2026 Foodservice & Menu Innovation 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.

Tuesday, September 29, 2026

Foodservice Roundtables

40 minutes

1. The Next Generation of Foodservice: What Will Customers Expect Next?
How are changing customer behaviors, demographics, and dining habits influencing foodservice programs?

- What are operators seeing from Gen Z and younger consumers?
- What emerging dining behaviors are influencing menus, formats, and service?
- What products, equipment, or technology will become essential to meet these expectations?
- What are buyers looking for that suppliers aren't bringing forward yet?

2. From Labor Challenges to Labor Solutions: How Are Operators Doing More With Less?
Labor continues to impact nearly every part of foodservice—from kitchens to front-of-house operations.

- What processes are operators looking to simplify or automate?
- Where can equipment and technology reduce labor requirements?
- What food products or ingredients can help simplify preparation?
- What solutions are actually delivering ROI versus simply adding technology?

3. Speed, Convenience & Throughput: Designing Foodservice for Today's Customer
Customers want food faster, but operators still need to deliver quality, consistency, and profitability.

- How are operators rethinking grab-and-go, takeout, delivery, and pickup?
- What products and packaging help improve speed and convenience?
- How are equipment and technology helping increase throughput?
- Where are suppliers seeing the biggest opportunities to improve the customer experience?

4. Innovation That Makes the Menu: What Gets a "Yes" From Foodservice Buyers?
A great conversation for buyers and suppliers because it gets directly into **what makes a new product worth bringing into a foodservice operation.**

- What makes buyers pay attention to a new product or concept?
- What are the biggest barriers to getting a new product approved?
- How important are versatility, labor savings, cost, shelf life, and distribution?
- What can suppliers do to make it easier for buyers to say yes?

5. Beyond the Menu: The Operational Innovations Changing Foodservice
Foodservice innovation isn't just about what's on the plate.

- What new equipment, technology, packaging, and operational solutions are making the biggest impact?
- Where are operators investing to improve efficiency and profitability?
- What technology is actually solving problems—and what is just hype?
- What operational challenges do buyers wish suppliers understood better?