

2026 Foodservice, Spring 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.

Monday, April 20, 2026

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 (shelf-stable products or packaging only) 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!

The Wellness-Driven Future of Frozen, Bakery, Deli & Dairy

30 minutes

Tuesday, April 21st | 5:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Innovations in health and wellness are transforming how shoppers connect with frozen, bakery, deli, and dairy products. From the cultural momentum behind GLP-1 medications to rising demands for cleaner ingredients, sustainable practices, and functional nutrition, consumers are redefining what “better-for-you” really means. Armed with NIQ’s latest market and consumer intelligence, this session dives into the cutting-edge trends shaping retail demand—and reveals how these categories can innovate faster to stay aligned with where shoppers are heading next.



Colleen McGinnis, Director, SMB Sales
NIQ

Roundtables

45 minutes

Tuesday, April 21st | 5:45 PM - 6:30 PM

1. The Value Equation: Balancing Cost Pressures Without Sacrificing Quality

Focus:

- How operators are navigating inflation, labor costs, and tighter budgets
- Reformulation, portion optimization, and smart sourcing strategies
- Where suppliers can add value beyond price
- Case studies of cost-saving partnerships that didn't compromise quality

2. Menu Innovation That Drives Traffic & Participation

Focus:

- Limited-time offers (LTOs) and seasonal rotations
- Global flavors and cultural authenticity on campus

- Data-driven menu decisions
- Turning trends into operationally executable menu items

3. Customer Perception: Does Sustainable Packaging Drive Loyalty?

Focus:

- Do guests notice or care?
- How to communicate sustainability without greenwashing
- When it becomes a competitive advantage

4. The Protein Shift: Plant-Forward, Functional, and Performance-Based Eating

Focus:

- Growth of plant-forward and flexitarian demand
- High-protein, functional, and performance nutrition trends
- Clean-label protein innovation
- What operators are actually looking for vs. hype

5. AI, Data & Digital Tools in Foodservice Buying

Focus:

- How operators are using data to inform purchasing
- Forecasting, inventory optimization, and waste reduction
- Supplier data transparency and digital sell sheets
- Leveraging technology to strengthen buyer-supplier collaboration

The BAM Blueprint - Turning Sponsorships into Sales

20 minutes

Wednesday, April 22nd | 8:00 AM - 8:20 AM

*In a 2026 marketplace saturated with omnichannel noise, the most critical gap for a brand to bridge is the "Last Mile." Traditional awareness is no longer enough; **sales velocity** is the only victory lane that matters. Join the leadership of Brand Activation Maximizer (BAM) for a strategic masterclass on the **BAM Blueprint TM**—a proprietary "Sponsorship-to-Sales" architecture designed to transform consumer passion into measurable momentum across every vertical.*

Our Blueprint connects high-emotion triggers—such as a NASCAR pit stop or a mobile marketing unit —directly to the professional kitchen and the shopper's countertop.

Kris Parlett, Communications Director
Brand Activation Maximizer, LLC

