



**Catersource
+ The Special Event**
by informa...

Speaker Guide

March 3–5, 2026 • Los Angeles, CA

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Catersource
+The Special Event
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Welcome!

Welcome • How we work together •
Timeline overview

Welcome!

Thank you for sharing your industry expertise, talent, and time to inspire and inform catering and event professionals from around the globe. You are very important to the success of our event, and I hope you know how much we appreciate you!

We're excited to be in Los Angeles in 2026, as it begins building toward hosting the FIFA World Cup later that summer in 2026, the Super Bowl in 2027, and Summer Olympics in 2028, while also recovering from the damaging fires of early 2025. It's an exciting time for the city and we are smack in the middle of downtown proper with the Grammy Museum and other sights just steps away, incredible restaurants, LA Live, and a host of opportunities to network and build your own business.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the process, but I have hopefully covered most of the details in this document.

Cheers!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'K'.

Director of Community & Content Strategy, Catersource + The Special Event



How We Work Together

Our goal at Catersource + The Special Event is to provide attendees with a high-value and positive learning experience, and to ensure you have a positive experience as a speaker. With that in mind, we will:

- Provide guidance and/or feedback on your session's first draft
- Share best practices and resources for speaking and presenting
- Promote your session across various digital platforms
- Provide you with promotional tools to help elevate your session to your own networks
- Maintain regular communication with you during the planning process, including sharing reminders and updates about speaker resources and deadlines
- Offer you a place to land onsite and prepare via our Speaker Ready Room Suite



How We Work Together

To help ensure we meet our mutual goals, we ask that you:

- Read speaker communications thoroughly and utilize the speaker resources available to you
- Commit to meeting deadlines and respond to requests from me as needed
- [Contact Kathleen](#) if you have any questions or need support at any point during the planning process.



Timeline Overview - 2025

August/September 2025: Deadline for breakout speaker confirmation. Notifications sent with a simple contract to agree to terms

October 2025:

- Scheduling of sessions begins, moving and rearranging so the content does not overlap in any one time slot.
- An emailed invitation to register as a speaker will be sent to you. I will also alert you that the email is on its way, along with the subject line to watch for. If you do not receive the link after my alert, please email CS-TSERegistration@informa.com and ask them to re-send the email.

November 2025: Sessions are finalized in our “Schedule Viewer” on [our website](#) for public viewing, and major promotion of sessions begins via marketing with an announcement

November 21, 2025: Super Early Bird cut off for registration. This does not affect your registration, but if you have colleagues who wish to attend the event, this is the best price available for Catersource + The Special Event



Timeline Overview - 2026

January 23–February 09, 2026: First draft of session(s) is due January 23. Reviews and any feedback provided will be done through February 09, 2026

January 30, 2026: Deadline to let Kathleen know whether you will have only a title slide. This is also your deadline to register for the conference.

February 23, 2026: Final drafts are due. Drafts will be uploaded to AV systems and tested prior to your arrival.

March 02–05, 2026:

- > Monday, March 02: *Venue excursions, Connect Social evening event*
- > Tuesday, March 03: *Education sessions (morning to early afternoon); Opening Keynote & Awards (mid-afternoon); Tradeshow floor open (mid-afternoon to early evening); Awards & Opening Night Party (early evening to late night)*
- > Wednesday, March 04: *Education sessions (morning); Tradeshow floor open (noon to late afternoon)*
- > Thursday, March 05: *Closing keynote (morning); Tradeshow floor open (morning to noon); Education sessions (early to mid-afternoon); afternoon Universal Studios excursion; Closing Night Celebration (early evening to late night)*





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Getting There

Address • Parking

Conference & Tradeshow Location

Los Angeles Convention Center: South Hall

1201 S. Figueroa St.

Los Angeles, CA 90015

Parking

The South Hall Parking Garage is easily accessible from major freeways and offers close parking for the Center.

General parking garage hours are 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily depending on current events and are subject to change. Flat rates of \$27 to \$42 apply, depending on event and parking location. All parking sales are final. No refunds or re-entry privileges.

Credit and debit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover) are accepted as payment at the garage entry kiosk. Cash or checks are not accepted.

The Los Angeles Convention Center can accommodate 5,600 vehicles. There are 20 EV charging stations available for electric cars - 12 in West Hall Parking Garage and eight in South Hall Parking Garage.





Programming Overview

**Attendee Overview • Tradeshow Floor
& EDU area maps • Education Overview
• Keynotes • Add'l meetups &
networking opportunities**

Attendee Overview

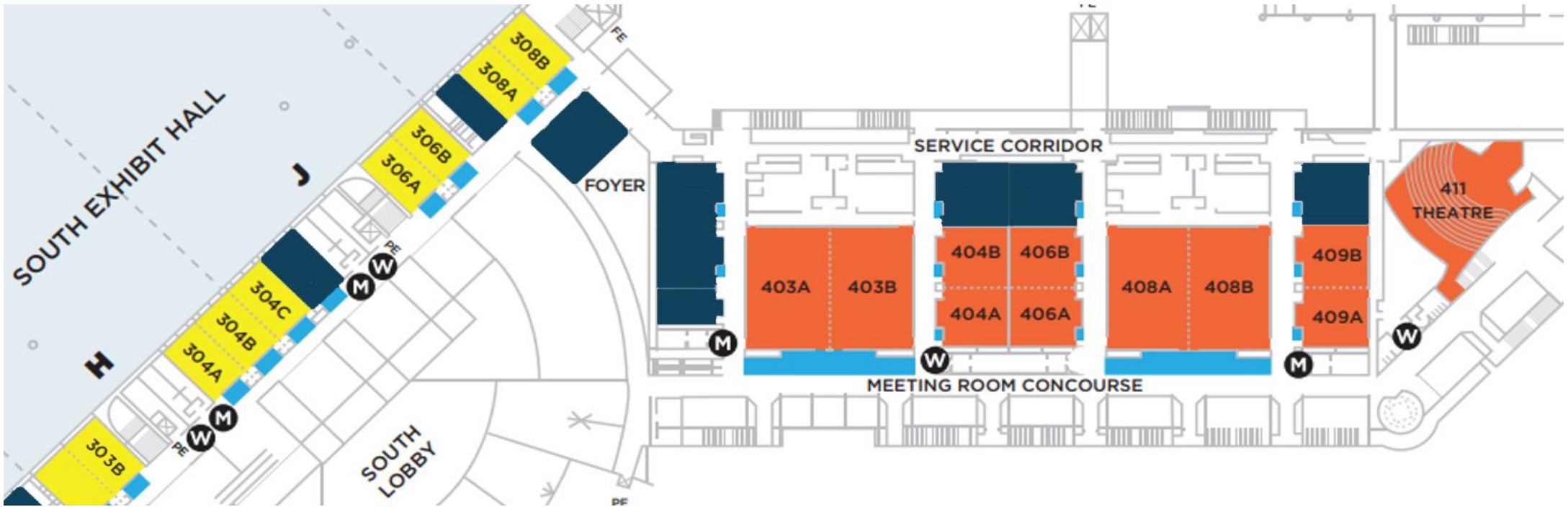
Catersource + The Special Event Conference & Tradeshow brings together **thousands of catering and event professionals and hundreds of suppliers** from around the globe to experience excellent educational seminars, inspiring evening events, and a lively tradeshow floor, all to celebrate catering and event excellence in the fabulous city of Los Angeles, CA in 2026!

On The Special Event side, event planners and producers, and owners/presidents make up almost two-thirds of the audience, with sales/marketing and “other” management filling in much of the rest.

On the Catersource side, catering professionals of all position levels and owners/presidents make up half, with sales/marketing and culinary positions taking the next highest ranking.

We host individuals who have been in the industry for decades and enjoy the networking and fresh educational ideas, along with new-to-the-industry attendees, eager to learn anything and everything.





Breakout session rooms

Breakout session rooms and speaker suite are on the second level of the Los Angeles Convention Center above the South lobby. See page 14 for a list of which conference goes in which room.



Education Overview: Sessions & Rooms

Session types:

- Over 100 breakout sessions varying in length from 30 to 60 minutes
- Two competitions (Diced culinary competition, Tablescape décor competition)
- Two keynote addresses

Conference rooms:

The Catersource conference will be held in rooms **304ABC, 306AB, 403A, 403B, and 404AB.**

The Special Event sessions will be held in **308AB, 406AB, 408AB, 409AB, and 411TH.**

There will also be education sessions on the tradeshow floor via the **Keynote** stage, **Ignite** stage, **Hands-on** area, and **Beverage Garden** stage.

Speaker suite is **303B.**



Education Overview: Seating & Stages

Conference seating capacity:

Room size determines seating capacity. Rooms will accommodate from 200-400 seats, theatre style. Keynote stage will accommodate 1000-2000 theatre style; Ignite stage about 75 per session (theatre), and Beverage Garden about 120 per session in classroom seating. Hands-on areas are typically standing room and/or cocktail tables, if only observing.

Stage & AV set up:

Wireless lav and handheld microphones will be made available. Presentation screen is set to accommodate 16:9 presentations; slide advancer provided. Podium will be set to the right or left of the stage. Solo speakers must request a stool or chair. Panels (up to four people per panel) will have chairs or stools at their disposal. Mic “runner” not always available; be sure to repeat any question you receive back to the audience. Confidence monitors are not available in the breakout rooms. Water bottles will be placed at the beginning of the day.





Keynote addresses

Both opening and closing keynotes
will be located on the tradeshow floor
Keynote & Competition stage.

All attendees and speakers are
allowed entrance to the keynotes.
Don't miss them, they're always great!

Tuesday, March 03, 2:30–3:30 p.m. -
Rich Bracken (*right*)

Thursday, March 05, 9:00-10:00 a.m.
- Julius Solaris (*left*)





Tradeshow floor

As noted, there will be three stages on the tradeshow floor and one hands-on area (see green areas marked with a blue dot). There is also a separate area for the Tablesaples competition and Tablesaples hands-on session.

Additional Meetups & Networking Opportunities

Meetups & 1:1s

Association and other meetups will be held throughout the event. 1:1 meetings will be on the tradeshow floor on Wed. and Thurs. Locations tbd

Tradeshow Floor Happy Hour

After the Tuesday keynote and awards, stay and stroll the tradeshow floor, cocktail (or mocktail) in hand during our hall happy hour.

Evening Events

Four evening events will be held: Connect Social (Monday), Opening Night celebration (Tuesday), Closing Night celebration (Thursday), as well as the annual SEARCH Foundation fundraising event (Wednesday). Your participation as a speaker provides you with a ticket to the Opening Night Party on Tuesday, March 03, and a discounted rate ticket for the Closing Night celebration.





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Speaker Resources

Speaker roles & session types • Speaker promotions • Best practices • Deadlines

Breakout Session Speakers

Thank you for your knowledge—and courage! Presenting on one's own—or even with a co-conspirator—can be daunting but with preparation, you will feel a lot more comfortable on stage. Here are some tips:

- **Prepare your presentation materials** (including handouts and resources) and upload the materials to the Speaker Dashboard.
- Once approved, **polish and finalize your session**, and then practice! The audience wants you to succeed but have little patience for ill-prepared speakers. If you know your content well and can speak comfortably and even off the cuff, you will win them over completely.
- Your **self-introduction** should be very short, as your bio is in the app and website, and most attendees do their homework before choosing a session. They know who you are and why you are qualified to teach.
- Your PowerPoint should not be filled with everything you plan to say. **Eyes should be on you** versus the screen, so keep your bullet points short and fill in the rest from your practiced speech.

(Note: If you are co-presenting, please work with your co-presenter(s) to decide who is responsible for preparing and managing presentation materials. Only one person from your session should upload materials to the dashboard.)



Fast Chat Session Speakers

These shorter sessions are a terrific opportunity to connect with your audience and use discussion as the driving point of your time together. Look at it as a dialogue, a back and forth with your attendees on a topic you are well-versed in. With attention spans dwindling, these 30-minute chats are refreshing and a perfect length for those who get “twitchy” sitting too long. Discussion and question-asking also keeps minds occupied and phones out of hands.

- You do not need to prepare a traditional PowerPoint presentation but we won't also discourage it. Just keep the slides simple to guide discussion.
- Be sure to **build your discussion around dialogue**: have questions that the audience can chime in on.
- Your **self-introduction** should be very short, as your bio is in the app and website, and most attendees do their homework before choosing a session. They know who you are and why you are qualified to teach.



Panel Discussions – Moderators & Panelists

Moderators are typically responsible for facilitating the panel discussion, outlining the panel discussion points in collaboration with the panelists, and preparing their panelists in advance of the session. Additionally, if you are using any presentation materials, moderators are usually responsible for preparing presentation materials, relevant handouts, or other materials and uploading the presentation to the Speaker Dashboard by the deadlines outlined. Moderators, for the most part, stand at the podium.

Panelists are usually not responsible for managing session content, preparing or uploading presentation materials, or uploading any handouts or resources, unless determined otherwise with your moderator. Your session contact or moderator will communicate with you directly and ensure everything is ready for your session. Panelists are typically seated.

Limit your panels to 4 persons at the most. Either one moderator and three panelists or four total panelists unless approved by Kathleen.



Culinary Demos

Any speaker leading a culinary demo is not required to prepare presentation materials, as the focus should be on the demo itself.

There will be a **live video feed** on the screens throughout the demo. Our IMag camera operator will do closeups of your hands and demo table as you present and also pull back to show you speaking.

Note: Anytime the AV team needs to toggle between your visuals and your live feed is tricky. The team will not know which is more important to feature or when to switch back unless directly cued by the speaker. This causes the demo to become somewhat disjointed.

However, if you would like to show visuals that support the demo's learning objectives, we recommend that you keep the visuals simple and use them sparingly.

Note: recipes and any additional materials you'd like to provide can be embedded as a PDF into your session description and accessed for download.

You will also need to provide a list of all materials you will need on stage to execute your demo. An **excel document** will be sent to you to complete.

Sampling of food item(s): Sampling of food items will only be available on the culinary or beverage stages on the exhibit hall floor. Please alert [Kathleen](#) if you want to provide a sample so you can be scheduled onto the proper stage.



Beverage Garden Demos

If you are teaching a session in the **Beverage Garden**, adding samples of your beverage is embraced. *Note: recipes and any additional materials you'd like to provide can be embedded as a PDF into your session description and accessed for download.*

- We prefer that all beverages are pre-set no later than five minutes prior to the start of your session.
- As this area is set classroom-style, multiple beverages can be included.
- We will have assistants on hand to help with set up and clean up. Passing of beverages during the session is discouraged for myriad reasons.

PowerPoint visuals are acceptable, if they follow the rules of a good presentation: simple bullet points, compelling high-resolution photos, and if video is being used, it must be embedded.

You will also need to provide a list of all materials you will need on stage to execute your demo. An excel document will be sent to you to complete.

Other sampling options: Instead of pre-placed beverages, beverages can also be disbursed at the end of your presentation via a “tasting table” station as people exit. More information will be provided to you after your session has been scheduled online.



Hands-on Sessions

Hands-on sessions can be a little bit chaos and a lot of fun for attendees. So that your session runs without a hitch, we will need a thorough list of props and/or ingredients you will require to accommodate participants, as well as a room set diagram. An excel document will be sent to you to complete for products, and we will ask about room set so we can draw it up for the operations team.

No PowerPoint visuals will be accommodated. The hands-on area will have audio capability, but not visual capability. However, we can upload any materials you would like to distribute onto our website and into our official show app for download.

We will need to finalize your needs no later than six weeks prior to the event, so we can order or rent anything you require (or ask for a substitution).



Diced Competition

Six chefs will compete in a live mystery box competition at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Each chef will have the same staple ingredients at their station as well as a limited pantry to pull from. The Mystery Box will have ingredients that chefs must use in some capacity. Chefs will have about 30+ minutes to prepare a total of four tasting plates featuring the mystery box ingredients and a concept they must embrace.

Once the “start bell” has been sounded chefs will open their boxes, access additional ingredients from the pantry, refrigerators, or shelves, and begin work.

For more information or to compete in the 2026 competition on Wednesday, March 4, [click here](#) to fill out a jotform expressing interest.



Speaker Promotions: Our Efforts

The best way to fill seats for your session is a solid two-fold promotional campaign.

How We Promote You

- Via social and other media marketing, we will promote Catersource + The Special Event breakout sessions across a variety of platforms: website, email, social media, and other possible narratives. We will also offer the opportunity for you to provide us with a short welcome video we can use on social media.
- If you send us your professional headshot, you may be included in one of our Instagram reels or email campaigns
- Attendees can view your session details, speaker profile, and additional materials uploaded to your session area on our show website via the [Schedule Builder](#), as well as on our CS+TSE app.



Speaker Promotions: Your Efforts

Promoting Yourself

- You will have access to Ingo, a social media site that builds various social media tiles you can place within your own social media efforts, as well as use as an email signature. Here are the links for InGo on LinkedIn and Facebook. You will also have immediate access once you register.

LinkedIn: <https://app.ingo.me/q/1i3ap>

Facebook: <https://app.ingo.me/q/et0pp>

- If you would like to contribute written or short video content to our media websites or social channels, please contact Kathleen.stoehr@informa.com. In tandem with website editors or social coordinators, she will assist in getting your content broadcast. Once on the site, it is eligible to be featured in our weekly e-newsletters or social channels.
- If you are having an issue accessing social media assets, please contact yara.eldaly@informa.com.



Best Practices

For more detailed information and helpful links, please access the Speaker Tips & Resources Tile.

In a nutshell:

- **Keep your PowerPoints brief.** Use short bullet points instead of full sentences whenever possible. We want the audience to have eyes on you, not reading the screen.
- **Practice your session** so if something major occurs, such as a glitch in your presentation or a stalled video, you can continue without notes or visuals.
- Ensure any images you use are **high resolution**. Low resolution images will pixilate on a large screen and look muddy, compromised, and unprofessional.
- **Embed all video**, you cannot trust that WIFI will work as needed
- **Do not “sell” your products or services** until, if you need to, your very last slide. You will lose your audience if the presentation appears self-serving.





Fit Check!

Wondering what you should wear on stage? Take a look at [this video](#) for some great tips (skip the annoying pre-commercial LOL).

Also note:

- **Not all stage surfaces are smooth.** Heels, especially, can get caught in stage surface module cracks, so if you choose to wear heels, a chunky rather than pencil thin heel is the way to go.
- **Will you be seated?** Clothing hitches up when you are seated. Ensure skirts/dresses are long enough to accommodate; that trousers are not too short (unless you have epic socks you want to show off).
- **Nice jeans are fine...** But please keep your worn or hole-riddled denim for your free time.
- **You will be wearing a lavalier mic, most likely.** Thin blouses tend to pull and sag under the (albeit light) weight of the equipment. Wear something that can accommodate the weight of a lapel mic & the equipment box (attached to the back of your outfit). *Note:* as in Will Guidara's outfit (*left*) from CS+TSE 2025, his lavalier is well masked in the dark shirt he chose.

Presentation Deadlines

- **January 23, 2026:** First draft of your session(s) is due January 23. Hands-on and culinary demo needs also due. Upload your session draft [here](#).
- **January 30, 2026:** Deadline to let Kathleen know whether you will have only a title slide (she will create one for you). This is also your deadline to register for the conference.
- **February 09, 2026:** Reviews and any feedback provided will be completed through February 09, 2026.
- **February 23, 2026:** Final drafts are due. Drafts will be uploaded to AV systems and tested prior to your arrival.
- **February 24, 2026:** Any finished sessions received after this date will not be accepted unless you have received permission from the conference team. Our AV and operations teams need time to transfer documents and test viability from this date until the conference. Bring your session on a thumb drive and arrive in the room at least 15 minutes before your session so AV can quickly transfer your material onto their hard drive.





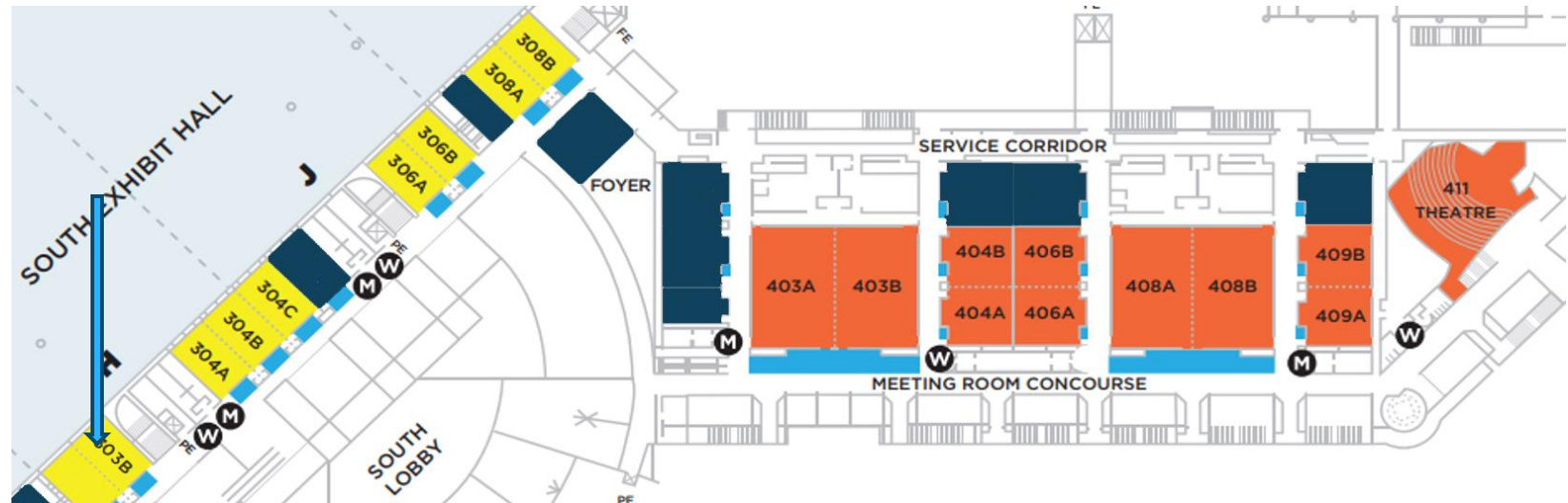
Onsite Resources

Speaker suite • Presentation Guidelines
& A/V

Speaker Suite: Room 303B

The speaker ready room suite will be open Tuesday, March 03 to Thursday, March 05 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Consider this your spot to connect with other speakers, find a quiet place to rest before or after your session, or hydrate. **See arrow** (far left) for exact location on the second floor of the Los Angeles Convention Center.



Presentation Guidelines

Presentation Guidelines

Your presentation must be in 16:9 format or converted to PDF 16:9 format. PowerPoint is preferred for best possible success when you are presenting.

If you do not plan to use slides during your session, [let us know](#) **no later than January 30, 2026** so we can create a title slide to display to the audience upon entry.

[Here is the link](#) to the official presentation template. Download it and view the many slide iterations available to you and then get to work!

Unsupported Presentation Formats

Keynote or Canva: Please export your presentation as a PowerPoint or PDF

Fonts

It is best to stick with the fonts in the official template, as they have been selected for best readability for a large audience. If you need a specialized font, please embed it into your presentation. For more on font embedding, [click here](#).



Presentation Guidelines

Good Rule of Thumb

Pull up pages from your PowerPoint and then step approximately four to five feet away from your computer (laptop) or seven to eight feet for a desktop. If you can't read your session clearly from that distance, the audience will not be able to read it either.

Additional Things to Avoid

- No type smaller than 18 point (for your reference, this is 16-point type, but it will not be displayed on a large screen as a presentation)
- Light colors as a background for white typography = difficult to read
- Stretching image to fit the space is a nope; low resolution images = not a good idea
- Lines of copy that extend the full width of the slide ☹️



Audio/Video

If you plan to use video or audio in your presentation, please see [this article](#) for file formats supported within PowerPoint.

Tip: Compress and embed your videos. If you have authored your PPT as a PPTX, there are tools within PowerPoint to do this automatically. Instructions can be found [here](#).

Note that a “bloated” presentation due to large video files may actually impede best performance when the video is running, without any clear visual improvement.

Internet Links

Internet bandwidth is never to be trusted in large conference venues. Do not embed clickable links into your presentation that rely on the internet. **If you need internet service, bring your own hotspot.**





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Hotel Booking

Official Housing Vendor

Reduced-rate lodging in Los Angeles through our partner, OnPeak, can be [found here](#). Our hotel blocks are convenient to the Los Angeles Convention Center and many other LA amenities.

We set aside a block of rooms at a special rate for attendees and speakers. Take advantage of our negotiated rate and stay where the action is—walkable to the Los Angeles Convention Center. CS+TSE has designated OnPeak as the official hotel provider for 2026.

OnPeak is Our Official Housing Vendor

Several housing agencies have presented themselves as hotel booking agencies for CS+TSE, contacting exhibitors and attendees to make hotel reservations using their services. OnPeak is the only official housing agent for CS+TSE. No other housing company or travel agency is authorized to place hotel reservations on behalf of CS+TSE. Reservations made through any other agency cannot be guaranteed and may result in additional charges, incorrect hotel placement, or inflated room rates. Please use the [OnPeak reservation link](#) to book your hotel.

If you need to reach OnPeak directly, please contact their Customer Contact Center at (855) 992-3353 or (312) 527-7300 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday Central.





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Contact Us

Your Questions Answered

About session content: kathleen.stoehr@informa.com

About registration: CS-TSERegistration@informa.com

About promotion and/or marketing: yara.eldaly@informa.com

About evening event sponsorship: jesse.parziale@informa.com

About the ACE & Gala awards: amber.kispert@informa.com

About exhibiting on the tradeshow floor:

- The Special Event: kevin.hacke@informa.com
- Catersource: devin.barnes@informa.com

About travel & hotel options: See “Hotel & Travel Information” tile or page 38 of this document.

