2026 Impulse, Front-End & Checklane 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.

Roundtables

45 minutes

Tuesday, February 3rd | 5:15 PM - 6:00 PM

This is a great networking event, giving participants the opportunity to discuss relevant industry topics in a round table format with fellow industry professionals sitting at the table.
Over the 45 minutes, participants can choose a table with an assigned topic to discuss. After 20 minutes, we will pause and ask everyone to switch to a second table topic.

- **The Digital Shelf & Physical Store: A Unified Strategy**
  - Discuss strategies on integrating online product information (content, reviews, images) and purchasing experiences with instore.
- **Driving Impulse: The Next Generation of Checklane & Front End Sales**
  - Where, how and what categories are driving the most profit in the modern store
- **Getting on-shelf: What Retailers REALLY need from Brands**
  - Discuss on best practices and partnerships that drive success for both retail and brands
- **The Changing Shopper: How Auto & Hardware Categories are Evolving?**
  - Discussion on how shift in consumer behavior-more DIY, younger buyers, online research- changes product selection and store layout.
- **Finding Margin in Innovative Ways to Increase Profit in General Merchandise**
  - Where are there opportunities to increase profits, outside of just rising prices?

***If you are interested in moderating, please contact Lisa Burkart at LBurkart@ecrm.marketgate.com

Supplier Spotlight Display in Hospitality - Stop by Anytime

60 minutes

Kick off the session in style! During the entire week, we'll feature Supplier Spotlights, a showcase where participating suppliers can spotlight one standout product for buyers to check out and vote on their favorites. It's free to participate for suppliers, and a great way to spark conversations and get your brand noticed right from day one. Buyers, be sure to stop by to check out and vote on the featured products throughout the reception!

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

General Merchandise Innovation Summit

510 minutes

Wednesday, February 4th | 10:00 AM 6:30 PM

The United Inventors Association x RangeMe General Merchandise Innovation Summit is set for February 4, 2026, at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa in Destin, FL.

General Merchandise Innovation Summit: Fireside Chat with Carmine Denisco, President, United Inventors Association

45 minutes

Wednesday, February 4th | 1:00 PM - 1:45 PM

From Prototype to Retail Shelf: What Inventors Really Need to Win

Turning a great idea into a product on the retail shelf takes more than passion and a patent. In this fireside chat, Carmine Denisco, President of the United Inventors Association, joins Wayne Bennett to walk through the real-world journey from first prototype to in-market success.

We'll unpack what inventors must have in place at each stage: smart validation before you spend, practical IP strategy, realistic costing and pricing, retail-ready packaging and branding, and the operational basics buyers expect. Carmine will share common mistakes that stall promising inventions—and the moves that separate hobby projects from scalable businesses.

Inventors will leave with a clear, honest roadmap and tangible next steps to get closer to the shelf.

Carmine Denisco, President
United Innovators Association

General Merchandise Innovation Summit: The “They Can’t Ignore You” DTC & 3PL Blueprint, Mike Hornigold, Founder, Deep Blue Commerce

45 minutes

Wednesday, February 4th | 1:00 PM - 1:45 PM

In this session, you’ll learn how to build a high-converting DTC engine and plug into the right “white-glove” 3PL so your growth doesn’t stall when orders start to scale. We’ll break down the core moves every new brand should make—launching DTC as your brand HQ, using marketplaces for validation, and locking in a startup-friendly 3PL that can handle bundles, sampling, and multi-channel fulfillment. You’ll leave with a clear 4-step action plan to optimize your DTC, avoid costly 3PL mistakes, and get retail-ready faster.

Mike Hornigold, Founder
Deep Blue Commerce

General Merchandise Innovation Summit: Creating a Hard Hitting Pitch Deck, Presented By Tia Ellis, Founder Wildflower Insight

45 minutes

Wednesday, February 4th | 2:30 PM - 3:15 PM

In this power-packed session, Tia Ellis breaks down exactly what buyers, investors, and retail partners need to see in a pitch deck to take you seriously. She’ll show you how to sharpen your story, highlight the right data, and structure a hard-hitting deck that grabs attention, answers tough questions, and drives decisions. If you’re ready to move from “interesting” to “in,” this is your roadmap.

Tia Ellis, Founder
Wildflower Insight

General Merchandise Innovation Summit: Inside the Buyer's Mind - A RangeMe Insights Presentation, Presented By Wayne Bennett

30 minutes

Wednesday, February 4th | 3:30 PM - 4:00 PM

In this session, RangeMe will pull back the curtain on how retailers are discovering and engaging with **GM brands** on the platform. See real data on buyer search behavior, saves, follows, and messages—and what those signals really mean for interest and intent. You'll walk away with clear steps to optimize your profile, content, and outreach so you show up where buyers are looking and turn digital interest into real opportunities.

Wayne Bennett, SVP Retail
ECRM/RangeMe

General Merchandise Innovation Summit: Panel Discussion with Leading Retailers -What it Takes to Be Retail Ready

45 minutes

Wednesday, February 4th | 5:00 PM - 5:45 PM

Join merchandising leaders from Tractor Supply, ACE Hardware, and Dunham's Sporting Goods for a straight-talk conversation on what it really takes for brands to win in today's general merchandise marketplace. They'll share how they evaluate new products, what gets a buyer's attention, and the capabilities they expect from supplier partners. If you want to turn a great idea into real distribution and repeat sales, this is the playbook you can't afford to miss at the GM Innovation Summit

Supplier Showcase and Product Discovery Event

60 minutes

Wednesday, February 4th | 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Join us for a fun and interactive evening where suppliers have the opportunity to showcase their products to all attending buyers in a relaxed, social setting.

Each supplier will bring one featured product to display during the event. Tables will be provided, and buyers can mingle, sip, and explore the latest offerings across the Impulse, Hardware, and Outdoor categories.

No sign-up required — just stop by, connect, and enjoy the evening!