

Request Your Invitation

President's COUNCIL

THE NEXT DECADE WILL
REWARD DIFFERENT LEADERS.

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR WHAT'S COMING?

Join an exclusive gathering of restaurant and hospitality executives exploring the strategies, talent, technology, and leadership decisions that will define tomorrow's winners.

ONE EVENT. 20+ INDUSTRY LEADERS. UNLIMITED INSIGHTS.



Sam Oches
Editor in Chief,
Nation's Restaurant News



Abigail Pringle
Senior Advisor, L.E.K. Consulting,
Former President, Wendy's U.S.



Jamie Richardson
Chief Marketing Officer,
White Castle



David Miller
President & COO,
Cameron Mitchell Restaurants



Michael Johnson
Senior Vice President,
AlixPartners



OCTOBER 13
THE ELLIS
COLUMBUS

SEE INSIDE FOR DETAILS



Request Your Invitation Today to This
Invitation-Only Executive Leadership Summit

REQUEST INVITATION



OCTOBER 13 • THE ELLIS • COLUMBUS

A Seat at the Table with Industry Leaders.

The restaurant and hospitality industry is facing unprecedented change. Consumer expectations continue to evolve, labor challenges persist, technology is transforming operations, and traditional growth models are being tested like never before.

President's Council 2026 was designed for leaders responsible for navigating these realities. Through executive panel discussions, peer-to-peer conversations, and interactive roundtables, attendees will explore the strategies, opportunities, and decisions that will shape the future of their organizations.

More than a conference, President's Council is an opportunity to engage with the executives, innovators, and thought leaders helping define what's next.

If you are committed to building a stronger organization, developing a competitive advantage, and positioning your business for long-term success, we encourage you to request an invitation today.

The following provides an overview of the day's program, including roundtable discussion topics, to assist you in selecting your preferred sessions during registration.





President's Council 2026 Program & Roundtable Topics

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2026 • 9:00 AM - 3:45 PM
THE ELLIS • 777 NORTH 4TH ST, COLUMBUS, OHIO • (614) 683-4052

9:00am – 9:30am

CHECK-IN & MARKETPLACE NETWORKING

9:30am – 9:45am

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS, INTERACTIVE POLL & OPENING REMARKS

PART 1

9:45am – 12:30am

PANEL DISCUSSION 1

State of the Industry & What's Breaking the Old Playbook?

Moderated by:

Sam Oches, Editor in Chief, *Nation's Restaurant News*

Executive Leadership Panel:

- Evan Andrews, Executive Vice President, Montgomery Inn and Cincy Favorites
- Jamie Richardson, Chief Marketing Officer, White Castle
- David Miller, President & COO, Cameron Mitchell Restaurants

The restaurant and hospitality landscape is changing faster than many legacy strategies can keep up with.

This session delivers a snapshot of the Ohio and national industry outlook as it highlights the forces reshaping labor, costs, consumer behavior, and profitability by exploring long-standing assumptions that no longer hold true and innovations changing our industry.

Attendees will gain a clear view of where the real risks and opportunities lie for leaders who must re-think their playbook, while adhering to their core values.

PART 2

PANEL DISCUSSION 2

How Best Can Owners/Operators Engage Consumers and Get Them to Love Their Brand?

Moderated by:

Allison Schroeder, Founder, Pomme Communications

Executive Leadership Panel:

- Michael Johnson, Senior Vice President, AlixPartners
- Andrew Summerfield, President, Summerfield Advertising
- Ryan Wilkins, CEO & Founder, Wilkins Collective

In an age of endless options, pricing fluctuations, and shrinking customer attention, brand loyalty is no longer built by marketing spend alone.

This session focuses on how today's most successful operators are earning loyalty through the customer experience, authenticity, digital engagement, and purpose-driven leadership.

Executives will gain practical insights into how to turn guests into advocates and make their brand unforgettable in a crowded and competitive market.

11:15am – 11:45am

BREAK: NETWORKING & MARKETPLACE PAVILIONS

PART 3

PANEL DISCUSSION 3

Where Will Growth Come from in the Next 5 Years?

Moderated by:

Kathleen White, US Director of Merchandising, Gordon Food Service (GFS)

Executive Leadership Panel:

- **Abigail Pringle**, Senior Advisor, L.E.K. Consulting, Former President, Wendy's U.S.
- **Bob Deck**, Chief Operations Officer & Managing Partner, 4 Entertainment Group
- **Scott Swaldo**, CEO & General Manager, Gervasi Destinations

As traditional unit growth faces new constraints, leaders should look beyond “more locations” for sustainable expansion.

This forward-looking session examines how smart growth can position operators now by emerging from new concepts, formats, channels, partnerships, and operational models.

Designed for decision-makers, this discussion challenges attendees to think strategically about investments that will define their next phase of growth.

12:30pm – 1:15pm

LUNCH, NETWORKING & MARKETPLACE PAVILION

Featured Author Conversation & Book Signing

Denny Lynch

Author of Call Me Dave: Behind the Counter with Dave Thomas, Founder of Wendy's

- Exclusive interview and audience Q&A
- Behind-the-scenes stories of Dave Thomas and the Wendy's journey
- Book signing following the discussion

PART 4

1:15pm – 3:00pm

EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS & TAKEAWAYS

The Roundtable Discussions: Winning the Next Decade: Leadership, Talent, and Innovation.

This interactive roundtable experience challenges leaders to tackle the realities of the next decade, including navigating constant disruption, redefining competitive advantage, and building the talent, culture, and execution needed to turn strategy into results. Attendees will engage with peers and experts to explore how leadership, innovation, and operational discipline must evolve to succeed in a complex environment.

Registrants will select two roundtable discussions, one topic for each session. The topics below will help determine which discussions are most relevant to you. At the conclusion of the roundtables, topic leaders will share brief takeaways and insights with the full group.

EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS & TAKEAWAYS *continued***1. Balancing Stakeholder, Employee & Customer Expectations**

Leader: **Diane Hurd**, Senior Vice President & Partner, Inspire PR Group

- Leaders face continuous tradeoffs between competing priorities. This roundtable explores how to make balanced decisions that align stakeholder expectations while sustaining employee performance and customer trust.

2. Culture as a Strategic Asset

Leader: **Jim Sauter**, Vice President of Restaurants & Operating Partner, Cameron Mitchell Restaurants & The Rusty Bucket Restaurant and Tavern

- Culture is more than a value and is often a competitive differentiator. This roundtable examines how intentional culture-building can strengthen performance, retention, and brand identity.

3. Elevating Operations to A+ Level

Leader: **Marco Piazza**, CEO, Cut & Dried Consulting

- Operational excellence doesn't happen by accident. This discussion dives into the disciplined steps and difficult decisions required to make operations a true point of differentiation.

4. Franchising as an Opportunity

Leader: **Dan March**, Vice President - Franchise Development, Skyline Chili

- Is your brand ready to scale through franchising? Participants focus on evaluating franchise readiness, attracting the right partners, and building mutually successful franchisor–franchisee relationships by identifying key prospect characteristics.

5. From Digital to AI-Driven Enterprise

Leader: **Avery Ward**, CEO, Little Italy Ristorante

- As AI moves from hype to reality, where does it actually create value? This discussion focuses on practical applications, balancing speed with governance, and avoiding wasted investment.

6. From Strategy to Execution: Why Good Plans Fail

Leader: **Chris Artinian**, President & CEO, Artinian Holdings

- Strong strategies can often fall short in execution. Participants will explore the role of alignment, incentives, and removing the impediments of management friction to turn plans into measurable outcomes.

7. Leading Through Permanent Disruption

Leader: **Michael Johnson**, Senior Vice President, AlixPartners

- Explore how today's leaders make decisions without complete information in a constantly changing landscape, shifting from a mindset of stability to one of agility. This roundtable focuses on building organizations designed to adapt and thrive amid constant uncertainty.

8. Navigating Political & Regulatory Uncertainty

Leader: **Kerry Boyle**, Vice President & General Counsel, Cameron Mitchell Restaurants

- Operating environments are constantly shifting. This discussion focuses on how leaders can plan and adapt while managing risk across changing policy and regulatory landscapes.

PART 4

1:15pm – 3:00pm

EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS & TAKEAWAYS *continued*

9. Reinventing the Business Model

Leader: **Chad Eddy**, Certified EOS Implementer, EOS Worldwide

- Discover how operators are rethinking their business models to drive clarity, alignment, and results. This session centers on the practical implementation of systems like the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) to make planning and deliverables centralized and execution focused to hold organizations and stakeholders accountable.

10. Technology as Strategy: Not IT

Leader: **Cody McMichael**, Area Sales Manager, SpotOn

- Technology is no longer just support - it's a revenue engine. This roundtable explores how leaders can evaluate and leverage rapidly evolving tech to drive growth and competitive advantage.

11. The Next Era of Competitive Advantage

Leader: **Ryan Wilkins**, CEO & Founder, Wilkins Collective

- If scale alone is no longer enough, what truly differentiates winning brands? This discussion examines how speed, culture, technology, data application, and brand trust are redefining the competitive advantage.

12. The ROI of Innovation

Leader: **Craig Turner**, Chief Operating Officer & Executive Director, Agapé Automation

- Innovation requires both bold thinking and disciplined evaluation. This discussion examines how leaders assess investment decisions and balance experimentation with operational discipline.

13. The Workforce We Will Need by 2030

Leader: **John Lanni**, Co Founder & Owner, Thunderdome Restaurant Group

- Looking ahead, leaders must rethink how they build and sustain talent pipelines. This discussion explores evolving skill needs and roles, leadership development, and the role AI will play in shaping the future workforce.

14. Winning the Margin Battle in a Supplier-Driven Cost Environment

Leader: **Kathleen White**, US Director of Merchandising, Gordon Food Service (GFS)

- As cost pressures persist and pricing power becomes more limited, operators must rethink how they protect and grow margins. This roundtable explores practical strategies for balancing pricing, strengthening supplier partnerships, and reinforcing value to sustain profitability without sacrificing trust.

3:00pm – 3:45pm

WRAP UP & COCKTAIL HOUR



OCTOBER 13 • THE ELLIS • COLUMBUS

Built for Leaders.

President's Council is an Invite Only event that brings together industry leaders to explore the ideas, strategies, and innovations shaping the future of restaurant and hospitality operations. Through executive panels and peer-to-peer discussions, you'll gain practical insights, fresh perspectives, and valuable connections.



**REQUEST
INVITATION**

REQUEST YOUR INVITATION TODAY.