

WORKSHOPS AND SPEAKERS – Thursday, April 24, 2025

CAL SMACNA's 59th Annual Convention
Ojai Valley Inn, Ojai, California, April 23-26, 2025

Workshop 1

Thursday, April 24, 2025

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

“Spotting Fatal Flaws, How to Pick the Right Business Leaders”

Jake will explain how to map out best practices in selecting future business leaders, and help identify common “fatal flaws” in future leaders and discuss how to spot them before it is too late. He will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of external and internal hires for key leadership roles and apply the concepts in a workshop setting to provide attendees insight into their own leadership pipeline.



Jake Appelman leads FMI's management succession practice, partnering with architecture, engineering and construction firms to build enduring organizations through exceptional leadership.

His approach involves a rigorous, assessment-based process to identify, select and develop the next generation of leaders. He has extensive experience guiding the succession process across a range of company sizes and structures, from closely held family firms to large, employee-owned firms. Jake's specialty is working one-on-one with senior leaders to accelerate their development and prepare for succession.

In addition to client work, Jake is also a frequent speaker at conferences and industry events on leadership and succession management. He also teaches as part of FMI's course on the topic, helping companies create plans to best develop their talent.

Workshop 2

Thursday, April 24, 2025

10:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

“AI in Construction”

Tom will share his expertise on how AI will affect construction on a macro level (such as building design) and micro level (such as construction processes) as well as how urban design will be affected as downtown spaces recover from COVID, specifically as these relate to California's construction industry.



Tom Edwards is a dynamic speaker renowned for his ability to distill complex technical details into insights that resonate with diverse audiences. As a leader in Generative AI at EY, Tom brings extensive experience from his roles in various C-Suite positions, including Chief Marketing Officer, Chief Digital Officer, Chief Data Officer, and Chief Innovation Officer. His broad

expertise uniquely positions him to offer valuable perspectives on AI's influence across industries and business functions.

Tom has earned recognition as a thought leader, accumulating numerous awards and accolades. Recently, he was honored as a 2024 Top AI Keynote Speaker to Watch, a recipient of the 2024 Global Recognition AI Award, and a 2024 Top 50 Tech Professional award.

Industry leaders have praised Tom's expertise and forward-thinking approach. Apple described him as “bold and fearless,” Nintendo recognized his exceptional expertise, Hulu called him “a leader in the digital realm,” and Southwest Airlines highlighted him as “a forward thinker who pushes the convention.” C-Suite executives have also commended Tom for his insights that help leaders stay ahead of the competition.

WORKSHOPS AND SPEAKERS – Saturday, April 26, 2025

Annual Business Meeting

Saturday, April 26, 2025

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

The CAL SMACNA annual business meeting will include voting by chapter delegates on the 2025 Executive Committee and 2024 financial statements. Attendees will also hear updates on SMACNA from National representatives.



CAL SMACNA President **Phillip Phillips**, Southland Industries, Bay Area SMACNA, will open the annual business meeting.

The following guest speakers will give updates on SMACNA activities:



Tom Martin is SMACNA's President and CEO and President of T.H. Martin, Inc., a full-service mechanical contractor based in Cleveland, Ohio. Martin is an industry innovator and highly regarded member of SMACNA-Cleveland, which represents more than 60 contractor firms in northeast Ohio. He has served as the chapter's president since 2014.

On the national level, Martin's involvement is unmatched. In 2018, he was awarded SMACNA Contractor of the year. And most recently, he was awarded 2021 Legislative Contractor of the Year. He is a critical player in ongoing lobbying efforts to reform registered apprenticeship laws and regulations, pension reform, infrastructure policies, and prevailing wage enforcement legislation.

Martin is a member of many SMACNA committees, including the National Contractor Manual Task Force Committee, HVAC Council Steering Committee, SMACNA/SMART National Market Recovery Committee, and the SMACNA National Strategic Planning Task Force Committee.

T.H. Martin, Inc. is a family-owned business started in 1985 by Martin's father, Thomas H. Martin. In his role as president, Martin works alongside his brother, Mike, who serves as vice president of the company.



Aaron Hilger is SMACNA's Chief Executive Officer, and he will provide a national update and share the latest issues and concerns affecting SMACNA.

Before assuming his role as CEO, Aaron was the President & CEO of the Builders Exchange of Rochester. His work included leading a collective of 13 local and state-wide trade associations,

including the Construction Industry Association of Rochester, Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA) Rochester, the Roofers Industry Fund and New York State SMACNA. Hilger has extensive experience with labor relations and employee benefit funds.

Hilger holds a BA in Political Science and Psychology from the University of Rochester, an MA in Political Management from The George Washington University, and an MBA from the University at Buffalo. In 2021, he received The Presidents Hammer award from Flower City Habitat for Humanity in recognition of his leadership as chair of the Construction Committee and commitment to building a stronger community.



Jason Watson is SMACNA's Executive Director of Labor Relations and he will provide an update on National Labor Relations.

Jason has more than two decades of experience working with labor unions. He administers national labor agreements and specialty agreements covering over 4,000 contractors and 70,000 plus building trades' union members, serves as

chief management spokesperson in industry labor negotiations and arbitration hearings, and develops and implements the Association bargaining objectives and strategies.

Jason provides labor relations and legal advice to contractors and local chapters engaged in labor negotiations and is charged with the chief responsibility of planning and conducting educational programs to improve industry national and local labor-management relations.

He holds a Masters' degree in Business from the State University of New York Polytechnic Institute and a Bachelors' degree in Political Science from Cazenovia College.

WORKSHOPS AND SPEAKERS – Saturday, April 26, 2025

Keynote Speaker

Saturday, April 26, 2025

10:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

“Unstoppable Leadership”

Unstoppable Leadership begins with your unwavering commitment to yourself, your vision, and everyone you touch. But with this immense hunger for success comes immense pressure, challenges, and internal adversity. Alex deep-dives on the actionable principles of what it takes to be an *Unstoppable Leader*. For yourself, and all those you lead.

President's Awards Luncheon

Saturday, April 26, 2025

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

The agenda will feature the annual legislative update, recognition of our generous sponsors and the announcement of the Ed Banks Memorial Award for Contractor of the Year, Tom Guilfooy Memorial Award for Craftsmanship of the Year, and the Safety Award winners.



Alex Weber is an American Ninja Warrior, Award-Winning Leader & Entertainer positively inspiring millions to achieve breakthrough success!

Not only does Alex talk the talk as an in-demand international speaker, but he's also walked the walk as an elite competitor on NBC's Emmy-nominated series *American Ninja Warrior*.

Well, more like, leaped the leap! This wildly popular TV show has sparked a global phenomenon to the extent that hundreds of thousands of people apply, and only a few hundred are given the rare opportunity to compete. Alex is the only person to host *and* compete on NBC *American Ninja Warrior*. Alex's greatest passion is championing your highest potential by helping you find your Edge...

Because success is about more than just knowing what to do, it's knowing *how* to do it. And, when it comes to masterful execution of your skills, one thing is certain: Negative energy kills results.

In order to perform and lead at your best, you need to access your Edge. Alex shows Top Professionals and Leaders how to bring their very best every day, and to the most high-stakes situations that can make or break your success.

It's his sincere understanding of peak performance and peak challenges, mixed with inspiring stories and actionable strategies that makes Alex unforgettable for your audience.

With his contagious energy and passion, Alex shares his game-changing secrets to record-breaking success and will be the human shot of espresso to make your people come alive!