UW E-BUSINESS CONSORTIUM
UWEBC
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

NEWS &
UPCOMING EVENTS

November 2024

Relive the Highlights of This Year's UWEBC Annual Conference!

A month has flown by since our UWEBC Annual Conference, yet the energy and inspiration from that incredible day remain strong. If you joined us, you experienced firsthand the enlightening discussions, innovative strategies, and exciting new connections that set this conference apart. For those who couldn't make it, don't worry —there's still a chance to catch up on everything you missed! The rest of this month's newsletter highlights a speaker from each track. You can also find video highlight reels and audio summaries (like podcasts) of each session **on our website**.

This year's event was packed with five distinct tracks, ten strategic briefings, and remarkable keynote speakers, all delivering knowledge to equip you for the future of business and technology. From the start, attendees dove into a rich, carefully curated agenda designed to inspire and inform. Our speakers shared insights on emerging trends, challenged industry norms, and energized everyone to rethink what's possible in their fields. The passion and enthusiasm in the room were undeniable, creating a one-of-a-kind learning experience.

And, with a **digital pass**, you can now gain immediate access to all video recordings from the conference.

Opening Keynote: Elliott Parker

Click on the image above to play the video.

Elliott Parker, CEO of High Alpha Innovation and author of *The Illusion of Innovation*

opened the conference by discussing key themes essential for fostering innovation and resilience in organizations. Elliott has recognized many organizations are consistently focused on making incremental improvements to enhance efficiency, reduce waste, and maximize capital returns. However, the pandemic revealed vulnerabilities when even a small part of their system failed. While striving for short-term capital efficiency, many companies lack long-term resilience and are becoming less adept at problem-solving. The notion that they can reduce errors without losing insights is misleading. Elliott highlights organizations that stop learning set themselves up for failure. True growth requires embracing challenges and putting systems under stress to foster innovation and resilience.

Learn more about Elliott's session and hear an audio summary

The Future of Customer Experience with Isabelle Zdatny (Customer Service Track)

Click on the image above to play the video.

Isabelle Zdatny, Head of Thought Leadership at Qualtrics XM Institute, delivered an engaging talk on the future of Customer Experience (CX) and the evolving role of Experience Management (XM) in driving business transformation. She emphasized the need for organizations to modernize their CX programs by moving beyond traditional, static survey methods to embrace more dynamic, data-driven approaches. Zdatny highlighted the importance of embedding human empathy into every decision-making process, which requires leveraging structured and unstructured data across multiple touchpoints for real-time insights.

She outlined three critical shifts CX programs must make: transitioning from static surveys to dynamic instrumentation, from repetitive reporting to actionable intelligence, and from periodic improvements to adaptive processes. These shifts enable organizations to use advanced analytics and AI-powered tools to transform raw data into predictive insights that inform smarter decisions. Furthermore, Zdatny stressed the importance of embedding CX insights into workflows to foster continuous improvement and innovation across the business.

As CX professionals, Zdatny urged the audience to evolve from simply gathering and sharing customer data to becoming strategic assets that can help their organizations rapidly adapt to technological disruptions, particularly in an era of AI-driven change. By doing so, CX teams can play a crucial role in helping organizations uncover growth opportunities and implement innovative new solutions that create value for customers. She concluded with a call to action for CX leaders to actively shape the future of their organizations by creatively leveraging emerging technologies.

Learn more about Isabelle's session and hear an audio summary

Adapt to Thrive: Building Change-Ready Organizations and Leaders with Tessa Misiaszek (Human Resources Track)

Click on the image above to play the video.

In the Human Resource track, we were fortunate enough to be joined by **Tessa G. Misiaszek, the Head of Research at the Korn Ferry Institute**. In her work, she explores the critical need for organizational adaptability in today's dynamic business environment. Her session delved into the six organizing principles that foster a change-ready culture, from anticipating the unexpected to sustaining resilience.

Most notably, Tessa emphasized how leaders can drive success by fostering change readiness, empowering their workforce, and cultivating learning agility. She expressed that organizations can no longer rely on long-term planning for stability. Instead, they must embrace continuous change. This means preparing all levels of the organization to adapt to whatever challenges arise.

Additionally, Tessa mentioned that traditional top-down approaches to change management are losing their effectiveness. She shared some of her research showing that employees often feel more engaged and collaborative when change is driven from the middle of the organization rather than from the top.

As change becomes the new normal, the key to long-term success lies in building resilient, adaptable organizations where employees at all levels are prepared to lead and thrive in our rapidly changing environment.

Learn more about Tessa's session and hear an audio summary

Boardroom Briefings: Effective Engagement through Cybersecurity Communications with Gina Yacone (Information Technology Track)

Click on the image above to play the video.

In the fast-evolving realm of cybersecurity, the responsibilities of Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) and Chief Information Officers (CIOs) have expanded to effectively communicate complex security issues to the board of directors. **Gina Yacone, CISO at Trace3**, presented at our Annual Conference under the IT track. She focused on turning the challenge of addressing cybersecurity with the board into an opportunity to showcase leadership, improve risk awareness, and advocate for essential resources.

During her session, she highlighted the importance of recognizing unknown data when developing accurate vulnerability reporting, creating actionable metrics that align with your organization's initiatives, changes of cybersecurity reporting, and more.

Learn more about Gina's session and hear an audio summary

A Remarkable Customer Experience Is Your Biggest Competitive Advantage with Dan Gingiss (Marketing Track)

Click on the image above to play the video.

Customer experience expert Dan Gingiss took the stage in our conference's Marketing track and instantly connected with the audience by sharing his most embarrassing moment—applying to grad school and labeling himself "strikingly handsome" in his essay. This humorous story served as a brilliant metaphor for his key message: in a world where every business competes on price and product, the real way to stand out is by creating unique, memorable experiences.

Dan didn't just talk about theory—he offered a practical, five-step framework from his book The Experience Maker that any business can adopt today. His WISE methodology, which stands for Witty, Immersive, Shareable, and Extraordinary, is all about crafting experiences customers will remember, talk about, and share. With real-world examples, Dan showed how small, clever changes can have a massive impact—whether it's a witty message on a clothing tag or making the waiting-on-hold experience fun and enjoyable. The beauty of Dan's advice? It's simple, practical, and inexpensive.

By the end of his talk, Dan had everyone fired up and declaring themselves "experience makers" ready to bring their newfound insights back to their teams and customers.

Learn more about Dan's session and hear an audio summary

People: The Most Critical and Volatile Part of Your Supply Chain with Steve Hunt (Supply Chain Track)

Click on the image above to play the video.

Our featured speaker from the Supply Chain Track was **Steve Hunt**. Steve is the **Founder of i3 Talent**, a Workforce Psychologist, Technologist, and Author of Talent Tectonics. He gave an insightful presentation that discussed the role of people in the supply chain, the influence of technology, and how organizations should rethink managing their workforce. One key takeaway from his presentation is how the COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the importance of people in supply chains and how technology is reshaping work environments.

Steve's presentation delved into two major "talent tectonic" shifts: the digitalization of work and demographic changes. Steve expressed that businesses need to start embracing technology that supports employee autonomy, such as self-scheduling tools, and to look into "underutilized labor pools," such as people with disabilities and workers from underserved communities.

Steve's enlightening words left the audience with the understanding that environments that foster learning, collaboration, and personal fulfillment will result in satisfied employees who will help organizations tackle the challenges of the future.

Learn more about Steve's session and hear an audio summary

Luncheon Address: Dr. Christine B. Whelan

Click on the image above to play the video.

Dr. Christine B. Whelan, the "Purpose Professor," captivated the audience with an energizing keynote on the power of purpose. Using a blend of research, personal stories, and practical exercises, she urged attendees to rethink how they approach purpose in their daily lives, emphasizing that purpose is not just a lofty goal but a verb —something we actively do every day.

Through an engaging exercise, Whelan guided the audience in creating a daily purpose statement by identifying their top three values, strengths, and impact areas. She explained that these small, intentional steps — whether helping a colleague, solving a business challenge, or even making a family recipe — are the building blocks of a purposeful life.

Her message was clear: purpose is within reach every day, not just for the future. By committing to small, purpose-driven actions, we can positively impact our lives and the world around us.

Learn more about Christine's session and hear an audio summary

Closing Session: The Future of Work with Dr. Serena Huang and Tessa Misiaszek, PhD

Click on the image above to play the video.

The 2024 UWEBC Annual Conference closed with an engaging interview of **Dr. Serena Huang and Tessa Misiaszek, PhD**, by Master of Ceremonies **John Stofflet**. In this Q&A session, Serena and Tessa discussed many important issues, including AI in the workplace, employee well-being, return to the office, and a conversation regarding DEI in the workplace.

One thing they discussed was how AI is predicted to change industries, and many organizations feel unprepared. Communication and transparency are crucial in navigating this transformation. Both speakers talked about the importance of mental health while navigating these changes. Dr. Serena Huang discussed how a well-being survey helped one company understand and address employee burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Serena and Tessa also discussed the burning topic of returning to the office post-pandemic. They shared how companies like Amazon are calling employees back to the office full-time. However, they noted that many employees prefer autonomy in choosing where to work. This shift is causing tension, particularly with younger generations like Gen Z, who value work-life balance.

Another notable topic of conversation was about DEI in the workplace. AI and People Analytics were highlighted as powerful tools for fostering inclusion in the workplace. Serena shared how data can help identify patterns of exclusion, while Tessa discussed how DEI investments can improve retention.

Learn more about this session and hear an audio summary

Partner Offering Spotlight

UW–Madison has a wide breadth of professional development courses offered each year, diving into a variety of topics. Here is one upcoming event in particular that we thought may interest you.

Organizational Agility in Digital Transformation
March 18-20, 2025, in person in Madison, WI, or live online
This course is structured to support small teams as well as individual leaders to build their capacity and planning for holistic digital transformation. There will be ample time for application of concepts, case study analysis, planning, and feedback from both instructor and participants. Learn more.

Upcoming UWEBC Events

Note: Attending the events listed below requires UWEBC membership. All are virtual unless otherwise specified.

November 7: AI in Employee Training: Learning to be Better Humans from Technology
Future of Contact Centers Special Interest Group
Unlock the future of employee training with AI—join us to explore cutting-edge innovations that will transform your contact center into a powerhouse of customer service excellence!
More information and register »

November 12: Nearshoring, Re-shoring, and Friend-shoring Strategies
Procurement Peer Group
Discuss successes and challenges with nearshoring and re-shoring sourcing strategies with fellow UWEBC members.
More information and register »

November 14: Contact Center Workforce Management Special Interest Group
Connect with fellow practitioners on what is happening in the contact center workforce management space.
More information and register »

November 19: Agile Synergy: Integrating People, Processes, and Technology for Organizational Resilience (Hybrid Event)
Agile Methodology Interest Group
Join us to collaboratively explore practical strategies for integrating people, processes, and technology to enhance agility and resilience in our organizations.
More information and register »

November 21: Connected and Intelligent Products
Product Management Special Interest Group
In partnership with UW's Erdman Center for Technology Strategy and Product Management, we will explore how advanced technologies are transforming product ecosystems and creating new opportunities for innovation. This session will provide product management leaders and practitioners the opportunity to dive into the world of connected and intelligent products.
More information and register »

December 5: Tech Trends 2025 (Hybrid Event)
Information Technology Peer Group
Tech Trends 2025 will showcase cutting-edge technologies with hands-on demos in robotics, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR), highlighting their transformative business applications. Attendees will also hear from a member company, gaining insights into leveraging these innovations for digital growth.
More information and register »

December 10: Building a Data-Savvy Workforce: Assessing and Addressing Skill Gaps in Our Teams
Data & Analytics Special Interest Group
Uncover practical strategies for cultivating a data-savvy culture across all levels of the organization.
More information and register »

View the full event calendar

This calendar is updated in real-time. Keep an eye out for topics that interest you so you can mark them on your calendar! Note: Adding something to your calendar does not register you for the event; you will still need to register as well.

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