

Executive Leadership Academy 2026

Modules and Presenters

Module 1 – Increasing Self-Awareness & Building Trust as a Leader

Kim Greenauer and Stefanie Putter, Greenmeadow Group

As businesses grow and the complexity of our industry increases, the expectations placed on leaders naturally increase. Foundational leadership skills of increasing self-awareness, giving and receiving effective feedback, and building trust are often assumed or overlooked amid rising demands on leaders.

Leaders who lack self-awareness struggle to achieve the results they desire and have a disconnected view of how they are performing in their role compared to others. Choosing to increase self-awareness is a choice and has powerful outcomes when taken seriously. Giving and receiving feedback is one of the most effective ways to increase awareness for individual leaders and their team members and a skill drastically lacking in many organizations.

Leaders who struggle to build trust and connection with others also struggle to achieve the results they desire. When trust is lacking, relationships feel strained or inauthentic, connection is restricted, and team performance declines. Intentionally focusing on trust-building behaviors is also a leader's choice and the individuals and teams feel the impact just as much they do.

This module will focus on:

- Methods to increase self-awareness as a leader.
- A framework for creating a clear feedback message & strategies to deliver the message.
- How to receive feedback effectively.
- Key elements of trust-building and trust-breaking behaviors.
- Industry case studies and lessons learned.

Module 2 - From Visibility to Victory: Navigate Critical Moments within the Project

Development Lifecycle

Travis White and Josh Roberts, Rainmaker Growth Partners

Success in the AEC industry depends on more than technical excellence. It requires clear market positioning, disciplined pursuit strategy, and trusted client relationships. This module explores how firms differentiate themselves throughout the project development lifecycle, recognize early signals of opportunity and/or risk, and align teams around winning the right work.

Participants will break down the full project development lifecycle, from market awareness through pursuit and execution. The critical moments that shape client perception and decision-making, including strategic partnerships, internal alignment, and communication throughout the pursuit process will be highlighted.

Participants will apply practical frameworks to evaluate client relationships, assess winnability, pursuit strategies, risk mitigation, and develop positioning strategies that clearly differentiate their teams in competitive markets. The focus will be on building internal and external trust and strengthening alignment between business development/marketing and operations, to drive sustainable, repeatable growth.

Module 3 - Risk & Financial Performance

Joe Poliafico, The Baldwin Group

Risk isn't just a safety or insurance topic—it is a core driver of financial performance. Emerging leaders who understand how project decisions affect the balance sheet are better positioned to influence outcomes, protect margins, and strengthen their company's competitiveness. This module builds practical confidence in identifying, evaluating, and discussing risk with project teams and executives.

Module Overview

Construction firms face a wide range of insurable and uninsurable risks that span operations, finance, legal, and safety. Insurance is one tool, but leaders must understand the trade-offs behind owning, sharing, transferring, or avoiding risk so they can support sound decisions in both pursuits and project delivery. Through short scenarios and structured breakouts, participants will practice evaluating risks and making clear, defensible recommendations.

Participants will learn to:

1. Identify and evaluate key project and enterprise risks—and determine when to own, transfer, share, or avoid them.
2. Explain how risk shows up “hits the balance sheet,” including Total Cost of Risk, cash flow timing/accruals, EMR impact, bonding capacity, and external perception.
3. Apply risk thinking with their teams—strengthening day-to-day risk awareness, monitoring emerging issues, and supporting better pursuit and project decisions.

Module 4 – Aligning Teams in Times of Change

Tracey Smith, FMI

Today's business environment is Volatile, Uncertain, and full of Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA). Effective leaders understand that change management demands coordinated action, not slogans. This module focuses on addressing the biggest challenges of implementing change within an organization—by clarifying direction, aligning roles and interfaces, and reinforcing the ongoing communication needs that sustain performance when priorities and systems shift.

Key Learning Objective:

By the end of this module, participants will be able to understand and apply practical tools that set direction, create alignment and ownership, and provide clear and consistent communication to support high-performing teams during periods of change and volatility.

This module will focus on:

1. Why change is so hard.
2. Defining a clear vision for the change (and understanding the impacts on the company, employees, clients, etc.)
3. Conducting a change analysis – what “forces” will be for the change, which will resist the change.
4. Understanding the change curve and how to communicate in each phase.
5. Stakeholder analysis – who will be impacted and what do we need to provide them to assist in the change.
6. Evaluating success – what metrics (objective and subjective) will let us know if we are on track (or not).