

2025

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Enrollment Limited To 24 Participants
Apply By September 8, 2025
Program Runs October 2025 - May 2026



Empowering People. Strengthening Firms.

The ACEC/MN Leadership Development Series is a powerful, career-shaping experience designed to benefit both high-performing individuals and the firms that support them.

Created for mid-career professionals already leading in some capacity—whether through projects, people, or initiatives—this seven-session leadership program provides proven strategies for taking on expanded roles effectively and successfully. It is designed for individuals ready to elevate their impact both within their firms and in the industry.

Develop **practical business insight, stronger communication skills, and the confidence to lead with purpose** in today's competitive and fast-evolving engineering environment. Each session is designed to translate directly to the workplace, empowering individuals to lead resilient and engaged teams, make smarter decisions, and deliver greater value to their firms.

This is more than a leadership program—it's a **career and business accelerator**. Don't miss this opportunity to grow, connect, and lead with confidence.

We welcome participants from **all disciplines and roles** within engineering firms. The program is designed to be **inclusive and collaborative**, encouraging a rich exchange of experiences and perspectives.

What You'll Gain

- **Essential tools and insights to lead effectively**, whether you're managing a team, project, or firm.
- **Preparation for leadership transitions**, equipping you with the confidence and capabilities to lead people, projects, and priorities.
- **Stronger core leadership skills** and expanded capacity to influence, inspire, and deliver results at a higher level.
- **Connections with peers and industry leaders** who understand your challenges and can support your growth.
- **Practical strategies for business development**, including how to build client relationships, win work, and position your firm for growth.
- **Up to 40 Professional Development Hours**

What To Expect

Each session is built around a key leadership theme and led by accomplished industry leaders who share real-world experiences, practical strategies, and actionable insights.

Series Schedule

Sessions will be held at Grandview Lodge in Nisswa, West End Conference Center in St. Louis Park, the ACEC/MN Offices in St. Paul, and at the Minnesota State Capitol.

- October 22-23, 2025: Maximizing Personal Leadership for Lasting Impact
- November 13 2025: Personal Leadership Virtual follow-up
- December 10, 2025: Communications, Listening, and Negotiations
- January 14, 2026: AI-Enhanced Leadership
- February 11, 2026: Market Trends, Business Development, and Marketing Strategies
- March 5, 2026: Advocacy and Navigating the Legislative Process
- April 15, 2026: Leading Resilient and Engaged Teams
- May 21, 2026: Graduation held at ACEC/MN Annual Meeting

Application Process

Registrants will be required to apply. Each applicant must have a principal sponsor within their firm, who commits to providing support for the applicant to attend and fully engage in each session. The sponsor will review goals and expectations with the applicant before the program begins and again near its conclusion.

Class size is limited. Firms may submit one candidate and may add a second candidate to the waitlist. If there are spots available after the application deadline, individuals on the waitlist will be accepted on a first-in basis. To apply, fill out the form [here](#).

Application Deadline is September 8, 2025

Tuition

The cost to attend is \$4,500 for members; \$7,500 for non-members.

In addition to the six in-person seminars and one virtual session that are part of the program, participants receive: complimentary registration to an ACEC/MN ethics course, offered two times a year, to support ongoing licensure and professional development. Tuition also includes a seat at the 2026 Excellence in Engineering Gala on February 6, 2026 at the McNamara Alumni Center, and at the May 21, 2006 Annual Meeting.

Travel and accommodation are the responsibility of the firm. Food, drink, and snacks will be provided during the program sessions.

Maximizing Personal Leadership for Lasting Impact

October 22-23, 2025

Grandview Lodge, Nisswa, MN

Day 1 – Team Building and Networking, 2pm – 5pm; Group Social Hour, 6:30pm

Day 2 – Maximizing Personal Leadership for Lasting Impact, 9am – 4pm

Each of us has the potential to lead with purpose and make a meaningful difference. This session is designed to help participants recognize their unique capacity for influence and take intentional steps toward a life of impact and legacy.

Grounded in the formula $\text{Life Impact} = \text{Competence} \times \text{Character} \times \text{Leadership Level}$, this course explores practical, relatable principles of personal leadership and human connection. Through engaging content and actionable tools, participants will gain insight into how they can strengthen their leadership presence, align their values with their actions, and make each day count—both professionally and personally.

Actionable Outcomes

- Understand how asking questions and practicing active listening fosters stronger relationships, increases employee engagement, and supports retention.
- Develop the ability to seek and consider others' perspectives, avoiding assumptions and premature conclusions in leadership decision-making.
- Recognize that consulting engineering is fundamentally a people-centered profession, requiring relational as well as technical skills.
- Explore how personal character and emotional health directly influence relational dynamics and, ultimately, organizational success—emphasizing the importance of internal growth and integrity in leadership.

Instructor

Jon Hauser received a degree in Electrical Engineer from North Dakota State University and a master's in religious education from Nazarene Theological Seminary. He worked as a high voltage substation engineer for 20 years for Burns and McDonnell and Ulteig Engineers, serving as department manager for a season.

In 2011 Jon completed training as a founding member of the John Maxwell Team. He has provided leadership training and speaking for sales and team leader meetings, technical conferences, and corporate management retreats along with coaching executive leaders. His passion is to help people maximize their life impact.



Communications, Listening, and Negotiations

December 10, 2025

West End Conference Center, St. Louis Park, MN

How can leaders use listening and negotiation to shape culture, build trust, and resolve conflict? Drawing from the high-stakes world of hostage negotiation, this session teaches powerful, real-world communication techniques that translate directly to leadership, team management, business development, and organizational change.

These principles are the ultimate foundation for building collaboration with internal and external partners, managing conflict, and creating clarity in executive decision-making for the participant and their firm. Whether you're leading through a tough conversation or guiding your team through change, this workshop gives you the tools to listen with purpose, lead with clarity, and influence with integrity.

Note: Prior to the session, attendees will receive a customized video with a message from the instructor to give the participants ways to “pre-learn” and maximize the value of the session.

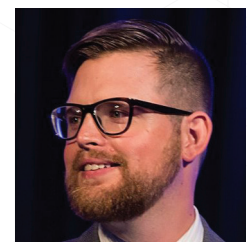
Actionable Outcomes

- Explore how listening, empathy, trust, and influence work together to drive effective leadership in modern consulting engineering firms.
- Rethink conflict and change as opportunities for growth, not roadblocks—using listening as the catalyst.
- Identify and overcome unproductive listening habits that undermine leadership and team cohesion.
- Learn and apply eight proven active listening techniques used by professional crisis negotiators.
- A customized plan for self-improvement over time for each participant.

Instructor

Dan Oblinger is a hostage negotiator, commander, author, international keynote speaker, and consulting business negotiator. He specializes in working with architects, engineers, and construction managers. He is a graduate of the FBI National Crisis Negotiator Course in Quantico.

As a workshop trainer, Oblinger is a cornerstone of emerging leader programs for American Council of Engineering Companies chapters in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Michigan, Ohio, North Dakota, New Jersey, Iowa, and Georgia. He regularly speaks for NSPE, ACEC, AIA, SMPS, AGC, SEI Reunions, Surety/Risk Management, and other specialty design/build audiences. His books, *Life or Death Listening*, *The 28 Laws of Listening*, and *Negotiation Mythbusters*, are used in internal negotiations training programs for companies ranging from large, multinational conglomerates to small design firms.



AI-Enhanced Leadership: Practical Tools & Techniques for Transformative Results

January 14, 2026

West End Conference Center, St. Louis Park, MN

AI has the potential to transform how leaders work—streamlining routine tasks, unlocking data-driven insights, and enhancing creative problem-solving. When leveraged mindfully, AI becomes more than a tool; it becomes a strategic thought partner in decision-making, planning, and innovation. This timely, hands-on workshop is designed to equip leaders with confidence, skillsets, and mindsets to integrate everyday AI into their professional workflows.

Through structured practice, tailored leadership examples, and the CRAFTing Framework, this session empowers leaders to improve decision-making, communication, and strategy through responsible AI use. This seminar delivers practical tools and powerful frameworks for immediate application.

This session will include a Leader Roundtable featuring speakers from the consulting engineering field as well as professionals in other business areas who will discuss how AI is changing the way they lead and do business.

Actionable Outcomes

- Discover high-impact AI applications in leadership, planning, and communication.
- Identify and avoid common pitfalls that reduce AI effectiveness.
- Apply the Leadership CRAFTing Framework to generate more effective AI outputs.
- Explore leadership-specific prompt libraries designed to support everyday workflows.
- Practice with tools like Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT, and Gemini through guided exercises.

Instructor

Tyler Moberg is an AI learning specialist and founder of Amplified Impact. He is a national trainer for The Bob Pike Group who has nearly two decades of leadership and consulting experience helping professionals integrate AI tools thoughtfully and strategically. He is known for translating complex tools into practical strategies that build skill, confidence, and measurable results. Tyler holds a master's degree in leadership from Bethel University.



Market Trends, Business Development, and Marketing

February 11, 2026

West End Conference Center, St. Louis Park, MN

In a rapidly evolving A/E/C landscape, mid-career professionals must anticipate and adapt not only to shifting market dynamics but also to increasing expectations around strategic growth and client engagement. This full-day session equips engineers with the knowledge and tools to navigate future economic conditions, sharpen their marketing and business development efforts, and thrive in a seller-doer model.

When market intelligence, business development, and strategic marketing align, it creates a powerful engine for long-term success. Participants will explore industry forecasts, identify high-value client opportunities, and build practical skills to drive growth—while staying rooted in their technical expertise.

Actionable Outcomes

- Analyze economic and industry trends shaping the A/E/C market through 2026 and beyond.
- Identify and prioritize high-value client and market opportunities to drive firm growth.
- Strengthen marketing and business development alignment for more effective outreach.
- Build practical seller-doer skills to deepen client relationships and expand influence.

Instructor

Scott Butcher of Stambaugh Ness is an AE industry veteran with 30 years of experience in strategy, marketing, and business development. As a former VP and chief marketing officer for a mid-sized engineering firm, Scott brings a unique perspective to his client work, delivering first-hand industry insight and knowledge. He is a sought-after national speaker and a prolific writer, Scott has authored 15 books and written numerous ebooks, white papers, and blogs, including his Marketropolis blog for Engineering News-Record.

Scott is a past president of the SMPS Foundation, an AEC research-focused nonprofit organization, and has served on the national board of directors for the Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS). In addition to being a Fellow of SMPS, Scott is also a Certified Professional Services Marketer.

Prior to joining Stambaugh Ness, Scott was the owner/principal of Aecumen, LLC, a firm providing consulting, facilitation, and training for AEC companies.



Advocacy and Understanding the Legislative Process

March 5, 2026

ACEC/MN Conference Center and MN State Capitol, St. Paul, MN

This interactive session equips consulting engineering professionals with the knowledge and tools to effectively engage in advocacy and navigate the legislative process at both state and federal levels. By clarifying how public policy is developed and enacted, participants will better understand how their expertise can influence decisions shaping the consulting engineering industry.

While technical skills and project execution remain central, the business of engineering is increasingly influenced by legislative and regulatory forces—impacting everything from funding and procurement to licensing and staffing. Understanding this landscape is no longer optional but essential. With the right insights, every engineer can advocate for their firm, clients, and community.

Led by the ACEC/MN Advocacy Team, this session features firsthand perspectives from experienced advocates, state legislators, and association leaders. Joining the team is Professor David Schultz.

Actionable Outcomes

- Understand how legislation is introduced, debated, and passed.
- Recognize the role of grassroots advocacy in advancing the profession.
- Explore major policy issues affecting engineering firms.
- Learn how to build relationships with lawmakers and influence policy.
- Participate in direct advocacy through Day at the Capitol and legislative meetings.

Instructor

David Schultz is Distinguished University Professor in the Departments of Political Science, Environmental Studies, and Legal Studies at Hamline University. He is also an adjunct professor of Law at the University of Minnesota and the University of St. Thomas, and is an affiliate faculty member at the Lithuanian Military Academy in Vilnius, Lithuania.

A four-time Fulbright scholar who has taught extensively in Europe and Asia, as well as the winner of the Leslie A. Whittington national award for excellence in public affairs teaching, David is the author of more than 45 books and 200+ articles on various aspects of American politics, election law, and the media and politics. He is regularly interviewed and quoted in local, national, and international press, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, The Economist, and National Public Radio. His recent books are Constitutional Precedent in US Supreme Court Reasoning (2022), Handbook of Election Law (2022), and Presidential Swing States (2022).



Leading Resilient and Engaged Teams

April 15, 2026

West End Conference Center, St. Louis Park, MN

AM Session – Leading Resilient and Engaged Teams, 9am – 12pm

Economic uncertainty, the impact of AI technology, and our collective recovery from a global pandemic continue to drive high stress and low well-being among workplace teams. This program will weave together new research, stories, and case studies, and provide easy-to-implement strategies to help leaders identify the causes of stress and disengagement, and implement new mindsets to lead in a way that inspires resilience, connection, and thriving workplace cultures.

The skills and frameworks are presented as TNTs (tiny noticeable things) to reinforce the message that strong, resilient teams are built on the foundation of small shifts in mindset and practice. Participants will leave with a workbook/plan of action for steps to implement moving forward.

PM Session – Management to Leadership Panel, 1pm – 2:30pm, social hour to follow

This discussion will bring together a panel of firm owners and senior leaders for a candid, insightful discussion designed specifically for mid-career professionals.

Actionable Outcomes

- Identify the six core causes of team stress and disengagement, and learn strategies to address each to support team resilience.
- Apply the ABCs of intrinsic motivation—autonomy, belonging, and challenge—to cultivate a more engaged and energized team.
- Use “sticky” recognition practices that foster a culture of appreciation, connection, and psychological safety.
- Leverage the Active Constructive Responding framework to deepen team connection and morale through meaningful celebration of wins.

Instructor

Paula Davis, JD, MAPP, is the founder and CEO of the Stress & Resilience Institute, where she has spent over 15 years helping leaders reduce burnout and build resilient, thriving teams. A former practicing attorney, she earned her master's in applied positive psychology from the University of Pennsylvania and taught resilience skills to soldiers and their families as part of the Army's Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness program. Paula is the author of *Beating Burnout at Work* and the upcoming *Lead Well* (Feb 2025), both recognized by the Next Big Idea Club. She has delivered programs at institutions including Harvard Law, Stanford, and Wharton Executive Education, and her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *O, The Oprah Magazine*.





For more information, visit acecmn.org or email kelly@acecmn.org