

# COE 2026 SUMMIT

EXCELLENCE REWIRED

APRIL 7-9, 2026 | FAWCETT CENTER

As technology and disruption accelerate, it's time for visionary leaders to reexamine how we define and deliver operational excellence. Are you ready for smarter systems, sharper thinking, and stronger results?

The Ohio State University Center for Operational Excellence Summit, now in its 13th year, is a three-day event dedicated to connecting diverse industries to the latest best practices in leadership and continuous improvement. This year's Summit will explore how organizations are rewiring excellence with emerging tech, bold strategies, and future-ready thinking. Top authors, researchers, and lean practitioners will share insights on operationalizing AI, innovating processes, and navigating disruption with clarity and confidence.

With 4 engaging keynotes, 20 breakout sessions, and exclusive opportunities for networking and hands-on learning, the COE Summit is a high-impact opportunity to gain the skills and strategies you'll need to lead the charge into a new era of excellence.

## Tuesday, April 7 (Optional)

7 - 8 AM Breakfast

8 AM - 12 PM Workshops\*

See workshop options on page 2.

12 - 1 PM Lunch

1 - 4 PM Tours\*

See tour options on page 2.

*\*Workshops and tours are included in members-only All-Access Passes or available as add-on tickets after February 1.*

## Wednesday, April 8

7:30 - 8:30 AM Breakfast

8:30 - 9:45 AM Keynote 1

**AI-Powered Organizations: Redefining the Future of Work**, Dr. Melissa Valentine, Stanford Professor, Author, & Human-Centered AI Researcher

10 - 11 AM Breakout A

11:15 - 12:15 Breakout B

12:15 - 1:15 PM Lunch

1:15 - 2:15 PM Breakout C

2:30 - 4 PM Keynote 2

**Make Bold Possible™: Building the Bold Net So People and Innovation Thrive**, Kathy Klotz-Guest, Author, Tech Leader, & Comedian

4 - 5:30 PM Reception

## Thursday, April 9

7:30 - 8:30 AM Breakfast

8:30 - 9:45 AM Keynote 3

**The Focus Framework: Driving Operational Excellence and Transformation at Huntington**, Prashant Nateri, EVP & Chief Corporate Operations Officer at Huntington, with Dr. Aravind Chandrasekaran, Fisher College of Business Interim Dean

10 - 11 AM Breakout D

11:15 - 12:15 Breakout E

12:15 - 1:15 PM Lunch

1:15 - 2:30 PM Keynote 4 & Conference Close

**The Myth of the Fearless Leader: Exposing a Path Beyond Fight, Flight or Freeze**, Dr. Tonya Jackman Hampton, Accomplished People Leader, Founder, & Author

## 4/7 Workshop Options

**Get READY for Rapid Change: Simplify and Accelerate Organizational Change**, April Callis-Birchmeier, CEO of Springboard Consulting

**Leadership ReDEFYned: Disrupting the Status Quo with Authentic Power**, Tami Chapek, Founder & Head Coach of WelnspireWe

**Winning with Data: Sports-Driven Analytics for Ops Leaders**, Dr. John Draper, Fisher College of Business Clinical Associate Professor

**Customer Journey-Driven Problem Solving in an AI World**, Michael Fruhling, CEO & Founder of BFS Innovations

**The Art of Building an Adaptive Culture**, Julia Geisman, Chief Human Infrastructure Architect at HiWorks Solutions

**Sherlock Holmes: Zombie Hunter Lean Simulation**, Peg Pennington, President of MoreSteam

**Flow Engineering: Mapping Knowledge Work, AI, and Operational Performance for Flow**, Steve Pereira, Lead Consultant for Visible Flow Consulting

**Building an Effective Hoshin Plan for Your Team**, Jason Risser, Lean Practitioner & Technology Delivery Leader, and Michelle Risser, Therapist & Consultant

**Observing Work for Deep Insight: Practical SMED**, Master Black Belt and Owner of CI Solutions

## 4/7 Tour Options

**Central Library Consortium Operations**, the facility that processes material requests and logistics across 18 independent library systems

**Cologix Data Centers**, AI-ready, industry-leading facilities that house “the cloud” as well as the generators and cooling systems required to keep it running

**Coca-Cola Distribution Facility**, a 60-acre campus with a 400K-square-foot warehouse facility, plus an equipment services facility and fleet shop

**Edge Innovation Hub**, a collaborative home for food automation and technology companies established by Donatos Pizza founder Jim Grote

**Elford Airport Construction Site**, a behind-the-scenes look into the \$1.6 billion New Terminal project at the John Glenn Columbus International Airport

**Mettler Toledo Americas Hub**, production and distribution facility for the global leader in precision instruments and services

**Mills James Media Operations**, offices, studios, and warehouse space for a world-class creative agency and production company

**OSU Dining Operations & Automation**, the operations hub where Ohio State food delivery robots are maintained and dispatched

**Path Robotics**, facility that develops AI-powered robotic systems for autonomous welding

**Scotts Miracle-Gro Plant**, manufacturing facilities where fertilizer and grass seed are packaged and prepared for distribution and consumer purchase

## 4/8-9 Breakouts Preview

**Driving Strategy as a Leader**, Tim Bath, Rumpke Waste & Recycling

**Why AI Fails to Deliver ROI: A Practical System for Making It Work**, Sandeep Chennikara & Blake Mohseni, Discover

**A Culture of Contribution: Thriving in a Hybrid World**, Elisabeth Galperin, Peak Productivity

**Empowering 35,000 Frontline Problem Solvers through Lean Daily Management**, Michelle Gauntner & Melanie Yoder, OhioHealth

**Leading Teams Through Uncertainty and Change**, Rick Grambo, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

**An OpEx Learning Journey: From Purpose to Self-Sustainment**, Nathan Greaves & Nathan Thorpe, Crown Equipment

**Digging Deeper: How Data Mining Fuels Your CI Strategy**, Anna Karousis, Quantum Health, & Heather Perfors, T. Marzetti

**Failure Is Not an Option: Building a CI Culture at NiSource**, Abby Lauer, Joe Marinello & Chelsea Garrett, NiSource

**Waste Elimination by Keeping Improvement Local**, Chad Smith, CI Solutions

**Rapid Problem Solving: A Lean Six Sigma-Inspired Hybrid for Fast, Effective Improvement**, Brett Wolf & Marcy Arango, Nationwide

**Navigating Transformation, Change, and Disruption**, Devon Wood & Lisa Rogers, Fisher Management Partners

*This agenda and its session options are subject to change.*