

TECH CONNECT™

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SPEAKER GUIDE



Abdenmour Abbas, PhD

Associate Professor

[University of Minnesota](#)

Founder and CTO

[Claros Technologies](#); and [Frontline Biotechnologies](#)

Dr. Abbas is co-presenting “Translating Research to Solve Problems” at 2:15 p.m.

Abdenmour Abbas is a Professor of Nanotechnology at the University of Minnesota where he directs the Biosensors and Bionanotechnology laboratory. He is also the Founder and Chief Technology Officer of Claros Technologies Inc., an advanced materials company in 2018, and Frontline Biotechnologies Inc., a biological purification company in 2021. Dr. Abbas published over 50 scientific publications and 15 patents and is the recipient of the MIT Technology Review Award for the Top 10 Innovators under the age of 35.



Shaina Abraham

Right Track Program Director

[City of Saint Paul](#)

Shaina is a conversation leader at 1:15 p.m. in the Tech Talent Discussion Room.

Shaina is the program director for Right Track, Saint Paul's youth employment and training program. Shaina has over twenty years of experience working with young people and is dedicated to promoting life-long learning. Shaina has her Master's Degree in Youth Development Leadership from the University of Minnesota. Over the years, Shaina has built and supported youth employment and youth development programs, while supporting youth work professionals.



Teddy Bekele

SVP, Chief Technology Officer

[Land O'Lakes](#)

Teddy is a panelist at the 3 p.m. Executive Roundtable Closing Session.

Teddy is the Chief Technology Officer at Land O'Lakes, Inc. He has a passion for researching, developing and implementing innovative technology solutions to help retailers and farmers produce more nutritious food while using fewer resources in new and sustainable ways. Prior to joining Land O'Lakes, Teddy held several leadership roles at Ingersoll Rand where he led teams in IT Program Management, developed technology strategies for Engineering and Innovation, and custom software development.

He holds an MBA from Indiana University and a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from North Carolina State University. Most recently, he was appointed as Chairman of the Minnesota Broadband Task Force as well as Chairman of the FCC Task Force for Precision Agriculture Connectivity and Adoption. Teddy is a thought leader in emerging technology. He has been featured in the media including Fortune, ComputerWorld, MIT Sloan Management Review, BBC and 60 Minutes. In 2017, was selected as a Minnesotan to Meet by WCCO.

He has lived in three different continents and speaks fluent Italian and Amharic. He currently lives in Minneapolis, MN with his wife Michele, son Teddy Jr. and daughter Luna.



Zach Brand

Senior Director of Connected Solutions Delivery

[Crossfuze/Virteva](#)

Zach is presenting "Enabling the Future of Work" at 1:15 p.m.

Zach Brand is the Senior Director of Delivery at Virteva, where he leads the company's IT Managed Services and Professional Services delivery. In this role, he enjoys partnering with people that are interested in continuous improvement and how technology can enable people to do their best work. His team is responsible for serving organizations that rely on Virteva to deliver expertise around Customer Experience, Modern Workplace, and IT Security. He also is an MBA student at St. Thomas University focusing on strategy, marketing, and leadership. Zach serves on the CompTIA Tech Career Academy National Advisory Board and the Advisory Board at Hennepin Technical Community College. In 2018, Zach completed the ACE Leadership Program through MnTech.



Angelia (Angie) Brekke

President, Dev10

[Genesis10](#)

Angie is a conversation leader at 2:15 p.m. in the Tech Talent Discussion Room.

Angie Brekke is the Managing Director of Genesis10's Minnesota operation, and President of Dev10, Genesis10's Talent Creation program. She is responsible for client satisfaction and strategic growth. Brekke has strong ties within the Twin Cities business community with senior leadership experience at Analysts International, Fingerhut, and Ernst & Young. She has served as a board member of the Minnesota High Tech Association. Nationally, Brekke provides leadership and direction for Genesis10's diverse portfolio of business and technology talent management services, receiving recognition by the Department of Defense for her executive support of the company's veterans program. In 2022, Twin Cities Business named her to its Notable Women in Technology list. In 2018 and 2019, she was named to The Minnesota 500—The Most Powerful Business Leaders in Minnesota.



Melvin Carter

Mayor
[City of Saint Paul](#)

Mayor Carter is a guest speaker at the 8:30 a.m. Opening Session.

A fourth-generation Saint Paul resident, Mayor Carter leads with an unapologetic equity agenda. Since taking office in 2018, his accomplishments include raising the city's minimum wage; tripling free program in rec centers; eliminating late fines in public libraries; reestablishing an Affordable Housing Trust Fund; expanding immigrant & refugee support resources; and launching an Office of Financial Empowerment. One signature initiative is CollegeBound Saint Paul, Mayor Carter's plan to start every child born in the city with a \$50 College Savings Account, starting January 1, 2020.

Passionate about helping others engage in civic processes, Mayor Carter has trained progressive activists and candidates in over 30 states, and commonly recites his administration's mantra: "Building a city that works for us all means we all must do the work."

Prior to his election in 2017, Mayor Carter has served as a Saint Paul City Council Member; Founding Board Chair of the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood; Director of the Minnesota Office of Early Learning; and Executive Director of the Minnesota Children's Cabinet.

A proud graduate of the Saint Paul public schools, Mayor Carter holds a Bachelor's Degree in business administration from Florida A&M University and a Master of Public Policy from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. He resides in Saint Paul with his wife, Dr. Sakeena Futrell-Carter, and their children.



Martha Cotton

Managing Director and Global Co-Lead, Fjord, part of Accenture Song
[Accenture](#)

Martha is a keynote speaker at the 8:30 a.m. Opening Session.

Martha is a Managing Director with Accenture and is the global co -lead for Fjord . She has over twenty years of consulting experience, working as an applied ethnographer across multiple industries and collaborating with a range of practitioners including designers, engineers, business analysts, marcomms, and brand strategists . Prior to joining Fjord, she was a partner at gravitytank and led the Design Research practice . She also served as gravitytank's CMO for two years . Past experience also includes leadership roles at HLB, Hall & Partners and Sapien . Martha is on the faculty of Northwestern University's MMM program –the Kellogg School of Management's marquee Design Thinking degree –where she developed and now teaches the Design Research curriculum . A frequent writer and speaker on the intersection of anthropology and business, Martha's article "The Shelf Life of Data" appears in "The Handbook of Anthropology in Business" (LeftCoast Press, 2014 . Denny, Sunderland editors) . She holds a BA in English from Indiana University and an MA in Performance Studies from Northwestern University . She is also the author of "Dinner Dates : A Cookbook for Couples Cooking Together" (Avon Books 1999) .

Martha has spent her career studying how everyday people engage with products, services and brands, as well as helping her clients work differently and with a human - centered lens . She has conducted deep ethnographic research around

the globe and across every industry you could imagine from Automotive to Zippers and everything in between . As she helps her clients succeed in with their innovation portfolios, much of her work also includes a focus on corporate culture change and helping organizations learn how to get out of their own way so they can be successful in their innovation goals .



Tammy Dickinson

Step Up Director
[City of Minneapolis](#)

Tammy is a conversation leader at 1:15 p.m. in the Tech Talent Discussion Room.

Tammy currently leads the nationally recognized Step Up internship program at the City of Minneapolis, and has more than 25 years of experience leading workforce development initiatives in the Twin Cities. Prior to her work with Step Up, she led Career Pathways at the City of Minneapolis, including the MSP TechHire initiative, a collaborative of accelerated training providers and local government focused on increasing the number of skilled, diverse talented professionals for the region.



Theresa Dolezal

IT Portfolio Lead
[Xcel Energy](#)

Theresa is speaking at "Building a Bright Future Through Technology Transformation at Xcel Energy" at 10:15 a.m.

Theresa Dolezal is a context driven communication strategist, supporting progress across multiple areas within the technology team at Xcel Energy. Theresa believes trust and win-win situations are the basis for all positive progress and relationship development.

Currently, Theresa supports senior leaders with comprehensive communications strategies and an agile mindset, taking a lead role in ensuring visibility to the innovative ideas and projects impacting the technology strategy at Xcel Energy. Theresa's areas of expertise include business case development, strategic communication planning, business improvement, product ownership, stakeholder relationships and organizational change management.

Prior to joining Xcel Energy, Theresa worked as a consultant and area director supporting initiatives in health, wellness and youth leadership. Theresa is originally from Minnesota and is thrilled to be able to split her time between Minnesota (summer on lakes) and Denver (winter in mountains). She has great passion for travel, learning and new adventures!

Theresa holds a Master of Arts in Community Psychology from Metropolitan State University and a Masters of Business Communication Certificate from the University of St. Thomas. Theresa graduated with a bachelors from Hamline University.



Julie Durham
Chief Technology Officer
[UnitedHealthcare](#)

Julie is a panelist at the 3 p.m. Executive Roundtable Closing Session.

Julie is a passionate and accomplished Sr. Executive with exceptional experience, and proven record of success creating cutting-edge technology to drive business transformation and strategic growth for Fortune 50 organizations.

20+ years of leading global technology teams with a focus on software and new product development via multiple CIO/CTO roles leading global teams with up to 2,000 professionals delivering platforms and products spanning Digital, E-Commerce, AI, ERP, Marketing/CRM, Supply Chain and cloud powered Big Data Analytics across diverse industries and locations including Asia, Middle East, Europe, North and South America.

She is currently serving as the Chief Technology Officer for United HealthCare, where she is responsible for strategy and execution of \$3.0B of technology investments that drive UHC \$200B Revenue globally. Julie has been with United Health Group Since 2016. Prior to her UHC CTO role, she was the CTO For Optum Payment Integrity and Optum Connect where she served on senior pursuit team that led M&A integration of Equian for \$3.2B. She also created the first AI Platform & Transformation team for UHG. Recognized as executive top talent and completed exclusive General Management Program in 2019 in conjunction with Harvard and Stanford. Former employers and clients include Best Buy, SAP, Nike, Apple, Al-Futtaim, ExxonMobil and GE.

Julie brings an innovative and entrepreneurial approach, with the ability to influence and create consensus at the 'C-level' providing leadership in ambiguous, innovative, fast-paced, complex corporate structures. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Information Systems & Finance from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY. And currently resides in the Chanhassen MN, with her Partner Sandy and her two children.



Jesse Erdmann
Systems Architect
[University of Minnesota](#)

Jesse is-co-presenting "Translating Research to Solve Problems" at 2:15 p.m.

Jesse is the Systems Architect for the GEMS agroinformatics platform and APIs. These services are used to enable public/private research partnerships in agriculture and related fields through secure data sharing, data access, computational and informatics resources. He has worked in research and supporting research across the domains of infosec, defense, biomedical informatics, bioinformatics, demography, and agroinformatics in both the private sector and academia. His career began with software engineering, but working on small research projects and at startups resulted in a broadening of skills and experiences into virtualization, data engineering, and wrapping it all together with systems architecture. Jesse's long term focus is helping scientists better leverage the tools and technologies available to them in their research.



John Ferguson

Senior Director, Solutions Architecture Americas

[OutSystems](#)

John is presenting "Burning Down the Backlog" at 11:20 a.m.

John has been a part of delivering great software for a variety of organizations for longer than he cares to admit. Whether it is helping guide large organizations on complex transformations or helping companies embrace software as a key differentiator, John finds great enjoyment in that satisfying "aha moment". In his current capacity at OutSystems, he and his team help customers connect the need to build software with the capability of doing it at scale.



Tawnya Fiedler

Vice President

[Xcel Energy](#)

Tawnya is speaking at "Building a Bright Future Through Technology Transformation at Xcel Energy" at 10:15 a.m.

Tawnya Fiedler is a vice president at Xcel Energy, leading Application Delivery, Advanced Grid and the Digital Operations Factory within the technology department. Tawnya has worked in Utility IT for the last six years. She's led technology efforts to deliver smart meters and new electric grid visibility, as well as solutions benefiting all Xcel Energy customers. Tawnya currently leads a team that is delivering the first Digital Operations Factory, driving significant business value savings to the organization.

Prior to Xcel Energy, Tawnya spent 23 years at Target, where she focused on in Data and Analytics through the development of the Customer Data warehouse and associated one to one marketing solutions. She also led inhouse delivery and support of Pharmacy and Merchandising applications.

Tawnya is an adjunct professor at Bethel University teaching Introduction to Technology and holds an MBA from the University of St. Thomas.



Josh Forsythe

Solutions Architect

[Verizon](#)

Josh is presenting "5G Wireless: Changing the World Around Us" at 10:15 a.m.

Josh Forsythe is a 20-year veteran of the wireless industry, starting with a regional carrier in southern Minnesota and, for the last 12 years, working with Verizon in the Twin Cities. Josh has worked in cell site design, solutions architecture, and business development and has seen networks evolve from 3G to 4G and now 5G!



Meryl Gibbs

Emerging Industries Leader

[Appian](#)

Meryl is presenting "The State of ESG: Where Technology is Improving Outcomes" at 11:20 a.m.

As an Emerging Industries Leader with 3 years of experience in the Appian Strategy Office, Meryl develops Appian's strategy and Go To Market in ESG, Net Carbon, Business Services and Real Estate. Prior to Appian, she worked as a business analyst at AgriDigital, an Australian AgTech and Blockchain startup, and as a Senior Consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton in the Strategic Innovation Group. She has a Bachelors in Environmental Engineering and a minor in Public Policy from MIT.



Ty Hollins

Chief Information Security Officer

[ProCircular](#)

Ty is presenting "Think Like a Jazz Musician" at 10:15 a.m.

Building and improving are the hallmarks of Ty Hollins's cybersecurity philosophy. Throughout his dynamic career, he approaches work with a focus on taking what exists – people, procedures, policies, technology – and helping them evolve to a new level of effectiveness. It is through helping people and organizations become better, safer, and more prepared that Hollins finds his greatest reward.

Brought up and educated in Europe, Hollins applies his diverse experience with a host of global organizations to help each client tailor data security and compliance policies to manage their specific level of risk. His guidance and leadership have helped countless, complex teams develop and implement comprehensive cybersecurity and compliance strategies involving numerous departments, vendors, tools, systems, subsidiaries, and nationalities all at once.



Allison Hubel, PhD

Professor, Mechanical Engineering; Director, BioCor; and Director of the Technology Leadership Institute

[University of Minnesota](#)

Dr. Hubel is-co-presenting "Translating Research to Solve Problems" at 2:15 p.m.

Dr. Hubel is a Professor in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Minnesota and Director of the Technology Leadership Institute. She is President-elect of the Society for Cryobiology. Dr. Hubel has studied both basic science and translational issues behind preservation. Her work spans from the study of molecular mechanisms of damage during preservation to the development of technology to improve preservation outcomes. She is currently Chief Science Officer of Evia Bio, a startup company based on the preservation technology developed in her lab. As co-PI for the MN-REACH commercialization hub and faculty lead for the U of MN Great Lakes I-Corps Hub site, Dr. Hubel has been involved in working with faculty interested in the commercialization of academic research. Dr. Hubel has published numerous scientific articles in the field of preservation, and she is the author of, "Preservation of Cells: a Practical Manual" published in 2018. She is a former deputy editor of Biopreservation and Biobanking and received the Outstanding Achievement in Biobanking Award from ISBER. She is a fellow of ASME and AIMBE and a National Blood Foundation Scholar.



Amy Hutsell

VP of Strategic Planning & Digital Operations

Thomson Reuters

Amy is a panelist at the 3 p.m. Executive Roundtable Closing Session.

Amy joins us from Thomson Reuters where she is the VP of Strategic Planning & Digital Operations. Thomson Reuters builds industry leading software and information solutions which underpin the legal industry, justice system, and accounting profession.

In her current role, she is responsible for the Project Management Office and driving the business operations and results for the Digital & Shared Capabilities organization. Her team leads projects that are transforming the way customers interact with Thomson Reuters digitally.

Prior to this role, Amy led a global team of about 200 technologists that developed software for Legal Professionals. Other roles at TR have all involved leading a diverse set of strategic programs in Technology.

Before joining Thomson Reuters in 2015, Amy held multiple leadership roles at the Star Tribune Media Company in Minneapolis, MN. She is passionate about leading change that will drive efficiencies & growth in the business.

Amy is a graduate of Purdue University. She has served as a strategic consultant for the Bundles of Love charity, which provides handmade items for newborns in need. She also enjoys volunteering with the Patrick Schoonover Foundation.



Marcus Johansson

Director

Xcel Energy

Marcus is speaking at “Building a Bright Future Through Technology Transformation at Xcel Energy” at 10:15 a.m.

Marcus Johansson is director of the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Delivery Program within Xcel Energy’s Advanced Grid Intelligence and Security (AGIS) initiative. AGIS is a multi-year initiative that impacts all of Xcel Energy’s customers. Marcus and his team work with enterprise partners to enable the technology to implement Xcel Energy’s grid modernization strategy. He leads his team modeling what builds a highly motivated, effective and successful team: collaboration and forward-looking leadership.

Marcus has led digital strategy transformation in hospitality, earned leadership awards in the medical device and health insurance industry, and Chairman Awards in the financial services industry. Career highlights include: divestiture initiatives at Ameriprise Financial, Pricing strategy play at Best Buy, digital transformation at Marriott and Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group. At Xcel Energy, prior to his work on the AGIS initiative, Marcus has led Cyber Security initiatives and Data and Analytics projects.

Marcus holds a bachelor’s degree in Computer Science and executive education on Digital Strategy and Innovation in Medical Devices from University of Minnesota – Carlson School of Management.



Erika Johnson

Director Supply Chain Technology

[Land O'Lakes](#)

Erika is co-presenting "Using Analytics in a Disrupted Supply Chain" at 1:15 p.m.

Erika Johnson has been with Land O'Lakes for 10 years holding various leadership positions supporting business functions ranging from sales and marketing to supply chain. Erika currently is a Supply Chain Technology Director, where she is focused on leading product teams to deliver new and support existing applications for Land O'Lakes Supply Chain. This includes key efforts focused on advancing Supply Chain automation and analytics. Prior to Land O'Lakes Erika held positions in demand planning, sales, marketing and strategy at Bobcat Company, Doosan Equipment, and Ingersoll Rand. These early roles are where Erika nurtured and developed a passion for process efficiency and optimization.



Kyle Jourdan

Sr. Manager, Solution Consulting (AutoML)

[Qlik](#)

Kyle is-presenting "Automated Machine Learning: Are You the Next Citizen Data Scientist" at 10:15 a.m.

With roots starting in the finance and accounting world, Kyle Jourdan found himself called back to his true passion: using structured languages to create solutions that revolutionize the way we do business. Today, he is at the forefront of improving the way that data and business analysts, developers, and engineers adopt AI and machine learning in their day-to-day business practices. Kyle applies the fundamentals of asking the right question, collecting and preparing the right data, or meaningfully applying the insights to day-to-day operations as he finds himself broadening the scope of machine learning applications every day!



Caroline Karanja

Director, Tech Inclusion Alliance

[Minnesota Technology Association](#)

Caroline is a conversation leader at 10:15 a.m. in the Tech Talent Discussion Room.

Caroline leads MNTech's Tech Inclusion Alliance, a CIO-led initiative focused on growing and developing a more diverse pool of technology talent in the Twin Cities community. Caroline is an accomplished author, speaker and entrepreneur. Caroline is passionate about making technology accessible to all as well as using tech as a path towards a more equitable society. As the CEO of Hack the Gap, she collaboratively creates pathways for more women, non-binary people, Black, Indigenous and Latinx technologists to get into and thrive in their tech careers. Through her work in Guided Pulse, she's partnered with organizations to implement DEI initiatives specific to their organizational needs.



Brian Kary

Director of Traffic Operations

[Minnesota Department of Transportation](#)

Brian is co-presenting "Technology and Transportation: How MnDOT Uses Technology to Manage Traffic" at 1:15 p.m.

Brian Kary has worked with the Minnesota Department of Transportation since 1999. His work with the department has included working in Freeway Operations, Traffic Analysis, and Traffic Incident Management. In his current position, Brian oversees the daily operations of the Regional Transportation Management Center, which includes the E-ZPass system, the FIRST program, and the deployment of new traffic management systems deployed for MnDOT.



Amy Kircher, DrPH

Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives

[University of Minnesota](#)

Dr. Kircher is co-presenting "Translating Research to Solve Problems" at 2:15 p.m.

Dr. Amy Kircher is the Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives in the Office of the Vice President for Research and Co-Director of the Strategic Partnerships and Research Collaborative (SPARC). She leads external research strategy and initiatives, including engagement with national labs and security concerns, government and public institutions, corporate entities, and international bodies. Her research portfolio includes identification and warning of system disruption through data fusion and analysis; supply chain characterization and assessment; and disaster preparedness.



Matthew Kissel

Manager, Risk Consulting

[RSM](#)

Matthew is presenting "Cloud Security and Risks of Working in the Cloud" at 2:15 p.m.

Matthew is responsible for the planning and execution of audit and consulting engagements. He specializes in IT control analysis and risk assessments, IT Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) implementation and testing, and System and Organization Controls (SOC) engagements. Matthew has experience in assisting clients develop, enhance and evaluate IT and business process controls. He has worked with clients representing a variety of industries.



Carly Knopick

Scrum Master

[Land O'Lakes](#)

Carly is co-presenting "Using Analytics in a Disrupted Supply Chain" at 1:15 p.m.

Carly Knopick has been with Land O'Lakes for 5 years holding various positions within their supply chain and technology teams. Carly is currently the Scrum Master for the Supply Chain Planning technology team, where she is focused on supporting the team to deliver and enhance solutions for demand and supply planning across the Dairy, Purina and WinField United businesses at Land O'Lakes.

Prior to this role, Carly held positions in operations, sourcing, and supply chain analytics where she developed an appreciation for collaboration and an agile mindset.



Jake Krings

VP – Marketing & Merchandise Engineering

[Target Corporation](#)

Jake is a panelist at the 3 p.m. Executive Roundtable Closing Session.

Jake Krings is a Vice President of Engineering, supporting Target's Marketing and Merchandising teams. Jake sponsors Target's Emerging Engineer Program and helped standup Target's pro bono consulting program, Target Tech4Good, which has now delivered over 20 pro bono technology projects nationally, many right in the Twin Cities. He also serves on the Minnesota Technology Association Board of Directors. Outside of work Jake enjoys being the outdoors and cheering on his two children who are competitive swimmers.



Peter Lutz

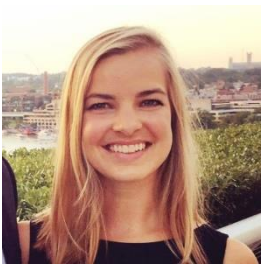
VP of Technology, Home & Community

[Optum Health](#)

Peter is co-presenting "Lessons in Shifting to a Product and Agile Centric Culture" at 1:15 p.m.

Peter's career has spanned Healthcare, Retail, and consulting. He has had the opportunity to lead complex initiatives from the introduction of speech recognition to the replacement of a Global Workforce Management System. In a recent role, Peter was charged with transforming the engineering and delivery teams supporting the Population Health Solutions business within Optum.

Over the last 20+ years Peter has worked at multiple divisions of UnitedHealth Group and Target Corporation. He has started organizations from scratch and built them to be over 300 resources strong, both on-shore and off-shore. He has also joined existing organizations and has a track record of delivery, developing talent and creating an engaging team environment.



Katie McClelland

Director, Public Policy & Research

[Minnesota Technology Association](#)

Katie is a conversation leader at 11:20 a.m. in the Tech Talent Discussion Room.

Katie McClelland is the Director of Policy & Research for the Minnesota Technology Association. Prior to MNTech, Katie led the workforce policy portfolio for the U.S. House Committee on Education & Labor and the Health, Education, Labor and Pension (HELP) Committee. Prior to her time on Capitol Hill, Katie held roles at The Manufacturing Institute, the nonprofit affiliate of The National Association of Manufacturers, Lumina Foundation and in the Minneapolis Public Schools and AchieveMPLS through AmeriCorps VISTA. Katie has led research on the future of work, employer engagement in workforce development initiatives, and strategies for attracting the next generation of students into STEM careers.



Tina Meeker

Sr. Director of Information Security
[Sleep Number](#)

Tina is presenting a breakout session at 1:15 p.m.

Tina is currently the Sr. Director of Information Security at Sleep Number Corporation and has held executive cybersecurity leadership positions at Best Buy, Shutterfly, and Target Corporation. Tina holds a B.A. in Organizational Behavior from St. Scholastica and an M.B.A. from Augsburg University. Tina also maintains an active CISSP certification and is an adjunct cybersecurity instructor at Dunwoody College in Minneapolis and serves on their Cybersecurity degree program advisory board. She is also currently the Vice President of the Minnesota Chapter of the WiCyS (Women in CyberSecurity) National Organization.

LinkedIn Profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/beaconsecurity/>



Kowsar D. Mohamed

Project Manager
[City of Saint Paul](#)

Kowsar is a conversation leader at 1:15 p.m. in the Tech Talent Discussion Room.

Kowsar is an economic development professional and strategy consultant in the MSP Region, currently serving as a Program Manager for the City of Saint Paul's MSP TechHire Program through the Full Stack Saint Paul Initiative. For the past 10 years, Kowsar has worked to build equitable public-private collaborations around corridor development, public interest design, and innovative workforce incubators. She's passionate about efforts that are reflective and supportive of surrounding communities and future generations. Kowsar holds a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, and a Certificate in Metropolitan Design from the College of Design at the University of Minnesota.

To learn more about the MSP TechHire Program, visit our site:
<https://www.stpaul.gov/msptechhire>

Also, stay up to date with Saint Paul Tech and Innovation News by subscribing to our Full Stack Newsletter: <https://rb.gy/nkizgf>



Dave Perrill

Co-Founder & CEO
[Compute North](#)

Dave is presenting "Advancing Sustainable Compute Infrastructure" at 2:15 p.m.

Dave Perrill is a 25-year veteran of the data center and information security industry. Dave has been keenly immersed in the cryptocurrency mining and blockchain industry since 2017. He is a three-time technology founder, including an Internet Service Provider/Managed Security Provider, SecureConnect, which was acquired by Trustwave Holdings in 2013. Dave is a sought-after speaker and has extensive experience in networking, data center engineering, blockchain technology, cryptocurrencies, energy, and security.

Dave was recognized as a "CEO To Know" in the Twin Cities in 2021 and as the CEO of the #1 Fastest Growing Private company in Minnesota by Minneapolis/St. Paul

Business Journal. He holds a BS in Management Information Systems and an MBA in Finance from the University of Minnesota. Dave has been a member of the Young Presidents Organization (YPO) since 2015 as part of the Twin Cities (Minneapolis, Minnesota) chapter.



Tom Rieger

Senior Solution Engineer

[Snowflake](#)

Tom is presenting “Having ‘Data Management’ as the New Utility” at 11:20 a.m.

Tom Rieger brings over 30 years in data management and data empowerment. He has spent 10 years as a developer of transactional and analytical information systems with the balance working for market leading firms like Informix, IBM, EMC and now Snowflake. Being hands-on in helping some of the largest clients in the world, Tom brings first-hand experience in understanding the drivers and impediments in making this next big move to cloud. Outside of his day job, he and his wife are raising 3 teenagers in Minnetonka with the oldest attending St Olaf College this fall.



Amy Roberts

Director of State Government Affairs

[Code.org](#)

Amy is a conversation leader at 11:20 a.m. in the Tech Talent Discussion Room.

Amy Roberts has over 20 years of experience working in public policy, law, politics and government. Amy advanced numerous public policy initiatives through the Minnesota legislature and within the Executive Branch; including eight years as the Director of Compliance for the Minnesota Department of Education, Government Affairs Manager for Comcast, and as a lawyer-lobbyist in the private sector. Amy is a licensed attorney and a former prosecutor for Dakota County. Amy holds a Juris Doctor degree from Syracuse University College of Law and Bachelor’s degree in Communications and Political Science from the University of Minnesota.



Jill Rodning

Director

[Xcel Energy](#)

Jill is speaking at “Building a Bright Future Through Technology Transformation at Xcel Energy” at 10:15 a.m.

Jill Rodning is director of the Digital Operations Factory (DOF) working within Xcel Energy to modernize technology and process innovation that rapidly drives value for the Company.

Proudly, Jill has been working for Xcel Energy for 20 years. She is thrilled to lead a new organization within the technology department where business and digital teams come together to solve operational problems through innovation and change. Her team has adopted an Agile methodology to deliver value faster through an iterative MVP (Minimum Viable Product) approach with relentless focus on the user, using feedback to ensure high-quality impactful outcomes.

The DOF implemented its first MVP at Xcel Energy in 2022 for the Nuclear organization by automating a manual corrective action program. This outcome saves the Company over \$33M over the next decade. There is huge buzz on what DOF has achieved in 2022 and how it will continue to transform the business bringing millions of dollars in savings in the next decade through technology.

Jill holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from Mankato State University.



Megan Scheller

Sr. Director

[Xcel Energy](#)

Megan is speaking at “Building a Bright Future Through Technology Transformation at Xcel Energy” at 10:15 a.m.

Megan is a transformational leader responsible for driving large-scale digital product delivery. She is responsible for the transition of a project minded organization to a product delivery agile model with the transformation of people, process, technology, and data. Her leadership has brought her organization to the forefront through new platforms and capabilities.

Megan has integrated the digital experience with a bold brand strategy executed through a complete end-to-end customer experience which strengthens customer engagement and sales. In order to accomplish this, she brings an experience led approach and deep customer insights to the forefront of strategy planning and marketing. She has more than 15 years of professional experience leading an organization in driving new ways working and delivering solutions for customers and employees with measurable success.

Megan holds a bachelor’s degree in Advertising and Marketing from St Cloud State University and an MBA with an emphasis in Marketing from Capella University.

Megan’s personal mission is to make a difference in the lives and work around her and is a natural change agent. She leans heavily on her values of faith, trust, curiosity and gratitude to make an impact. She is a local to Minnesota where she lives with her husband and her three children.



Garrett Schreiner

Freeway Operations Engineer

[Minnesota Department of Transportation](#)

Garrett is co-presenting “Technology and Transportation: How MnDOT Uses Technology to Manage Traffic” at 1:15 p.m.

Garrett Schreiner has worked with the Minnesota Department of Transportation since 2007. His work with the department has included Construction Project Management, Project Scheduling, and Freeway Operations. As Freeway Operations Engineer, Garrett oversees TMC Dispatch, the FIRST Program, and 511 Traveler Information.



Creg Schumann
Enterprise Principal
[Turnberry Solutions](#)

Creg is co-presenting “Lessons in Shifting to a Product and Agile Centric Culture” at 1:15 p.m.

Informed by a good understanding of building cool technology, Creg was an early adopter and adapter of agile techniques from the likes of DSDM, SCRUM and other flavors (before there was an agile manifesto). His approach is pragmatic not favoring any single method, tool, framework, etc. It's about understanding the problem and selecting a toolkit appropriate to help learning and solving the problem.

He's learned that there is no one perfect answer in organizational change initiatives – there are choices and experiments to learn from. True change is never managed upon an organization: it's when the conditions and perception within the environment are set for the organization itself to choose to change where lasting change is achieved. Barriers to change aren't the tools, processes, roles – it's the lack of trust, low autonomy, unclear purpose, and ignoring the mastery of one's craft that truly impede meaningful change.

He's been part of large teams/organizations and small teams in many industries and solution spaces. Some of his clients he's worked with on transformation are American Airlines, Disney, Ecolab, US Bank, Wells Fargo, Optum, RBC, and many others.



Keith Senkowski
Director, Digital Experience
[Thrivent](#)

Keith is presenting “Designing Meaningfully: Just Because You Can, Doesn't Mean You Should” at 11:20 a.m.

Keith is a technologist and designer that has been lucky enough to be trying to solve user problems since the internet was a baby. Today, he is the Director of Digital Experiences at Thrivent, where he leads a team of designers and product owners that are rethinking how a 100+ year old financial institution engages with their customers.



Brent Shiely
Director of Product Management – External Marketplaces
[Best Buy](#)

Brent is presenting “Simplifying the Complex – Receive Orders From Anywhere” at 2:15 p.m.

Brent has been with Best Buy for 9 years. He is a technical entrepreneur with a background in software development & digital marketing. His goal is continuous improvement in influence, efficiency, and effectiveness to grow revenue, lower expenses and create win/win/win opportunities for all. Conversion is achieved when you have inventory + fulfillment + payment. Any one of those ingredients missing, conversion cannot happen.

Brent is a storyteller. When he graduated college, he pursued stand-up comedy full time. That experience helped him tell engaging stories that connected with audiences. When he does this in his professional life, it connects the dots between a customer and how we can serve better. This storytelling inspires those around him to rise to the occasion.



Ashish Shrivastava

Intelligent Automation Leader, 3M Transformation Technology Services

3M

Ashish is presenting “Conversational AI Fabric – How it is Changing the Future of Application Experience” at 10:15 a.m.

Ashish is leading Intelligent Automation organization under 3M's Technology Transformation Services division based out of Saint Paul. He is instrumental in implementing Hyper-automation technology stack such as RPA, workflow orchestration, cloud services, conversational AI (virtual assistants), and applied AI/ML technologies to create streamlined business processes in order to drive process optimization at scale.

Ashish comes with a diverse domain background in IT, Telecom, Banking, and Consultancy services and loaded have a strong experience in software development, disruptive technologies, AI/ML product management, process re-engineering, and Lean/Agile practices. Before 3M, he worked for the companies such as Motorola, HSBC Bank, Wipro, and Dell in various capacities from software development to program management. His experience is spanned around 16+ years in three continents and he speaks English, Hindi and Polish. He currently lives in Woodbury, MN with his wife Mariola, son Ishaan, Ayan and daughter Arya.

Ashish holds a Bachelor of Computer Science from India and MS in Information Technology from Clark University, MA. Outside of work, he enjoys cooking, yoga, and video gaming.



Scott Siebert

Director

Xcel Energy

Scott is speaking at “Building a Bright Future Through Technology Transformation at Xcel Energy” at 10:15 a.m.

Scott Siebert is a director at Xcel Energy, leading the Application Delivery Enablement team. Scott is an evolving learner and teacher and seeks to bolster and develop the best talent to continue to build Xcel Energy's technology strategy.

Scott has enabled his delivery team to transform into Agile methodology in which they've delivered significant ease of use for internal business partners and external customers. Scott has also published articles about Project Management in IT World and has a podcast you can catch at TalkPMIT.

Scott is an adjunct professor at North Central University teaching Project Management and holds an MBA from Capella University.



Nardos Tesfalidet

YJ2 Program Manager

[City of Saint Paul](#)

Nardos is a conversation leader at 1:15 p.m. in the Tech Talent Discussion Room.

Nardos joined the Right Track team in January 2020 and currently serves as the YJ2 Program Manager connecting Saint Paul youth and young adults with career exploration experiences across industries. Over the past 15 years she has experience working in college access, special education, community-based programs, as well as youth employment. Most recently, she worked with Roseville Area Schools Community Education as a District OST Coordinator. Nardos earned her Bachelor's in Social Work with a concentration in American, Racial & Multicultural Studies from St. Olaf College and her Master's Degree in Social Work with a focus in Program Development, Policy and Administration from Augsburg University.



Jeff Tollefson

President & CEO

[Minnesota Technology Association](#)

Jeff will open the conference at 8:30 a.m. and is facilitating the 3 p.m. Executive Roundtable Closing Session.

Jeff leads the overall management and strategic direction of the Minnesota Technology Association, with a focus on enhancing member value and driving community impact. Prior to joining the MnTech in August 2019, Jeff held various leadership roles with Genesys Works, a national nonprofit helping low-income high school students achieve career success in the tech field through skills training and meaningful work experiences. Before founding Genesys Works' Twin Cities program in 2008, Jeff spent 17 years in the venture capital industry, including ten years as co-founder and General Partner of Crescendo Ventures, an early-stage venture capital firm with more than \$1.1 billion under management and offices in Minneapolis, Palo Alto, and London. A graduate of the University of Iowa, Jeff is a 25-year resident of the Twin Cities where he lives with his wife and their three rescue animals.



Jack Uldrich

Global Futurist, Speaker, Author

[Jack Uldrich](#)

Jack is a keynote speaker at 12:30 p.m.

Jack Uldrich is a renowned global futurist and the best-selling author of eleven books. He is a frequent guest on national media and regularly appears on the Science Channel's television program, "FutureScape" and the Discovery Channel show "Inside Out." He is a prolific speaker on technology, change management and leadership and has addressed Fortune 100 corporations, venture capital firms, associations, not-for-profit organizations and state and regional governments on five continents. He lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota with his wife and two children.



Matthew Versaggi

Senior Director of Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Technology;
Distinguished Engineer

[Optum](#)

Matthew is presenting “The Cutting Edge of Quantum Computing in Healthcare” at 11:20 a.m.

Matthew is a senior leader in the AI space with Fortune-5 healthcare experience who possesses a unique blend of business, technology, entrepreneurial, and academic backgrounds; is an experienced public speaker, strategist, and mentor; and has international business experience. He is an Education and Subject Matter Expert in AI/ML for College of Artificial Intelligence in the Optum Tech University, and Subject Matter Expert in the UHG Patent Review Board reviewing AI/ML technologies. Matthew holds four university degrees : BA (Computer Science), BS (Finance / MIS), MS (Computer Science -Artificial Intelligence), MBA (International Business / Economics), and Professional certificates in Security (Server / Network), Data Science / Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence, and Quantum Computing.



Ange Wang

Sr. Director of UX Instruction & Strategy

[Prime Digital Academy](#)

Ange is a conversation leader at 1:15 p.m. in the Tech Talent Discussion Room.

Ange is a designer, researcher, and educator who currently leads the User Experience programming and strategy at Prime Digital Academy. She has engaged her UX practice at numerous scales, from consulting for pre-startup solopreneuers to leading end-to-end design and research strategy for product lines within a Fortune 100 company. Today, she blends this experience with her passion for creating career opportunities—empowering learners through practice-based programming and collaborating to contribute to the industry’s overall growth.



Tara Wyborny

VP of Talent Development [Dev10]

[Genesis10](#)

Tara is a conversation leader at 2:15 p.m. in the Tech Talent Discussion Room.

Tara Wyborny is Vice President of Talent Development for Genesis10’s talent creation program, Dev10. She is an advocate and trusted advisor to companies for next-generation workforce planning, implementation and ongoing support. In addition to operations management and sales support, Wyborny is a training, mentoring and performance management expert. She publishes career advice and specializes in helping college students and recent graduates with various technical and managerial roles.

Prior to her current position, Wyborny was National Director – Emerging Talent Programs (G10 Associates and Dev10). She’s also served as Recruiting Lead for the G10 Associates Program (College Hire). In this role, she recruited college students and recent graduates for Business Analysis, Project Management, Instructional Design and IT consulting roles. Before joining Genesis10 in 2010, Wyborny worked at Honda of America Manufacturing leading their college recruiting and internship programs. She has a BSPA degree in Management, Human Resources, from Indiana University Bloomington.

