

wga SYMPOSIUM

September 16-17, 2025

**Coca Cola Headquarters
Atlanta, GA**



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

11:45am-12:30pm | Plum Street Room, 2nd Floor

NETWORKING LUNCH

12:30-1:00pm | Collective - 3rd Floor

WELCOME *Kristin Popp, Woodmans Food Markets | Marvin Vines, Coca-Cola | Meagan Nelson, SPINS*

1:00-1:45pm | Collective, 3rd Floor

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY: GROCERY INSIGHTS IN 2026 Ever evolving macro forces place pressure on our daily lives. Awareness of changing shopper patterns helps build the strategy for future growth. Many outlets are competing for grocery trips and traditional grocery is fighting to maintain its foothold. Securing the shop within traditional grocery requires a continued look into shifting demographic and shopper patterns that will enable differentiation that provides the reason to shop in-store. In this session, we will look at how we evaluate growth potential in the Grocery sector and create demand for changing shopping habits.

Hillary Garland, The Coca-Cola Company

1:45-2:45pm | Collective, 3rd Floor

KEYNOTE: SHAPE STORIES THAT DRIVE SOLUTIONS As a female leader in the grocery industry, your ability to drive action is key - whether you are influencing your team, vendors or senior leadership. In this session, you will learn how to craft concise stories that focus on solutions. Walk away with a practical framework you can use daily. *Kelly Zehfuss*

2:45-3:15pm | **BREAK** Sponsored by Imperial Distributors, Inc.

3:15-4:15pm | Collective, 3rd Floor

KEYNOTE: COMMUNICATE WITH CONFIDENCE Master the art of clear communication and break free from common pitfalls that can undermine women's voices. *Kelly Zehfuss*

4:15-5:00pm | Collective - 3rd Floor

LEADERSHIP UNPLUGGED: FIRESIDE CHAT A fireside chat moderated by Kristin Popp, Woodmans Food Market featuring Naomi Sleeper, Imperial Distributors; Sheila Ebanks, Coca-Cola; and Dana Naifeh, Naifeh's Food Market. *Naomi Sleeper, Imperial Distributors | Sheila Ebanks, Coca-Cola Company | Dana Naifeh, Naifeh's Food Market | Moderated by Kristin Popp, Woodmans Food Market*

5:00-6:00pm | USA 10 / Overlook

NETWORKING COCKTAIL HOUR Sponsored by ECRS

6:15pm | **BUS PICK-UP FROM COCA COLA HQ**

7:15-9:15pm | **DINNER ROUNDS WITH WGA BOARD MEMBERS** Optional

8:00-8:30am | *Collective, 3rd Floor*

NETWORKING BREAKFAST

8:30-9:00am | *Collective, 3rd Floor*

DAY 2 KICKOFF *Kristin Popp, Woodmans Food Markets*

NGA UPDATE It seems there's something new coming out of Washington every week recently - hear what NGA is doing to support the independent grocery industry and how you can get involved.

Greg Ferrara, NGA

9:00-10:00am | *Collective, 3rd Floor*

AI SESSION What if your best new hire didn't need sleep, benefits, or training — just better instructions? AI isn't coming for your job — it's coming for your tasks. In this hands-on session, you'll learn how to prompt like a boss — giving AI the role, context, and direction it needs to deliver. Walk away with a 5-step framework and real-world examples you can use to lead smarter, move faster, and show up stronger.

Chris Greco, Goodlight AI

10:00-10:30am **BREAK/SESSION TRANSITION** *Sponsored by Empower Fresh*

10:30-11:15am | *USA 2 Refresh A*

FINANCIAL ACUMEN FOR NON-FINANCIAL LEADERS You're in charge! Now what?! Benchmarks, budgets, shrink, oh my! Deepen your understanding of how your department can contribute to the bottom line by understanding how your decisions impact the financial statements. We'll share some retail-specific metrics you'll want to keep an eye on. *Robin Quigley, FMS Solutions Holdings LLC*

10:30-11:15am | *USA 2 Refresh B*

CONFIDENCE IN MOTION Confidence isn't just a mindset, it's a reflection of our environment and our ability to protect what matters most to us. In this candid and data-backed discussion, leaders in the grocery industry explore how burnout, confidence, and passion are deeply interconnected, and what happens when any of them is out of balance.

You'll hear personal stories and practical insights on what it takes to stay motivated in male-dominated spaces, how to rebuild confidence after setbacks, and how to reconnect with your passion when exhaustion sets in. We'll unpack how our environments shape our belief in ourselves, why so many women question whether they're "enough," and how to reclaim your energy, your voice, and your ambition.

This isn't about perfection or hustle culture, it's about finding sustainable strength. Whether you're leading a team, growing your career, or simply trying to keep going, this panel will give you tools to manage burnout, rekindle your drive, and build the kind of confidence that lasts.

Courtney Adams - Birdzi | Morgan Kahl, Sendik's Food Market | Kristy Lamontagna, Shipt | Tenneill McFarlane-Smart, Big Y Foods | Ashley Page, IGA

11:15-11:30am | **BREAK/SESSION TRANSITION**

11:30am-12:15pm | USA 2 Refresh A

THE DIGITAL ERA: OPTIMIZING OMNICHANNEL OPPORTUNITIES Advancements in technology are revolutionizing the grocery industry, bridging the gap between digital and in-store experiences for your customers. In this session, we'll explore the latest strategies for retailers to leverage omnichannel solutions to create seamless, personalized customer journeys, maximize operational efficiency for your teams, and drive loyalty. From innovative in-store tech to dynamic e-commerce platforms and data-driven insights, we'll dive into the tools and trends shaping the future of grocery. *Haley Sammis, Instacart*

11:30am-12:15pm | USA 2 Refresh B

BUILDING & LEADING DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE TEAMS As a leader you need to create a balanced team that can bring many skillsets and perspectives to the table to help you make decisions. You also then need to be prepared to grow and manage that diverse team. In this session you'll learn how to identify what diversity your team may need, how to seek it in your hiring process, and then best steps for building that team up.

Jenn Hahn, J Recruiting | Misty Kern, Food City

12:00-1:15pm | Plum Street Room, 2nd Floor

NETWORKING LUNCH & BREAK

1:30-2:15pm | USA 2 Refresh A

COMPLIANCE UNDER PRESSURE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW As the regulatory landscape rapidly evolves, independent grocery retailers are under increasing pressure to stay compliant while maintaining consumer trust and operational efficiency. From new traceability mandates in the supply chain to rising demands for ingredient transparency and growing labor complexity, retailers must be ready to respond—fast and smart.

Ann Visser-Depp - RespoiTrak | Meagan Nelson - SPINS | Karla Ash - Gelson's Market

1:30-2:00pm | USA 2 Refresh B

BEYOND THE TABLE: EMPOWERING WOMEN TO THRIVE & LEAD IN EVERY ROOM Success in the workplace isn't just about skill—it's about knowing how to show up, speak up, and stand out. In this empowering session, we go beyond surface-level advice to unpack the nuanced realities women face in professional environments.

Led by a dynamic trio of industry leaders, this session offers real-world guidance on how women can navigate professional settings with clarity and confidence—whether it's decoding the unspoken etiquette of a work dinner, making an impact at a conference, or striking the right tone at a networking event. Through candid insights, shared experiences, and actionable strategies, this session will help women not only find their seat at the table—but feel empowered to reshape it.

Kristin Popp - Woodmans Food Markets | Heidi Huff - Alliance Retail Group | Donna Zambo - Allegiance Retail Services | Brigid McGovern, Coca-Cola

2:15-2:30pm | **BREAK**

2:30-3:15pm | USA 2 Refresh A

DESIGNED TO DELIVER: ELEVATING THE IN-STORE EXPERIENCE As digital communication tools continue to evolve, it's easy to focus efforts online—but the in-store experience remains a powerful driver of connection, loyalty, and sales. This session spotlights how three retailers are putting fresh thinking into their stores—from eye-catching displays to digital tools that enhance engagement. You'll see real examples of how purposeful design and innovation are creating standout experiences—and learn how customers are responding. *Samantha Johnston, Clark's Market | Marcy Nathan, Rouses Supermarket | Jamie Collins, Dierbergs Markets | Brad Morris, Coca-Cola*

2:30-3:15pm | USA 2 Refresh B

THE MENTORSHIP MIRROR: REFLECT, GUIDE, GROW Whether you're guiding others or seeking guidance yourself, mentorship is a powerful force for personal and professional transformation. In this dynamic session, you'll gain practical, actionable tips for being both an effective mentor and a proactive mentee. Through personal stories from my own mentorship journey—both the triumphs and the lessons learned—you'll discover how meaningful connections can shape careers, build confidence, and create lasting impact. *Tracy Graham, EcoLab*

3:15-3:45pm | **BREAK/SESSION TRANSITION** Sponsored by AWG

3:45-4:45pm | Collective, 3rd Floor

RETAILER ROUNDTABLE: WOMEN LEADING CHANGE IN INDEPENDENT GROCERY This panel brings together trailblazing women grocers who are leading the industry with resilience, creativity, and innovation. They will share candid insights into the biggest issues affecting independent grocers today. From marketing tactics that build loyal customer bases, to operational improvements that reduce costs, to leadership lessons that empower teams, the conversation will focus on practical takeaways to drive growth and resilience in the independent grocery sector.

Jennifer Bosma, Harvest Market | Kelly Pearse, Sendik's Food Market | Kristie Maurer, Maurer's Market | Alice Kim, Nam Dae Mun Farmers Market | Moderated by John Ross, IGA, Inc.

4:45-5:15pm | Collective, 3rd Floor

RECAP & CLOSING REMARKS

Kristin Popp & Sheila Ebanks (Remarks)

5:30pm | **BUS LEAVES**

6:30-9:00pm | Starling Hotel

CLOSING CELEBRATION

WHAT'S THE BEST THING YOU LEARNED WHILE AT WGA SYMPOSIUM?

	PERSONAL	PROFESSIONAL
START		
STOP		
CONTINUE		

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY OR CHALLENGE YOU'RE CURRENTLY FOCUSED ON IN YOUR CAREER?

WHICH TYPE OF CONNECTIONS WILL BE MOST VALUABLE FOR YOU TO SEEK OUT HERE?

WHEN YOU LEAVE THIS CONFERENCE, WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

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SAVE THE DATES! DON'T MISS OUR NEXT NGA EVENTS



nga NATIONAL GROCERS ASSOCIATION

Executive Conference & Public Policy Summit

OCTOBER 20-22, 2025 | WASHINGTON D.C.



THE **nga** SHOW 2026

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



FEB 1 -3, 2026 | LAS VEGAS, NEVADA