

LAKE NORMAN AI SUMMIT 2026

| 09:00 am

Coffee and Conversation and AI Demos

Start your day with coffee and connections. Meet fellow business leaders and explore AI solution demonstrations.

| 10:00 am

Keynote: The Simulation Century - Year Two: Building Your Competitive Moat

Richard Boyd

Building on last year's vision, Richard returns to share real-world lessons from the frontlines of AI transformation. With 30+ years in AI and simulation, including leadership at Lockheed Martin's Virtual World Labs, Richard will reveal how leading companies are using the Data Fusion Plane to escape commoditization. Learn why some AI implementations create lasting competitive advantages while others become expensive failures.

Key Takeaways:

- The SMART process: How to transform data into AI-ready intelligence
 - Why 80% of AI projects fail (and how yours won't)
- Creating weighted connections that competitors can't replicate
 - Real case studies from aerospace to healthcare

| 11:15 am

From Commodity to Premium: AI-Powered Growth Strategies That Command Higher Prices

Dave Preston (PeopleSuite) & Danny Decker (SpotLight Branding)

Two Charlotte business leaders share how they escaped the commodity trap in their respective industries. Danny reveals how Spotlight Branding went from competing on price to charging 3x more for marketing services, while David (Charlotte Fast 50 #4) explains how PeopleSuite transformed from a staffing vendor to a strategic revenue partner commanding 5x industry rates.

Key Takeaways:

- Practical strategies for escaping price competition
- How to position AI as a differentiator, not a cost-cutter
- Building recurring revenue models in traditionally transactional businesses
- Real examples of charging premium prices for "commodity" services

| 12:00 pm

Lunch

Enjoy an event provided gourmet boxed lunch featuring chef-crafted wraps, artisanal salads, and fresh-baked cookies while networking.

| 1:00 pm

AdvisoryX: Reimagining Consulting in the AI

Era Rafi Menachem, Founder & CEO, Syntari International

Discover how Syntari is revolutionizing the consulting industry by fusing strategic expertise with AI-driven tools to deliver 10x impact at fraction of traditional costs. Learn how boutique firms can compete with Big 4 consultancies by leveraging AI-native platforms that automate strategy development while maintaining premium pricing.

Key Takeaways:

- How we reduced project turnaround by 95% while charging more
- Building AI agents that generate board-ready materials instantly
 - Creating switching costs through deep AI integration
 - The framework that lets boutique firms beat McKinsey
- Why giving away our methods strengthens our business

| 2:00 pm

Change Management for AI Transformation

Antonio Manueco

SEI's senior consultants share 20+ years of experience helping organizations navigate AI transformation. Learn how to cultivate change champions, design engaging training platforms, and build frameworks that allow employees to lead AI initiatives with minimal friction.

- Turning pilot participants into evangelists
- Moving beyond technical feasibility to cultural transformation
 - Creating employee-driven innovation frameworks
 - Measuring effectiveness and recognizing achievements
- Why change management expertise commands premium fees

| 3:00 pm

Protecting Your Castle: IP & Data Security in the AI Gold Rush

Edwin Sisson & Jeffrey Banyas, McIntosh Law Firm

As AI becomes ubiquitous, protecting your innovations becomes critical. Learn from patent attorneys who've secured 30+ patents and successfully enforced IP rights globally, including rare wins in China. Discover how to build defensible moats that survive the "AI for everyone" wave.

Key Takeaways:

- Creating IP strategies for AI innovations
- Trade secrets vs. patents in the AI age
- Compliance frameworks that differentiate

| 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Cocktails and Connections

Celebrate new knowledge and network with cocktails over a premium selection of chef-curated appetizers and refreshments. Two complimentary drinks included.