



## **GACC South 12<sup>th</sup> Annual SME Business Development Conference**

Gas South Convention Center | Atlanta, GA | April 17, 2024

### **Night Before (April 16, 2024)**

**5:00pm – 7:00pm | VIP Reception** (*Open to conference speakers and sponsors **only***)

- Welcome remarks from:
  - o Matthias Hoffmann, President & CEO GACC South
  - o Davis Myers, Business Development Director, CHOATE Construction Company
- **VIP Reception Sponsor:** [CHOATE Construction Company](#)



*Reputation is Everything*

### **Day of Conference (April 17, 2024)**

**8:30am – 9:30am | Breakfast & Registration** (*reception area*)

**9:30am – 9:45am | Welcome** (*Main Session, Salon 3*)

- Matthias Hoffmann, President & CEO, GACC South
- Pat Wilson, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Economic Development

**9:45am – 10:15am | Morning Keynote** (*Main Session, Salon 3*)

- **Speakers:**
  - o Isabell Lee, VP / Wealth Management Advisor, Merrill Lynch
  - o Gregg Corso, Financial Advisor, Merrill Lynch
  - o Lewis M. Lea, VP / Senior Financial Advisor, Merrill Lynch
  - o Daisy Phelps, VP / Employee Benefits Specialist, Merrill Lynch
- **Presented by:** Bank of America



**10:15am – 11:00am | Speed Networking** (*Main Session, Salon 3*)

**11:00am – 11:50am | First Round of Breakout Sessions** *(Four separate sessions running simultaneously)*

- **1A: Decarbonization of Logistics: Current Sustainability Innovations, Trends, Incentives, and ESG Regulations** [\(Salon 4\)](#)

Session Description: Conversations surrounding the lowering of carbon footprints and effective utilization of sustainable resources within supply chains have shaped current industry trends and will continue to gain traction.

Join our session where sustainability experts will discuss these constantly changing trends, technologies, and innovations, the evolution of ESG regulations in the US and internationally, strategies for companies to remain compliant in their reporting processes, principles and practices of a circular economy, government interactions with the cleantech industry – the topics are endless.

- o **Moderated by:** *Andy Marshall, Managing Director, Georgia CleanTech Innovation Hub*
- o **Panelists:**
  - o *Marcel Schaefer, Senior Research Scientist, Fraunhofer USA*
  - o *Joel Graye, Audit and Assurance Senior Manager, Deloitte & Touche LLP*
  - o *Bill Kascel, Senior Vice President - Sustainability Solutions North America, Kuehne + Nagel*

- **2A: 360° Collaboration Model: Optimizing your manufacturing structure** [\(Salon 5\)](#)

Session Description: In this panel, industry experts will discuss how individual companies add value and identify support from business partners by working together. Expect an insightful discussion on value propositions of a collaboration model between business partners.

In today's fast paced economy, where operational processes are required to perform on the highest level despite rising labor costs, automation is often seen as the path to a potential solution. This session will focus on how to adapt while staying as flexible as possible to meet customer requirements and standards, delving into topics such as smart manufacturing, sustainability, and lean management in a collaboration model.

- o **Moderated by:** *Maik Friebe, Partner, Roedl & Partner*
- o **Panelists:**
  - o *Samuel Schwarzer, Associate Partner, Key Account Manager, Ingenics Corporation USA*
  - o *Ron Spencer, Principal, Supply Chain Solutions, Cresa USA*
  - o *Jayce Nelson, Sales Engineer, Automated Solutions, KION Group*
- o **Hosted by:** [Ingenics Corporation](#)



- **3A: Inviting Culture into the C-Suite** [\(Salon 6\)](#)

Session description: Our professional lives have been shaped by the global nature of our businesses. As a result, cultural factors can easily become challenges. How do we confidently address cross-cultural differences and how strategic are we in building bridges across the culture gaps we encounter? Since organizations are only as global as the people who work for them, leadership is tasked with finding solutions to cross-cultural conundrums. Join us for an interactive session with representatives from different industries who discuss real-life scenarios – what they learned from their mistakes and which best practices they have found to be successful.

- **Moderated by:** Christian Hoeflerle, Founder & CEO, The Cultural Mastery
- **Panelists:**
  - Mario Duarte, Sr. Director, Learning, Training and Development, Volkswagen of America, Inc.
  - Michael Otte, Partner, DHR Global
  - Teresa Cassem, Human Resources Director, WACKER
  - Annekathrin Mueller, Power Solutions, VP Commercial Plant Management, Robert Bosch LLC

- **4A: Digital Trends and Impacts on Manufacturing and Logistics** (Salon 7)

Session Description: Join us for an insightful talk on digital trends and their impacts on manufacturing and logistics. Discover how cutting-edge technologies such as IoT, AI, and ChatGPT are revolutionizing traditional processes, enhancing efficiency, and driving innovation in supply chain management and process efficiency. We will explore real-world examples, discuss the challenges and opportunities presented by digitalization, and envision the future of smart manufacturing and logistics.

- **Moderated by:** Dr. Stanislaw Schmal, Director AI & Digital, Lufthansa Industry Solutions
- **Hosted by:** [Lufthansa Industry Solutions US](#)



**11:50am – 12:10pm | Coffee Break** (Reception area)

**12:10pm – 1:00pm | Second Round of Breakout Sessions**

- Session 1B, 2B, 3B, 4B

**1:00pm – 2:00pm | Lunch & Networking** (Main Session; Salon 3)

- Buffet Style Lunch set up in reception area, opportunity to visit exhibition tables, network, etc.

**2:00pm – 2:30pm | Afternoon Keynote: Leveraging Cross-Continental Collaboration for Success in Digitalization** (Main Session; Salon 3)

Session Description: In her keynote address, Monique Lesser will explore the pivotal role of cross-continental collaboration in digitalization. The central principle of her presentation is

the power of collective learning and the celebration of diversity as catalysts for corporate success in the digital age. Monique will draw upon real-life examples of Evonik in Research and Development, Production and Technology, and Marketing and Sales to showcase how the company's global teams leverage varied experiences and perspectives to make informed decisions that propel the company forward. Attendees can anticipate gaining practical insights into the methodologies and frameworks that underpin successful digital innovation. Through Evonik's lens, Monique will reveal how embracing differences and fostering a culture of shared knowledge can lead to advancements in digital strategies.

- **Keynote Speaker:** *Monique Lesser, Head of Cognitive Solutions, Evonik Digital*

## **2:30pm – 3:20pm | Third Round of Breakout Sessions** *(four sessions running simultaneously)*

### - **5A: Workforce Retention: Strategies for Motivating Gen Z and Alternative Approaches to Education** *(Salon 4)*

Session description: Ready or not, Gen Z has begun to enter and populate the workforce, creating rippling effects on the economy and businesses worldwide. Companies are having to adapt according to differences in generational values in the areas of politics and culture, consumption habits and behaviors, strengths and weaknesses, and job priorities. What tactics should your company employ to attract and retain workers from the next generation? What benefits and workforce attributes are most valuable to Gen Z-ers? Join this session on changing workforce habits where our panelists will explore topics such as apprenticeship solutions, models for hiring and retaining young talent, and more.

- **Moderated by:** *Scott Schrein, Deputy Director, Skills Initiative, GACC South*
- **Panelists:**
  - *Brent Lemond, CTAE Director, Franklin County High School*
  - *Wendy Davis, HR Manager, Solmax*
  - *Mark Whitlock, CEO, Central Educational Center*

### - **6A: Forward Focus: Economic Update and Industry Outlook** *(Salon 5)*

Session description: Addressing the dynamic landscape, the session will delve into key macroeconomic indicators, including inflation rates, interest rates, and global trade dynamics, offering insights into their potential impact on businesses. Industry experts will provide in-depth analyses of emerging trends, disruptions, and innovations shaping various sectors to include (data and smart manufacturing, continuing urgency of cybersecurity, reimagining global supply chains, war on talent economic pressures and market shifts, and the rise of AI). This would aim to equip participants with a forward-looking perspective on market conditions, enabling them to make informed strategic decisions. Special attention will be given to the interplay between industry trends and economic shifts, offering a nuanced understanding of potential challenges and opportunities. Attendees can expect actionable takeaways and practical strategies to navigate the evolving economic landscape in the coming year. Throughout the session, interactive elements and Q&A opportunities will foster engagement and facilitate a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the economic outlook and industry trajectories.

- **Moderated by:** Katie Landy, Principal, Industrials Senior Analyst, RSM US LLP
- **Hosted by:** [RSM US LLP](#)



- **7A: Using Immersive Technology to Combat Common Challenges in Manufacturing** ([Salon 6](#))

Session description: With the hype around the Apple Vision Pro, the topic of Immersive Technologies and the buzzwords AR/VR/XR or Augmented Reality / Virtual Reality and Mixed Reality are used by many people in different contexts.

In this session, you'll get an explanation of immersive technology and how it works. In addition, we focus on use cases and problem-solving in the Manufacturing and machine-building industry from Product Development to Engineering, Improvements in Marketing and Sales to Technical Training, and use cases in Maintenance and Life Cycle Management, as well as a forecast of what future developments with connectivity to IoT and the power of AI to create content efficiently can bring to the table.

- **Moderated by:** Markus Rimmele, Founder and Managing Principal of DigitalitUM, Digitalization tools for Manufacturing
- **Panelists:**
  - Rob Kuehl, CEO, Maier America

- **8A: Data-Driven Recruiting Strategies: Building a Winning Workforce that Drives Bottom-Line Performance** ([Salon 7](#))

Session Description: The ever-tightening labor market has created significant challenges for business leaders across the globe. Companies are continually having to adapt their strategies for attracting and hiring the right talent. In this interactive session, Rhiannon Poore, CEO & Founder of Forge Search, will share the data behind the trends shaping the labor pool, as well as innovative strategies to set your organization up for success. You'll learn what matters most to candidates in today's market, as well as how to go to market to attract the best candidates.

- **Moderated by:** Rhiannon Poore, CEO & Founder, Forge Search
- **Hosted by:** [Forge Search + Consulting](#)



**3:20pm – 4:00pm | Afternoon Coffee Break** (*Reception Area*)

**4:00pm – 4:50pm | Fourth Round of Breakout Sessions** (*Repeat of third round topics*)

- Sessions 5B, 6B, 7B, 8B

**4:50pm – 6:00pm | Networking/Evening Reception** (*open to all conference attendees*) (*Reception area*)

- Cocktail Hour; open bar serving beer, wine, and soft drinks
- **Champagne Toast:** Nadine Vaughan, Director & Relationship Manager, BMO Commercial Bank
- **Sponsored by:** BMO Commercial Bank

