

2025 Snack, Winter 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, February 18, 2025

Innovate X: Winning in Grocery

240 minutes

Tuesday, February 18th | 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Are you ready to elevate your brand and seize the opportunities in today's fast-paced marketplace?

Join us for a transformative event designed specifically for suppliers eager to thrive in a competitive landscape. This is your chance to gain invaluable insights from industry leaders providing actionable insights to help take your business to the next level.

The event InnovateX event fee is waived for ECRM participants. The series of educational sessions is included in your participation at the ECRM Session.

InnovateX is presented by MPG in partnership with ECRM.

Unleashing the Power of Social Commerce: Driving Omnichannel Growth with TikTok Shop

40 minutes

Bloomberg reported TikTok Shop expects to reach \$17.5 billion in sales by the end of 2024 and McKinsey projects the U.S. social commerce market to reach \$80 billion by 2025. Join us for this session where we will explore the key social commerce platforms, the fundamentals of how they all work, and help explain the essential building blocks for how to win and drive incremental revenue.

Oliver Bogner, Head of Social Commerce & Digital Strategy
MPG



From Aisle to Amazon: Amplifying Your Success on the World's Largest Marketplace

30 minutes

This working session is tailored for brands with success in brick-and-mortar or DTC channels that are ready to launch or improve performance on Amazon. It covers the critical steps for a successful Amazon entry, including the decision between 1P (first-party) and 3P (third-party) fulfillment models. We'll dive into listing optimization, branding, and advertising strategies, as well as evaluate the pros and cons of 1P and 3P models in terms of pricing control, inventory management, and customer reach. Attendees will leave with a clear framework for choosing the right fulfillment path, backed by actionable insights to drive sales and growth on Amazon.

Bryson Buck, Sr. Account Director eCommerce
MPG



Navigating Growth and Innovation: Insights from Whole Foods' Local and Emerging Brands Team

40 minutes

Join us for an insightful panel with Casey Gaston, Executive Leader, Local and Emerging Brands Team at Whole Foods Market, as she discusses her role and the unique enter Store Local and Emerging Brands Program, which helps identify and elevate emerging brands. Learn what sets Whole Foods apart from other retailers and the key factors for growing and scaling in this competitive landscape. Casey will also share insights into the latest trends shaping the industry and provide essential advice for new brands looking to succeed in the Whole Foods Market ecosystem.

Casey Gaston, Executive Leader, Local and Emerging Brands Team
Whole Foods Market



Unlock Growth: Strategic Capital Access and Scaling Insights for CPG Brands in a Competitive Landscape

45 minutes

This presentation explores strategies for consumer packaged goods (CPG) brands to access, leverage, and scale capital effectively to fuel business growth. Attendees will gain insights into the key funding options available—from venture capital to strategic partnerships—as well as best practices for making their brand attractive to investors. We'll discuss how to leverage capital to support scaling, innovation, and expansion, and cover how brands can build financial resilience in a competitive landscape. This session equips brand leaders with practical knowledge to navigate the complexities of capital management and unlock their growth potential in the CPG industry

Kathy Yuh, Vice President
VMF



Data, Analytics, & Storytelling for the Modern Merchant Mindset

30 minutes

The role of merchant has evolved rapidly over the past few years. With increased expectations from delivering an omnichannel experience to working cross-functionally to deliver lower costs, many merchants are finding less time to meet with suppliers. Therefore, building a data-centric story to either catch their attention and secure the meeting or help secure your item in distribution is critical. You need to break through the clutter by understanding what's meaningful for them and presenting the data in a compelling manner. In preparing for a retailer meeting, you should be familiar with their goals and strategies - and show how you can deliver meaningful results for them.

Heather Grantham, Vice President – SmartSights, Marketplace Intelligence Team
Lead
MPG



Marketing Transformation: How a Full Funnel Approach Unlocks Growth

40 minutes

Whether you are building an emerging business or looking to drive brand expansion, profitable consumer engagement is continuously changing and ever harder to attain. We will explore how brand building and performance marketing can complement each other, and how to strategically move consumers through the funnel by creating a complete commerce path of effective engagement. Walk away with a roadmap to transform your organization's mindset and priority initiatives!

Cheryl Policastro, VP Strategic Marketing & Communications Team
MPG



Driving Innovation and Supplier Growth in Grocery at Walmart

45 minutes

Tuesday, February 18th | 5:15 PM - 6:00 PM

Join Walmart's grocery merchant leaders for an in-depth panel discussion on how Walmart is shaping the future of grocery with a spotlight on center store categories, including pantry essentials, snacks, and beverages. As a recognized industry leader, Walmart continues to set the standard for innovation and supplier development, working hand-in-hand with partners to bring fresh, high-quality products to consumers. Panelists will share insights into Walmart's strategic approach to new product innovation, what it takes to succeed on Walmart shelves, and how suppliers can drive growth in these core categories. Don't miss this opportunity to hear directly from Walmart's grocery leadership on the evolving landscape of retail innovation and the collaborative journey to deliver value to customers.

Panelists Include: Heather Seymore, Merchandising VP, Salty Snacks | Shawn Townzen, VP, DMM, Pantry | Tasha Tandy, Walmart, Vice President - Merchandising, Breakfast, Baking & Commodities | Will McDonald, VP, DMM, Beverages

Walmart

Beyond the Basics: Trends Shaping Center Store Shopping

30 minutes

Join NIQ's Patrick Dougherty as he explores the latest trends in center store categories, including baking, spices, breakfast foods, canned, dry, and boxed foods, as well as condiments, sauces, spreads, and snacks this winter. In this session, Patrick will highlight emerging consumer preferences, innovative product developments, and market dynamics that are influencing these vital segments of the grocery store. Discover how trends in health and wellness, convenience, and flavor innovation are reshaping consumer choices and driving demand in the center store and snacking categories. This session is essential for industry professionals seeking to adapt their strategies to meet evolving shopper needs and capitalize on new opportunities in the winter market.



Patrick Dougherty, Director of SMB Acquisition
NielsenIQ