2026 Natural, Organic, Plant-Based & Gluten Free Food & Beverage Session

Education & EPPS Programs

ECRM's educational sessions provide EPPS attendees with the opportunity to learn from thought leaders and category experts on a variety of topics aimed at their professional development. These sessions include presentations, moderated panel discussions, special events, workshops, and roundtable discussions focused on category insights and trends, as well as hands-on workshops to help buyers and sellers enhance the effectiveness of their meetings during an EPPS.

Sunday, September 27, 2026

Tasting Experience

60 minutes

Get ready for a deliciously fun evening! Join us as suppliers serve up tasty samples, all while you mingle and sip at the cocktail reception. It's the perfect way to discover new flavors, meet industry pros, and enjoy a great time!
Supplier Setup: 5:30–6:00 PM
Location: Lonestar Foyer

Monday, September 28, 2026

From a Lead to a Client: The formula & finesse that turns your passionate pitch into a sale

45 minutes

You have a great purpose, service, or product… so why doesn't it always turn into sales?



The best basketball players in the world are the best because they re-watch, re-practice, and re-tool their execution on the fundamentals. As people selling products, this presentation will focus on those same fundamentals.

Closing a sale and moving a lead to a client requires both a formula and finesse.

The actions you take are the formula, and when you follow it, you WILL get a sale eventually:

• Find your ideal customer
• Tell them how you help
• Follow up

But increasing your success is about finesse. "How did you do the formula?"

• Do you truly understand your customer and what they need in their words and feelings?
• Are you using words that resonate and offering a plan that feels simple?
• Are you communicating safety from risk because they have doubts you will deliver?

Most people are too close to their own business...
... too familiar with their own industry vocabulary...
... and too far from the risk and pain faced by buyers...
to realize the answer to: 'Why aren't they buying?'

Experts in sales and beginners will all get tools to improve their pitch and follow-up, decreasing retailer ghosting and increasing the probability of closing a sale.

BIO:

Emily is a Business Growth Strategist and Speaker who helps founders pitch, scale, and exit their businesses with clarity and confidence. She built her own brand, sold it into U.S. retail, and later sold her shares.

Today she owns Pearl Resourcing, a brand and packaging design agency she has run for 12 years, specializing in repositioning brands for the American grocery industry, and through START to SOLD she delivers growth consulting tailored to each brand's goals.

Emily lives in Dallas, Texas with her husband Dylan. Every day she works to help people find their true, empowered identity and create their own "Success Sauce."

- Founder, START to SOLD – Business Growth Consulting and Speaking on Brand Growth
- Owner, PEARL RESOURCING Brand & Packaging Design
- Retired Co-Founder, JOCKO WHITE TEA
- Become Magnetic (book forthcoming)

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

- START to SOLD: https://starttosold.net/
- YOUTUBE: https://www.youtube.com/@STARTtoSOLD
- LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/start-to-sold/
- Instagram: http://instagram.com/StartToSold/
- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/STARTtoSOLD/

Emily Anne Page, Founder, Owner
PEARL RESOURCING Brand & Packaging Design, START to SOLD – Business Growth Consulting and Speaking on Brand Growth

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Most Important Things to Know Before Presenting to a Buyer



45 minutes

Join us for Tiffany Harris's session on "Most Important Things to Know Before Presenting to a Buyer"! Tiffany is joining us from Global Marketing Select, a brand manager and sales company with importation capabilities. They have over 16 years of experience in the food and beverage industry working with retailers nationwide and specializing in building brands in the USA. During our session, she will discuss the most important topics of what you should be mindful of before making that initial sales pitch to a buyer! Understanding everything from USA-ready packaging, the retailer's DSD options, promotional asks, slotting requirements, and a USA-ready sales sheet is crucial to get the WIN!

Tiffany Harris, President
Global Marketing Select

Outsmart Bigger CPG Brands with AI



45 minutes

In this session, Tia Ellis, pitch and presentation coach behind $200M+ in retail sales, breaks down how to use AI to compete with brands 100x your size. You'll learn how retail buyers actually make decisions, the four questions every winning pitch answers, and why AI is the small brands' unfair advantage.

Tia Ellis, Founder & CEO
Wildflower Insight

Doing the Math



40 minutes

Doing the Math: *How constrained budgets are a priority for healthy eating in the protein aisle*

Health-focused eating is no longer limited to affluent households — but the trade-offs constrained shoppers make in the protein aisle look nothing like the ones premium shoppers make. How often families eat meat, which proteins they choose, which claims earn a premium, and how that calculus shifts under budget pressure: this session maps the behavior, tracks the dollars, and identifies where the next growth opportunity is actually coming from.
Which proteins win with value-seeking consumers?
With frozen and shelf-stable seafood gaining share, where should distribution investment move?
Do accessible claims outperform full organic certification for value-seeking shoppers?

Beth Morris is the Vice President of Product Insights at NielsenIQ. With more than 15 years of experience in market research and analytics, she specializes in retail measurement, innovation forecasting, and consumer behavior, helping brands turn complex data into actionable insights. Beth holds a Bachelor's degree in Healthcare Management from Dallas Baptist University, where she developed a strong foundation in strategic thinking and organizational leadership.

At NielsenIQ, Beth is recognized for driving innovation in client solutions and promoting inclusive, forward-looking measurement practices. She frequently speaks on emerging retail trends, the role of AI in insights, and the importance of diversity in data interpretation. Her passion for consumer-first strategies continues to shape how businesses navigate today’s evolving marketplace.

Beth A. Morris, Vice President, Product Insights
NielsenIQ

Panel Discussion with Leading Retailers - What it Takes to Be Retail Ready



50 minutes

Join Tracey Priest and Bruce Montgomery with Road 2 Retail as they moderate a panel discussion with Albertsons and Sprouts for a straight-talk conversation on what it really takes for brands to win in today's Food & Beverage marketplace. They'll share how they evaluate new products, what gets a buyer's attention, and the capabilities they expect from supplier partners. If you want to turn a great product into real distribution and repeat sales, this is the playbook you can't afford to miss!

Moderated by Tracey Priest and Bruce Montgomery with Road 2 Retail

Tim Ryan, Albertsons, National Category Director

Andrea Hatziyannis, Sprouts Farmers Markets, LLC, Category Strategy Manager - Own Brand Frozen and Center Store