



**HOSPITALITY MINNESOTA CONFERENCE AGENDA
OCTOBER 5–7, 2025
DULUTH, MN**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5th – Arrival & Welcome

1:00 PM: Registration Opens

4:00 PM: Hotel Check-in (Sheraton Duluth Hotel)

6:00 - 8:00 PM: Welcome Reception (*Greysolon, Moorish Room*)

Kick off the conference with drinks, bites, and friendly faces!

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6th - Conference Programming – Greysolon

Morning

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM: Registration | Breakfast | Vendor Visits

8:45 AM – 9:00 AM: Welcome Remarks

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM: Keynote: Leading Thru Chaos (*Ballroom*)

Speaker: Erik Therwanger, Think GREAT

Erik delivers practical leadership strategies to help you inspire, empower, and rally your team through today's unpredictable hospitality landscape. Get ready to lead with confidence when chaos is the only constant.

10:00 AM – 10:20 AM: Morning Break | Vendor Visits

10:20 AM – 11:10 AM: Morning Breakout Sessions (*Choose one*)

- **Strategy First, AI Second: A Smarter Way to Create Marketing Content That Connects** (*Ballroom*)

Speakers: Justin Bieganeck & Cheri Quinn; Mercury Creative Group

In this hands-on session for busy hospitality operators, we'll walk through a repeatable framework to identify your primary client and show how strategic thinking + AI can create content that gets attention. You'll leave with messaging clarity, a reusable framework, and a resource to go even further.

- **How to Prepare for Immigration Worksite Enforcement** (*Moorish Room*)

Speaker: Loan Huynh; Fredrikson

Learn how to proactively prepare for immigration-related worksite enforcement actions. environment.

Afternoon

11:10 AM – 12:30 PM: Lunch & Vendor Visits

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM: Keynote: Creating an Employee-First Approach to Exceptional Guest Service (*Ballroom*)

Speaker: Ryan Minton

Happy teams = happy guests. Hospitality executive Ryan Minton shares how putting employees first leads to unforgettable service, rave reviews, and guests who keep coming back for more.

1:45 PM – 2:35 PM: Afternoon Breakout Sessions (Choose one)

- **Planning Thru Chaos (Ballroom)**
Speaker: Erik Therwanger; Think GREAT
Equip yourself with strategic planning tools to achieve high impact goals during turbulent times.
- **Supporting Employee Wellbeing (Moorish Room)**
Speakers: Maya Johnson; All Square & Sara Stamschror-Lott; Creative Kuponya
Explore innovative approaches to workplace wellness through mental health programming, therapy, and trauma-informed leadership.

2:35 PM – 3:00 PM: Afternoon Break | Vendor Visits

3:00 PM – 4:15 PM: A Conversation with Award-Winning Hospitality Changemakers (Ballroom)

Moderated by Alison Arth & Kimblery Belle; Salt & Roe

Panelists: Ann Ahmed; Kamma Hospitality, Karyn Tomlinson; Myriel, Jeanie Janas Ritter; Bûcheron

Join an honest, energizing conversation with values-driven leaders who are redefining hospitality culture, purpose, and impact.

4:15 PM – 4:30 PM: Closing Remarks & Final Vendor Thanks Yous

Evening

4:30 PM – 5:45 PM: Free Time

Refresh at your hotel or take a stroll through downtown Duluth before the evening's festivities.

5:45 PM: Transportation to Offsite Dinner

Shuttle pickup at the Sheraton Duluth Hotel.

6:00 PM: Offsite Dinner Event: *Glensheen Mansion*

Attire: Business casual + warm layers for lakeside drinks

Enjoy a private self-guided tour of the historic estate, a beautifully catered dinner, and a cozy campfire experience along the stunning shoreline of Lake Superior.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7th – Conference Programming - Greysolon

Morning

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM: Registration | Breakfast | Vendor Visits

8:45 AM – 9:00 AM: Welcome Remarks

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM: Morning Session

- **Understanding Employer Mandates (Ballroom)**
Panelists: Martin Kappenman; Peters & Kappenman, Paula Soderberg; Morrissey Hospitality
Moderator: Angie Whitcomb
A practical, plain-language breakdown of paid family leave and what your business needs to do to ensure you're ready.

10:00 – 10:30 AM: Break | Visit Vendors

10:30 – 11:30 AM: Charting the Course - 2025 Lessons & 2026 Legislative Priorities (Ballroom)

Panelists: Todd Hill, Tony Kwilas, Senator Grant Hauschild, Representative Dave Baker

Moderator: Hanna Zinn

Hear directly from a bipartisan group of policy experts and lawmakers as they break down recent wins and the road ahead for Minnesota's hospitality industry.

11:30 AM – 11:45 AM: Closing Remarks