



2026 Winter Conference

EMERGING LEADERS WORKSHOP

January 28, 2026

Your facilitator: David Cohen, President, Cohen and Associates

AGENDA

Wednesday, January 28

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

8:45 a.m. Introductions

9:00 a.m. Harnessing the Power of Emotional Intelligence

In today's fast-paced world of competitive workplaces and chaotic personal lives, each of us is searching for effective tools that can make our schedules, behaviors, and relationships more manageable. This course shows how understanding and utilizing emotional intelligence can be the key to exceeding our goals and achieving our fullest potential. ***Harnessing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*** brings this concept to life in a way that makes EQ practical and easy to apply in every aspect of our daily lives.

This course will help you to:

- 1) Engage the four unique areas of EQ: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.
- 2) Increase your EQ using these skill-building techniques
- 3) Apply your EQ at work to develop leadership skills and improve teamwork, making you a better manager and a more desirable employee.
- 4) Practice your EQ outside the office environment to benefit your relationships with loved ones, making you a better partner and parent.

Presented by David Cohen

10:30 a.m. Break

11:00 a.m. The Professional Maturity Journey – Going from Colleague to Supervisor

Stepping into a supervisory role marks a key turning point in any professional's career. This transition—from peer and colleague to leader and supervisor—requires more than just new responsibilities; it demands a shift in mindset, communication style, and professional maturity. In this interactive session, attendees will explore what it means to evolve from being 'one of the team' to guiding that team effectively and discuss strategies for meeting professional maturity expectations at each level of their career path. *Presented by Jennifer Johnson, Vice President of People and Culture, Visit Dallas, and Meg Winchester, Vice President, SE Director, Fired Up! Culture*

12:30 p.m. Lunch

1:15 p.m. Acting Decisively: Mastering the Art of Confident and Timely Decision Making

In today's fast-paced and complex environments, the ability to act decisively is a critical skill for professionals at all levels. Acting Decisively is designed to help individuals overcome hesitation, manage uncertainty, and make clear, confident decisions under pressure.

Participants will learn how to balance speed with accuracy, align actions with organizational goals, and build trust in their decision-making abilities. This course emphasizes the psychological and strategic aspects of decision-making, providing techniques to reduce second-guessing and increase follow-through.

By the end of the training, participants will be equipped with the mindset and methods needed to make timely decisions, take initiative, and lead with conviction.

Key Outcomes:

- Understand the barriers to decisive action and how to overcome them
- Apply structured decision-making models in a variety of contexts
- Build confidence and resilience when facing ambiguity
- Develop strategies for effective risk assessment and accountability
- Cultivate a decisive leadership presence that inspires others

Presented by David Cohen

3:00 p.m. Break

3:15 p.m. What Every Emerging Leader Should Know About the Numbers

Emerging leaders are often pulled into conversations about budgets, priorities, and constraints before they feel fully prepared. Many assume this requires deep financial knowledge, when senior leaders are looking for something else: clear thinking, sound judgment, and an understanding of how decisions are made when resources are limited.

This session focuses on how leaders think about "the numbers." Rather than teaching finance or accounting concepts, participants will learn a practical decision-making lens leaders use to evaluate priorities, weigh tradeoffs, and align resources to organizational goals.

Drawing from real leadership examples and coaching work with destination organizations, the session introduces a simple framework emerging leaders can use to:

- Understand why decisions get slowed down or prioritized
- Anticipate the questions senior leaders are asking
- Prepare more effectively for conversations involving budgets, capacity, and timing

Participants will leave with greater confidence engaging in financial and strategic discussions, and with a practical tool they can apply immediately, regardless of role or title. *Presented by Doug Bacon, Managing Director, Throwing Words, and Kurt Fournier, CFO, Visit Fort Worth*

4:15 p.m. Ask the CEOs: Candid Leadership Conversations for Emerging Leaders

This interactive panel brings together three seasoned destination organization CEOs for an open, unscripted conversation with emerging leaders. Designed as a true ask anything session, panelists will share honest, candid insights on leadership, career growth, and what executives look for when developing future leaders and building succession plans.

Attendees will have the opportunity to ask real questions and hear transparent answers about advancement, readiness for the next role, and what it truly takes to move from manager to director, vice president, or future CEO. This session is intended to be authentic and highly practical, offering emerging leaders rare access to executive level perspective. *Panelists: John Friebele, Executive Director, Destination Bryan; Tracy Rohrbacher, Executive Director, Visit Pearland; Aaron Werner, Executive Director, Visit McKinney; and Travis Napper, former CEO of Experience Ruston, and Director, Destination Partnerships, Tourism Economics.*