

# 2026 Future Leaders Mid-Year Meeting

Summary of Key Takeaways

Year:  
**2026**

Date:  
**April 9th**

Location:  
**Houston, Texas**



# The Myth of More

# 2026 Mid-Year Committee



# 200+ Future Leaders. One Focused Experience

All Challenging the “Myth of More”



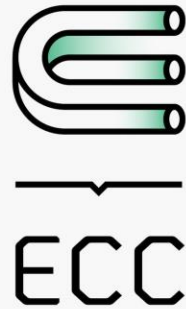
**200+**

Over 200 Future Leaders  
attended Mid-Year



**16**

Committee Members



**62+**

Teams Hours Went  
into Planning



**264+**

E-Mails Sent

# Mid-Year Meeting: The Myth of More Moments that Matter



# The Myth of More

Across industries, leaders are operating in a constant state of pressure—pressure to deliver, to adapt, to move faster. And the default response has become predictable: add more. More meetings, more tools, more initiatives. But here's the reality: the average executive now spends **23 hours per week in meetings**, and nearly **71% say they feel bogged down by them**. The result isn't better leadership, it's diluted focus. That's the tension behind *The Myth of More*: the belief that progress comes from adding, when it often comes from simplifying.

This year's sessions were intentionally designed to challenge that belief and refocus where it matters most. From how you show up through your personal brand, to how you collaborate, solve what's next, and understand influence, each speaker anchored a critical dimension of leadership. Together, they form a clear takeaway: focus isn't just a mindset, it's a strategic advantage. What follows is designed to help you reflect, apply, and move forward with clarity.



# Future Leaders Mid-Year Meeting – Speakers



**Dr. Thomas Karam, LSU Professor**

He is a Distinguished Instructor at LSU's E.J. Ourso College of Business, known for his interactive teaching on personal branding, media communication, and leadership presence. He has coached student-athletes in branding and media readiness for decades, and his session will help leaders understand how *effective communication and intentional self-presentation* unlock influence without adding noise. *on* unlock influence

Your leadership starts before you ever speak. Dr. Karam breaks down how your presence, communication, and consistency shape your personal brand — and how refining it creates influence, trust, and opportunity.



**Dr. John Sherk**

He delivers a highly engaging, self-awareness-driven leadership session that directly reinforces **The Myth of More**. His message challenges leaders to stop adding pressure and start gaining clarity — through reflection, honest feedback, and better conversations. John's interactive style, practical frameworks, and relatable stories create real “aha” moments that stick long after the session ends.

Strong leaders don't just react — they read the room. Dr. Sherk shares practical ways to build self-awareness, strengthen communication, and improve how you lead and connect with others in high-stakes environments.



**Captain Tyler Sykes**

He delivers a compelling session on adaptive leadership in uncertain and fast-changing environments. His message challenges the instinct to add more structure, more control, or more process during disruption. Instead, Tyler shows how clarity, trust, and disciplined decision-making enable teams to adapt and perform when it matters most — a perfect fit for this year's conference.

In high-risk environments, focus isn't optional — it's critical. Drawing from his experience as a Green Beret, Tyler shares how disciplined thinking, adaptability, and clarity under pressure drive results when the stakes are highest.

# MANAGING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND



**Dr. Thomas Karam**  
LSU Professor



## Executive Summary

Your leadership presence is already defined—whether you're intentional about it or not.

## Session Overview

This session focused on how likability, vocal delivery, and visual presence shape how leaders are perceived and how effectively they influence others

## Connect

LSU Profile: <https://www.lsu.edu/manSHIP/faculty/karam.php>

## Key Takeaways

- Your personal brand is built in everyday moments
- Likeability drives influence more than authority
- Delivery shapes how your message lands
- Your presence communicates before you speak
- Consistency builds long-term credibility

## What This Means For You

- Evaluate how you currently show up
- Be intentional with tone, pace, and clarity
- Align your appearance with your leadership message
- Actively seek feedback on perception

## Reflection

*What is one adjustment you can make immediately to improve how others experience your leadership?*

# MANAGING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND



# ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION UNDER UNCERTAINTY



**Captain Tyler Sykes**

US Army



## Executive Summary

Uncertainty isn't the obstacle—how your team responds to it is.

## Session Overview

This session explored how leaders build high-trust teams, evaluate risk, and drive innovation in rapidly changing environments.

## Connect

Email: [tylersykes08@gmail.com](mailto:tylersykes08@gmail.com)

## Key Takeaways

- High-performing teams rely on trust and clear intent
- Leaders must communicate the “why,” not control execution
- Innovation requires removing fear and encouraging initiative
- Risk should be evaluated—not avoided
- Capability comes from systems and people, not just tools

## What This Means For You

- Provide clear intent and desired outcomes
- Empower decision-making at the right level
- Encourage calculated experimentation
- Evaluate risk with logic and discipline

## Reflection

*Where are you holding too much control and limiting your team's ability to execute?*

# ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION UNDER UNCERTAINTY



# LEADERSHIP VERSUS EVERYTHING



**Dr. John Sherk**  
*Operations Laboratory*



## Executive Summary

Outcomes are not dictated by conditions—they are shaped by leadership.

## Session Overview

This session emphasized that leadership is the primary driver of results, with self-awareness as the foundation for growth and influence.

## Connect

Website: <https://operationslaboratory.com>

Dr. John Sherk is providing access to a beta tool designed to help you translate insight into action. This tool is built to guide you through identifying your next five priorities—not more tasks, but the *right* ones—so you can focus your time, energy, and leadership where it matters most.

 [Access the tool here](#)

## Key Takeaways

- Leadership drives the majority of outcomes
- External factors are secondary influences
- Self-awareness is the starting point for growth
- Influence is built through trust and consistency
- Leadership impacts retention, performance, and reputation

## What This Means For You

- Develop deeper self-awareness through feedback
- Take ownership of outcomes
- Strengthen trust through consistent communication
- Focus on both mindset and skillset

## Reflection

*If leadership drives outcomes, what do you need to change first in yourself?*

# LEADERSHIP VERSUS EVERYTHING



# The Focus in Action Challenge

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## Executive Summary

Pressure doesn't create problems—it reveals them.

## Session Overview

This exercise placed teams in a constrained, fast-moving environment where leadership, communication, and adaptability determined success.

### Key Takeaways

- Constraints expose how teams actually operate
- Clear roles improve execution
- Communication gaps appear quickly under pressure
- Adaptability outweighs perfect planning
- Structure and flexibility must work together

### What This Means For You

- Define roles and expectations early
- Communicate intent, not just tasks
- Build systems that allow quick adjustment
- Align before execution begins

### Reflection

*When pressure increases, does your team become more aligned or more chaotic?*

# About ECC

## **For over 50 years, the Engineering and Construction Contracting (ECC) Association**

has provided unique opportunities for industry pioneers and innovators to collaborate in a forum free from the daily demands and politics of business. Formed by owners, contractors, suppliers and academics in the engineering and construction business, the ECC aims to drive excellence and the long-term success of the industry through networking, innovation, and outreach.

### **The ECC Association provides:**

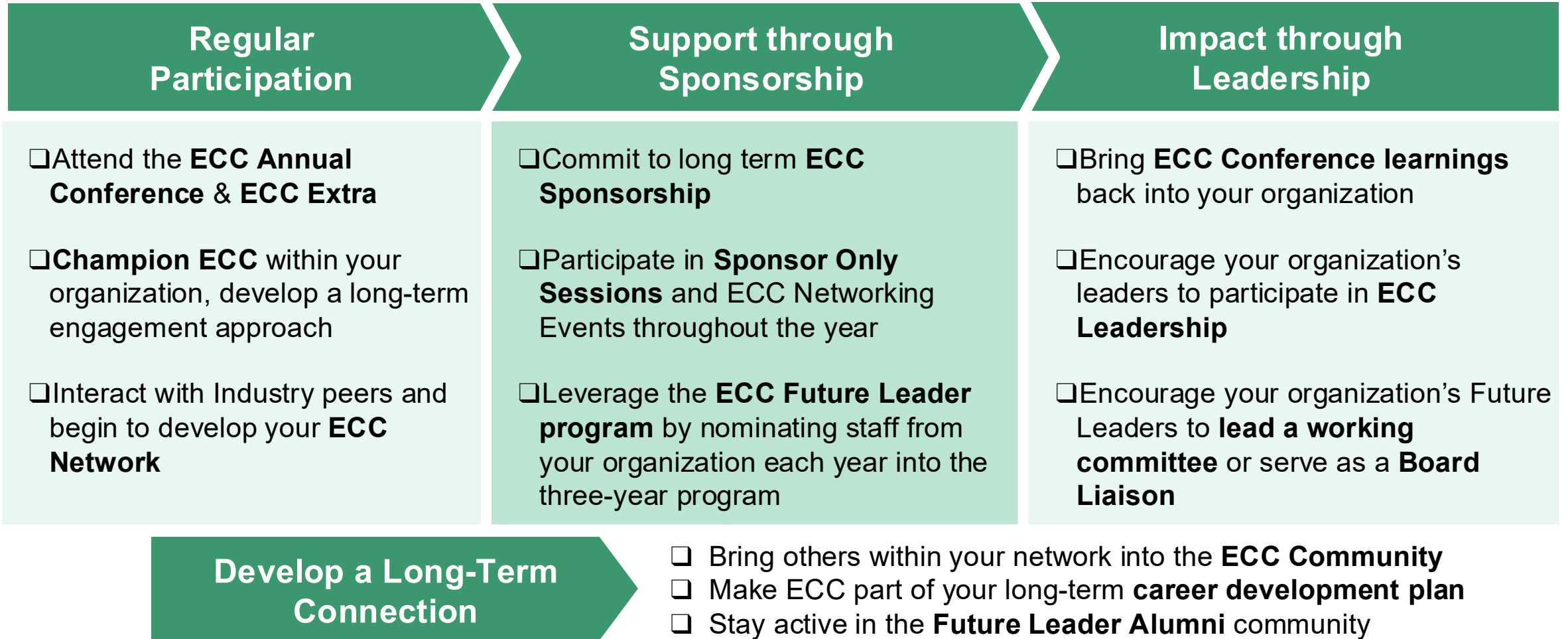
- Business-neutral platform for its diverse participants to come together outside the constraints of everyday business, to explore new paths, collaborate, exchange ideas, and gain perspective
- Honest, genuine peer-to-peer interaction that promotes better understanding to individual careers and company
- Source for real knowledge and skills that allow participants to be a leader and decision maker within their unique industry role



### **Annual Program Overview:**

- ECC Extra Single Day event in February
- Annual 3-Day ECC Conference held in September
- Sponsor Only Sessions and Future Leader program events held twice per year
- Numerous networking events throughout the year

# Progression of the ECC Experience & Next Steps



Visit the [ECC Website](#) for information [ECC Sponsorship](#), the [Future Leader Program](#) and more

# FORGING OUR FUTURE

58th Annual PerspECCTives Conference  
JW MARRIOTT • AUSTIN, TEXAS

SEPT 7-11, 2026



## 2026 PerspECCTives Conference

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Note: You must be logged in to your ECC portal to register for the Annual PerspECCTives Conference. If you do not have a login, please email [Info@eccassociation.org](mailto:Info@eccassociation.org).

[BOOK YOUR HOTEL ROOM HERE](#)

