Ongoing Change** drew the largest audience of the year.

Members showed up for a deeply human conversation about navigating nonstop change without burning out teams, featuring practical insights from FarWell, UW Athletics, and the Wisconsin School of Business.

SUPERLATIVES

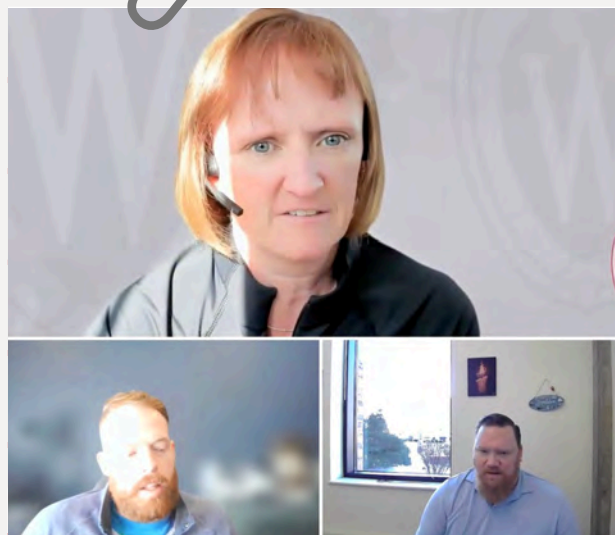
**Most Attended Event:
the Runner up**



**Unleashing the Future: Hyperautomation
Meets Agentic AI for Intelligent Transformation**

154

attendees!



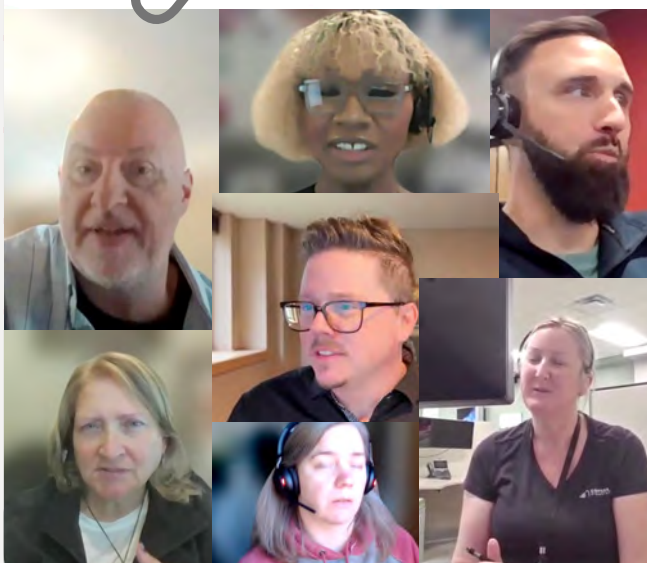
With 154 participants, Unleashing the Future: Hyperautomation Meets Agentic AI for Intelligent Transformation drew one of the biggest audiences of the year. Members showed up to explore how hyperautomation and agentic AI are reshaping operations and driving smarter, more efficient transformation across industries.

SUPERLATIVES

Highest Rated Event



Contact Center Quality Monitoring Special Interest Group



5.0
overall rating!

With a flawless 5.0 rating, the Contact Center Quality Monitoring Special Interest Group rose to the top as the year's best-reviewed session. Its practitioner-driven format gave members exactly what they wanted: a focused, relevant space to share challenges, compare insights, and shape the conversation together.

FEATURE

Raj Veeramani

In a year defined by growth and connection, a major leadership transition underscored the relationships and shared purpose that have long defined our community.

After 27 years of dedicated service as Founder and Executive Director, Professor Raj Veeramani stepped away from his leadership role at UWEBC in 2025 to focus fully on his faculty role in UW–Madison’s Department of Industrial & Systems Engineering (ISyE).

Raj’s vision and leadership profoundly shaped what UWEBC is today. From an idea launched in 1998 to a thriving collaboration among industry leaders and the University of Wisconsin, his dedication helped build something truly remarkable. What began as a response to emerging questions around e-commerce grew into one of the most respected university–industry collaborations in the country—a living embodiment of the [Wisconsin Idea](#) in action.

Raj’s legacy and impact live on in the relationships he fostered, the students he mentored, and the values he instilled: curiosity, collaboration, service, and continuous improvement. He believed deeply in the power of ideas, effort, and relationships to create change, and he led the development of a platform where those ideas could be shared, tested, and turned into action.

As we have been moving forward under the thoughtful and community-centered leadership of Director Doug Barton, we do so on a strong foundation shaped by Raj’s enduring legacy, one that continues to guide our community and our work.

**Visionary Leader, Builder
of Bridges, Champion of
the Wisconsin Idea**



FEATURE

2025 Annual Conference



As we close out the year, we're reflecting on the moments that shaped our community, and one of the most energizing was our Annual Conference. The conference brought together hundreds of members, speakers, and partners for a day full of insights, conversations, and connection. From inspiring keynote sessions to thought-provoking track discussions, the event was filled with moments that reminded us why this community is so special.

The event opened with a keynote from strategist, author, and futurist, Nancy Giordano, who inspired attendees to think bigger about the future – not as something to fear, but as something we have the power to design. With contagious optimism, she explored how breakthroughs in AI, healthcare, and education are defining what's possible, urging leaders to expand their social imagination and create a more regenerative, human-centered world. Her talk left the room buzzing with energy and hope, reminding everyone that the future belongs to those bold enough to imagine it.

Throughout the conference, each breakout track added its own dimension to this larger theme.

In Customer Service, Zack Hamilton (Author of Experience Performance System, Host of Unf*cking Your CX, and Strategic CX Advisor) brought energy and honesty to his session on what really drives CX success: influence. He challenged attendees to stop just reporting insights and start inspiring action across their organizations by connecting customer experience to real business outcomes. Everyone left with fresh ideas for turning customer pain points into compelling cases that drive impact.

Meanwhile, in the Human Resources track room, Jill Gawrych and Stephanie Haack from Springs Window Fashions showed how HR can be the ultimate driver of business success by engineering a culture people truly love. They shared how their team is living out “The Best Experience” vision, turning empowerment, ownership, and speed into everyday habits that fuel performance and growth. Attendees left inspired by real-world examples of how a thriving culture can become a company’s strongest competitive advantage.

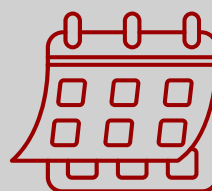
Over in Marketing, Bryan Brandt (Senior Vice President, Chief Marketing Officer) shared how Oshkosh Corporation transformed from a collection of strong product brands into one unified, purpose-driven company. By aligning culture, brand, and business strategy, Oshkosh built its identity around “Technology for Everyday Heroes” and redefined what it means to be an industrial technology leader. The result? A powerful reminder that when culture leads, brand strength naturally follows—creating clarity, purpose, and momentum that last.

In Supply Chain, Steve Jones (Partner at Jadin | Jones; Co-author of *The Twin Thieves*) brought incredible energy to the room as he challenged attendees to take charge of their culture by design, not by default. With humor, heart, and real-world stories, he showed how connection, mindset, trust, and servant leadership can turn good teams into unstoppable ones. The session left everyone fired up to grow their leaders, strengthen their culture, and build a team that wins together.

And in the Technology track, Denise Tilles, Chief Product Officer and Founder of Grocket, delivered a forward-looking and thought-provoking session on how AI is transforming the very core of product management. She introduced her “Future-Stack” approach, showing how today’s best product leaders are rebalancing their roles to focus less on routine tasks and more on strategic, high-impact work. The audience left buzzing with ideas on how to harness AI not just as a tool, but as a catalyst for smarter decisions, faster innovation, and stronger business outcomes.

As we look ahead, the themes from this year’s conference feel more relevant than ever. The pace of change is accelerating, but so is the opportunity to innovate, collaborate, and lead with purpose. The conversations sparked in these rooms about influence, culture, leadership, technology, and imagination will continue to guide our work in the months ahead.

Thank you to every member, speaker, and partner who made this year’s Annual Conference such a meaningful moment. And thank you to our entire community for the continued energy, insight, and generosity you bring throughout the year. We look forward to building on this momentum and stepping confidently into the year ahead together.



Save the date for the
2026 Annual Conference:
October 6, 2026



FEATURE

Adrienne Hartman

This past year brought many exciting moments for the UWEBC community, and one of the most notable was seeing a long-time member step into a historic new role. After more than 25 years of learning, contributing, and growing alongside the consortium, Adrienne Hartman became the new UWEBC Advisory Board Chair, marking not only a meaningful personal milestone, but also the first time a woman has held this position. Her journey, spanning decades of professional development and deep community connection, reflects exactly what makes this organization so special.

For more than 25 years, Adrienne Hartman has been an active member of the UWEBC, attending meetings, building connections, and learning alongside peers from across industries. As she steps into her new role as UWEBC Advisory Board Chair, she's excited to give back to the organization that has shaped her career in meaningful ways, while also marking a new chapter as the first woman to hold this position.

"When I first started attending meetings, I had just become a first-time manager with a team of two people," she shared. "I recently received a promotion and now I'm leading all of marketing for my organization with a team of 180 people. UWEBC has been a part of every step of that journey."

Adrienne remained closely connected to the consortium throughout her career at Lands' End, Mason Companies, and now J. J. Keller & Associates,

where she serves as the Executive Vice President of Marketing. When making career changes, she intentionally sought out companies that were UWEBC members and valued the community it fostered. That continuity makes her new role with UWEBC especially personal. "This is where I really feel like I can now help others in their career paths and in their career progression, and give back in multiple ways," she said.



Adrienne has been involved in several professional organizations, but what continuously sets UWEBC apart is its peer-driven structure. Members shape the topics, raise the questions, and collaboratively tackle industry challenges. She recalled how quickly the consortium adapted during the onset of COVID-19. Virtual sessions were launched almost immediately, creating space to discuss remote work, shifting expectations, and unprecedented business impacts, all driven by member needs.

Over the course of two decades, Adrienne has worked to build a trusted network within UWEBC, to which she can turn when evaluating software, navigating organizational changes, or exploring career decisions. These relationships and professional connections, she emphasized, wouldn't have existed without this community.

At the recent annual conference, Adrienne reflected with John Stofflet on her long-term involvement with the consortium and the value it continues to deliver. She's attended about 20 UWEBC conferences, and this year stood out as one of the best. You can see that video on the right.

Adrienne also encourages members to actively participate to get the most out of the consortium. "You get out of it what you put into it," she said. Beyond listening, she recommends submitting questions in advance, joining breakout groups, engaging in discussions, and building peer-to-peer connections. "That's where most of the value comes from. It's not just listening, but it's engaging, it's going deeper into discussions, and it's really in how we come together as a community."

Adrienne's professional journey is a testament to what can happen when leaders stay curious, collaborative, and connected. As Advisory Board Chair, she's looking forward to helping others grow just as she did, with the support of a network that learns, adapts, and evolves together.



[Hear Adrienne chat with John Stofflet
at the 2025 Annual Conference](#)

Most Watched Videos



#1

2025 UWEBC Conference
Highlight Video



#2

Tech Trends 2026



#3

Sebastian Glock on AI Risk &
Innovation in Contact Centers

FEATURE

Wisconsin Customer Experience Symposium

March 11, 2025, marked the first-ever Wisconsin Customer Experience Symposium hosted by UWEBEC! The symposium featured a range of experts, thought leaders, and Customer Experience (CX) professionals who shared their knowledge on building a strong culture, strengthening the competencies that matter, and mastering technological solutions. This virtual half-day event covered all facets of CX management.

The morning started with a presentation from Tom DeWitt, Ph.D. Tom is the Founder of CXM@MSU, North America's first Master's degree in Customer Experience Management at Michigan State University, and founder of the Experience Management Global Collaborative (XMGC).

His presentation focused on the challenges of CX and experience management (XM), emphasizing the high failure rates of CX initiatives despite organizations prioritizing them. He gathered audience insights on why CX initiatives fail, with common reasons being competing priorities, lack of leadership support, and employee engagement issues. Other critical factors mentioned include employee engagement, consistency, knowing what to measure, and change management challenges.

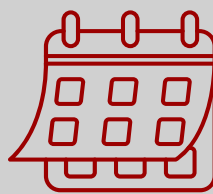
The discussion also highlighted the importance of reshaping organizational culture, aligning CX initiatives with financial goals, and adopting a long-term perspective.

Michelle DiTondo, the second presenter of the day, is a seasoned expert in organizational culture and customer experience with over 30 years of experience aligning workforce strategies with business outcomes. During her presentation, Michelle explained that many leaders initially struggle to define "culture" because it isn't something tangible like revenue or occupancy. She described culture as the collective experiences, values, behaviors, and practices within an organization—shaped largely by leadership and employee interactions. A positive culture, where employees feel valued and important, directly influences performance, creativity, and service quality, improving business outcomes.

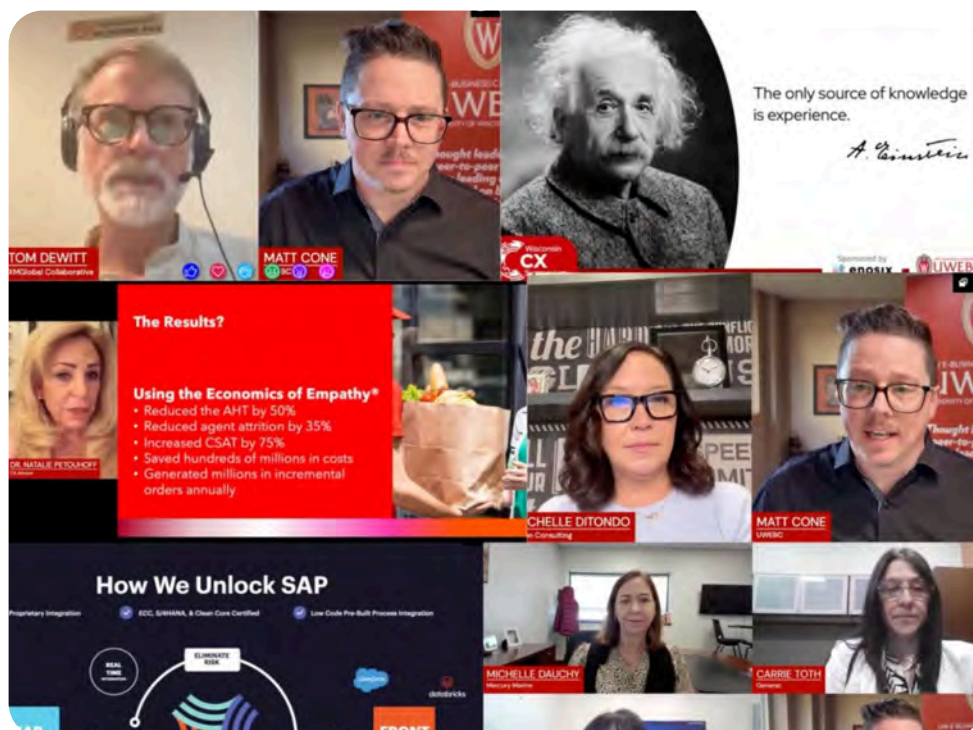
She highlighted that discretionary effort—going beyond the basic requirements to create memorable experiences for customers—only happens when employees feel appreciated. This cultural alignment is essential for long-term success, particularly in hospitality, where employees' emotional investment leads to better service and customer satisfaction.

Dr. Natalie Petouhoff, our final keynote speaker of the day, is a business consultant who helps brands improve customer and employee experiences to reduce costs and drive revenue. She advocates for "Empathy in Action," showing that empathy can foster growth without costly initiatives. During her session, she discussed empathy-based leadership in improving customer and employee experiences. She differentiated between sympathy and empathy, emphasizing the importance of using empathy as a business strategy to reduce employee disengagement and improve customer service. Dr. Petouhoff also explained how empathy transforms customer service, advocating for authentic problem-solving over sympathy scripts. This foundation of empathy, she stressed, creates a firm base for AI to enhance human work, not replace it, and allows the combination of AI and humans to create better business outcomes.

The Wisconsin Customer Experience Symposium concluded with a thoughtful panel discussion between Michelle Dauchy, VP of Customer Experience at Mercury Marine; Alex Paez-Gerstenhaber, Global VP of Client Experience at Hy Cite; and Carrie Toth, VP of Customer Experience at Generac. Each shared their personal journeys in CX, the importance of customer centricity, customer and organization empowerment, use of technology frameworks, metrics, external-driven mindsets, and more!



Save the date for the
2026 Wisconsin
Customer Experience
Symposium:
March 10, 2026



Most Popular Social Posts



UWEC (University of Wisconsin E-Business Consorti...

2,069 followers

2mo •

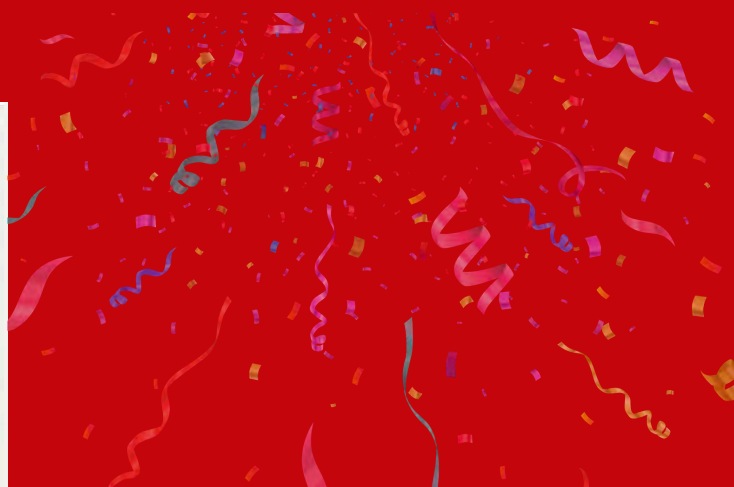
Today marked the long-awaited 27th Annual Conference, and it exceeded all our expectations. We are beyond grateful for everyone who joined us, whether you presented, asked questions, shared insights, or simply showed up ready to engage and learn. It's the energy, collaboration, and curiosity from our community that make this event truly special year after year.

Thanks to YOU, the day was a huge success! We can't wait to keep the conversations going and share the recorded sessions soon. They are perfect for revisiting your favorite moments or catching the insights you may have missed.

Until then, thank you for being part of this thriving community. Together, we're shaping the future of business!



Annual Conference Post:
1,259 Impressions!



LeMans Welcome Post:
2,237 Impressions!



UWEC (University of Wisconsin E-Business Consorti...

2,069 followers

4mo • Edited •

We're excited to welcome [LeMans Corporation](#) to the UWEC family!

LeMans is a leading distributor of powersports parts and accessories, serving dealers across the country through their well-known Parts Unlimited and Drag Specialties divisions. With a rich history of delivering top products and services to the powersports industry, LeMans brings a unique perspective to our community. We're looking forward to having them at the table as we learn from their expertise and collaborate on future initiatives.



LeMans



FEATURE

Wisconsin Digital Symposium



Earlier this year, we hosted our 4th Annual Wisconsin Digital Symposium at Union South on the UW–Madison campus. This highly anticipated event brought together technology and business leaders to explore the transformative power of artificial intelligence, digital ecosystems, and product-led growth strategies in the face of today’s rapidly changing digital landscape.

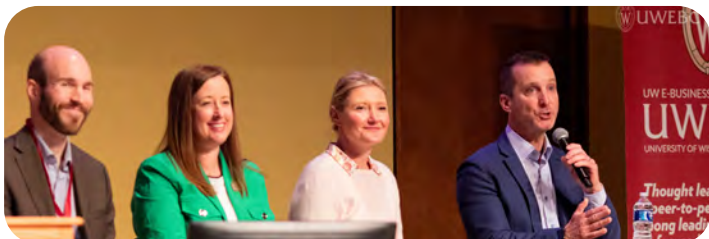
Against a backdrop of economic uncertainty and growing cybersecurity concerns, this year’s symposium delivered timely, practical insights aimed at helping organizations thrive—not just survive—in the age of digital disruption. The program featured an impressive lineup of keynote speakers, executive panelists, lightning talks, and networking opportunities, all designed to empower attendees with actionable strategies for innovation and competitive advantage.

Dr. Michael Proksch, a global AI and data expert and Chief Scientist at AccelerEd, opened the day with a compelling keynote on “Overcoming the Challenges of AI Value Creation.” Drawing on his experience leading major AI transformations for Fortune 500 companies, Dr. Proksch offered strategic insights from his bestselling book *The Secrets of AI Value Creation*, highlighting how organizations can unlock real business value through thoughtful AI implementation.

Next, attendees heard from FarWell on “Accelerating into the Future,” a session focused on transforming business capabilities through AI and automation. The presentation emphasized how tailored transformation frameworks can help companies integrate digital tools while fostering a culture of adaptability and sustained value.

Another standout session was the keynote session “Digital Relativity,” delivered by Cortney Thompson Rowan of Delve with thoughtful Q&A led by Matt Seitz of UW–Madison’s AI Hub. Together, they explored the intersection of technology, hardware, and humanity, making the case for human-centered design in an increasingly connected world. Rowan, a veteran of Fortune 100 innovation projects, and Seitz, a former Google executive, challenged the audience to reimagine product innovation through empathy-driven AI and IoT applications.

A mid-morning panel of distinguished executives provided a wide-ranging discussion on designing and leading successful innovation. Panelists included Shane Achterberg (Schneider), Michele Kaiser (John Deere), Andrea McGill (GE HealthCare), and Paul Ryan (Kohler Co.). They shared real-world insights on navigating digital transformation, balancing risk, and cultivating innovation in large, complex organizations.



The event closed with quick 10-minute lightning talks from academic leaders at UW–Madison, including Jelena Diakonikolas from the School of Computer, Data & Information Sciences; David Dwight from the Erdman Center for Technology Strategy; and Arissa Sato from the People and Robots Lab. These short, powerful presentations highlighted cutting-edge research shaping the future of AI, robotics, and product strategy.

Adding a creative touch to the day, graphic recorder Lin Wilson visually captured the sessions in real time through large-scale illustrations. His artwork, which synthesized key messages and moments from each speaker, offered attendees a unique and memorable way to engage with the event’s content.



.....



Member Company Visits

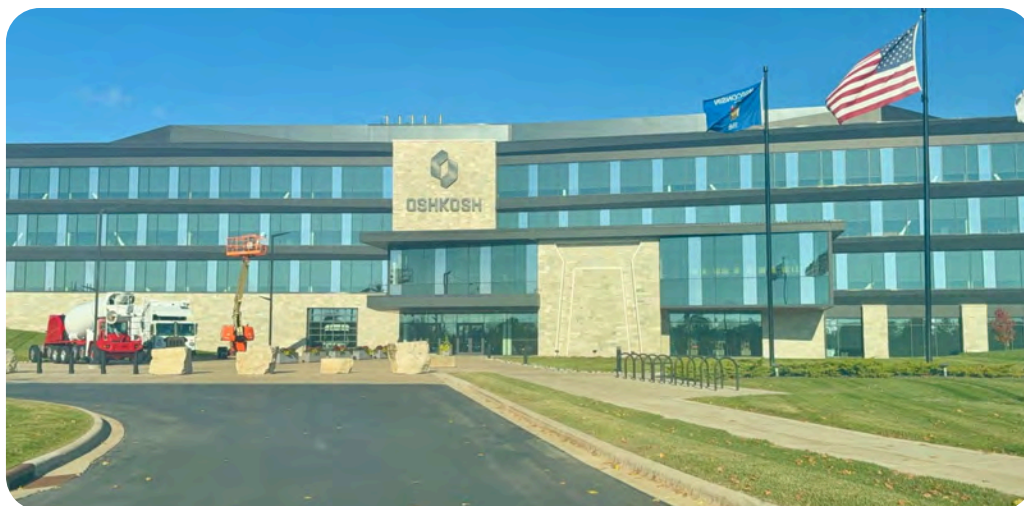
Our members are the lifeblood of UWEBC. Throughout the year, we're fortunate to step outside conference rooms and onto shop floors, into offices, plants, labs, and workspaces to see firsthand where the magic really happens. These visits give us the chance to learn directly from our members, connect in more personal ways, and experience their organizations in the environments where ideas turn into impact. The moments captured here represent just a snapshot of those experiences; many more meaningful visits aren't shown. No matter the setting, we value every opportunity to spend time with our members and strengthen the relationships that make this community so special.



July: The UWEBC team visited Exact Sciences' headquarters in Madison to connect with business leaders and see firsthand the work being done to improve lives through innovation and science. The visit offered valuable insight into the company's mission-driven culture and the meaningful impact its work has around the world.

August: The UWEBC team, along with partners from UW-Madison and the Wisconsin School of Business, visited Komatsu's South Harbor Campus in Milwaukee for an inside look at its cutting-edge facilities and innovative approach to manufacturing. The visit highlighted Komatsu's strong commitment to safety, sustainability, excellence, and its people—values that continue to shape the future of the industry and strengthen our broader UWEBC community.





November: The UWEBC team visited Oshkosh Corporation's global headquarters to see firsthand the technology behind products that support everyday heroes around the world. This visit highlighted the company's strong commitment to innovation and purpose-driven work—and we explore this experience in more depth on the next page.



Want us to visit you in 2026? We'd love to! Email us to set something up at membership@uwebc.wisc.edu or reach out to the Practice Director you work most closely with.



December: Our team spent the day at Stoughton Trailers, LLC, touring their facility and engaging in conversations on innovation, manufacturing, and emerging AI capabilities alongside company leaders, UW–Madison alumni, and College of Engineering Dean Devesh Ranjan.

FEATURE

Oshkosh Corporation Visit

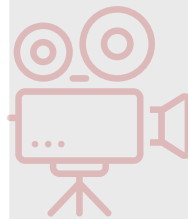
Earlier this fall, the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association hosted UW-Madison Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin, Oshkosh Corporation president and CEO John Pfeifer, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce Executive Vice President Scott Manley, and UW-Madison's Dean of the College of Engineering, Devesh Ranjan, for a focused discussion on how technology, workforce trends, and global markets are reshaping Wisconsin's manufacturing industry. The UWEBC regularly offers events that explore these same themes, providing members with ongoing insights into the innovations, challenges, and opportunities they may face in their organizations.

Panelists highlighted artificial intelligence as a significant force driving efficiency and innovation. Oshkosh Corporation CEO John Pfeifer described how AI now predicts equipment issues and optimizes airport operations, while Scott Manley of Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce noted the rise of computer vision and collaborative robots across the state. UW-Madison College of Engineering Dean Devesh Ranjan emphasized that the university is expanding AI-focused education to prepare students for these shifts.



Speakers agreed that Wisconsin's aging population and declining youth workforce pose significant challenges. Manufacturers need both high-tech engineers and skilled tradespeople. Mnookin pointed to major university investments, including the new Phillip A. Levy Engineering Center and Morgridge Hall, that will expand engineering enrollment and workforce training.

*Watch
it back*



In our December event [Data & Analytics and AI: Navigating Common Dilemmas](#), Leaders from Alliant Energy, American Family, and UW experts came together to address one of the biggest challenges of our time: how to empower teams to innovate with AI while maintaining the governance, ethics, and alignment that our organizations rely on.

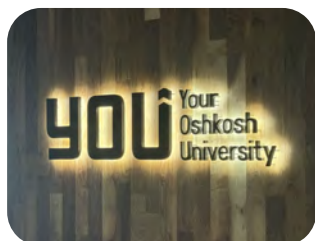
Panelists also examined the complex tariff environment that has reshaped supply chains across the state. Manley said tariffs have created uneven outcomes for Wisconsin manufacturers, benefiting some while placing heavy financial burdens on others. Pfeifer explained that high U.S. steel prices have prompted Oshkosh Corporation to adopt a “local-for-local” production model in order to remain globally competitive. Ranjan added that supply chain pressures are spurring new opportunities for innovation.

*Watch
it back*



Our November event [Dynamic Talent Management: Harnessing Skills Data for Workforce Agility and Growth](#). Referencing the 2025 Future of Jobs Report and featuring Dr. Steven Hunt (author of Talent Techtonics), the session identified skill gaps as the leading barrier to business transformation, highlighting a shift away from traditional job-centric models toward more adaptive, skills-driven approaches.

Closing the event, panelists stated that by investing in talent, embracing emerging technologies, and strengthening partnerships across the state, they expressed confidence that Wisconsin can not only meet its workforce and innovation challenges but also position itself as a national leader in advanced manufacturing for decades to come.



Our February event on [Supply Chain Resilience and Agility](#). Global freight forwarder Gebrüder Weiss discussed ways their company helps supply chains remain agile, and the panel from Sartori and Ideal Industries also shared their approaches to supply chain resiliency in the face of change and disruption.

Continue The Conversation: Register for our UWEBC Technology event on January 20, [Intelligent Collaboration and Digital Workflows](#), to explore how organizations are leveraging intelligent collaboration tools and streamlined digital workflows to enhance productivity, connectivity, and business performance.



Looking Forward

2026 UWEBC Programming Prospectus

A useful guide to what's coming – and what we'll build together

As we step into 2026, one theme remains unmistakable: **our ability to learn from one another is our greatest strategic advantage.**

The future isn't something that simply arrives. It's something we build – through shared insight, experimentation, and courageous leadership.

And let's be honest about the moment we're in: leaders across our member companies are trying to do two hard things at once – **move fast** and keep people, ethics, and long-term capability at the center.

That tension is real. It's also where UWEBC is at its best: peer learning that reduces the cost of discovery and accelerates application, because when one member learns something, every member benefits.

What you told us you want help with

In the **2026 UWEBC Topic Survey**, you told us where you want to lean in next year. Here are some of the strongest signals:

- Leadership & Change Management
- Data & Artificial Intelligence
- Talent & Learning
- Customer Experience
- Technology

That's not a "topic list." It's a strategic agenda. It underwrites progress in all the functional focus areas. It says: help us build individuals, teams, functions, and organizations that can learn faster than the environment changes.

The pragmatic reality check for 2026

In 2025, we saw the "stacking effect" of changes happening all at once – and it's not slowing down. Across member companies, we're living in three overlapping forces: acceleration, integration, and workforce pressure.

AI is no longer something happening "in pockets." It's becoming embedded in everyday platforms and workflows.



And the two challenges we keep hearing (and experiencing) are brutally consistent: **expectations are rising faster than skills**, and AI exposes the cracks in datasets, toolsets, skillsets, and mindsets.

If the learning required to stay current is increasing faster than teams have time to learn... then the old model of "annual training" is now a liability. And we will compete better if we learn both "on the job," from peers, and from experts.

What UWEBC will prioritize in 2026

We're not here to flood calendars. We're here to create "longer levers" of collective learning – spaces to safely explore new ideas, share practical strategies, and help organizations take steps forward together.

So our 2026 programming will cluster around a few capability-building pillars:

1) Change leadership that actually changes things

Not inspiration. Not templates. The real work: building leaders and middle managers who can steward continuous transformation without exhausting the organization.

2) AI + data foundations you can trust

We'll move beyond "AI curiosity" and focus on governance, adoption, and the operational patterns that create real value – without losing control of risk, ethics, or quality.

3) Workforce learning that keeps up with the work

We'll share what's working across member companies: micro-learning, peer learning, coaching, and project-based development – learning ecosystems built into the flow of work.

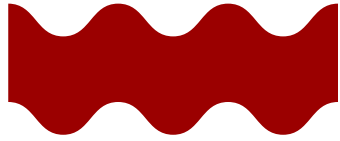
4) Customer value and trust under pressure

CX and marketing aren't separate from operations and tech – they're where strategy becomes real. We'll keep focusing on measurable value, integrated execution, and trust-building experiences.

5) Supply chains built for volatility

We'll focus on practical resilience – better visibility, smarter planning, stronger supplier partnerships, and risk-aware inventory strategies – so organizations can keep customers served even when conditions shift fast.





How you can help shape the year and get full value from it

UWEBC is peer-driven: members shape the topics, raise the questions, and tackle challenges together.

And as Adrienne Hartman puts it: you get out of it what you put into it – real value comes from going deeper, engaging, and building peer connections.

So here's the ask for 2026:

- **Bring one “messy middle” challenge** – and one thing you’ve tried.
- **Volunteer a real workflow** that’s ready for AI augmentation.
- **Share one simplification decision** you made (or avoided) – and what it cost you.

Because the deeper truth of this consortium is simple: **as you join us, you change us**. And together, we’ll keep building a future worth wanting.

– Doug Barton





Thank You For An Amazing Year!

We Can't Wait For What's Next!