

2026
SMI

Annual Meeting

March 5-8, 2026



RELAX.



RECHARGE.



REINVENT.

*Set against the
stunning backdrop of Puerto Rico,*



the 2026 SMI Annual Meeting offers the ideal setting to unwind, connect and recharge with fellow spring industry professionals. Through dynamic sessions and forward-thinking speakers, you'll gain fresh insights on reimagining employee engagement and harnessing emerging technologies to drive your business ahead. Leave inspired—with actionable strategies to elevate both your personal growth and professional success.

SPONSORS.

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS.

RELAX. RECHARGE. REINVENT.

THURSDAY, MARCH 5

9–12 Noon	Executive Committee Meeting	Boardroom
12:30–4 p.m.	Meeting Registration	Foyer 1-4
1–4 p.m.	Emerging Leaders Conference	Rio Mar 9-10
5–6 p.m.	Newcomers Reception	Ocean Terrace 1
6–8 p.m.	Welcome Reception	Marabella Garden

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

8–9:45 a.m.	Committee Meeting with Breakfast Buffet (open to all)	Caribbean Ballroom
10 a.m.–12 Noon	Board of Directors Meeting (Lunch)	Rio Mar 7-8
12:15 p.m.	Gather for Optional Tours	Hotel Lobby
12:30–4:30 p.m.	El Yunque Rainforest Tour*	
12:30–5:30 p.m.	Catamaran Sail & Snorkel Tour*	
6:30–9:30 p.m.	Reception and Dinner	Vista Verde Gardens

SATURDAY, MARCH 7

8 a.m.	Breakfast	Rio Mar Salon 5
8:30–11:30 a.m.	General Session	Rio Mar Salon 5
8:30–9:30 a.m.	“Learning to be the Coach They Need” Raquel Chole	
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Coffee Break	
10–11:30 a.m.	“Principles of Winning” Desmond Clark	
11:45–5:30 p.m.	Golf Tournament*	Rio Mar River Golf Course
12:30–4:30 p.m.	Barcardi Rum Tasting Tour*	Hotel Lobby

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

8 a.m.	Breakfast	Rio Mar Salon 5
8:30–9 a.m.	Membership Meeting	Rio Mar Salon 5
9–11:30 a.m.	General Session	Rio Mar Salon 5
9–9:30 a.m.	“Smart Safety: How Technology and Innovation Are Redefining Worker Protection in Manufacturing” Laura Helmrich-Rhodes	
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Coffee Break	
10–11:30 a.m.	“Compete on Awesome with AI” Susan Frew	
11:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.	Women in Springs Luncheon	El Morro 1
1:30–4 p.m.	Pickleball Tournament*	Rio Mar Tennis Center
5:30–6:30 p.m.	Reception	Vista Verde Gardens
6:30–9 p.m.	Closing Dinner	Vista Verde Gardens

*Optional Activity

Raquel Chole



Raquel Chole is president and CEO of Global Leadership Resources, a leadership development company. Chole's passion for leadership development comes first and foremost from her time in the spring industry. For more than

20 years, she worked in global business development for an automotive component maker that served all major car producers, including Ford, VW, GM, Nissan, SAIC, Adient and Toyota. It was through her work in automotive that she was named one of the most influential women in American manufacturing by the National Association of Manufacturers and received the Minority Supplier Development award from Johnson Controls. In addition, she was a regular contributor to *Springs* magazine.

That passion for excellence led her to partner with Crestcom, one of the training industry's most widely used management and leadership development programs among Fortune magazine's "Most Admired Companies." Her experience, paired with Crestcom's L.E.A.D.R. program, helps people produce business results. Chole works with small and mid-market companies to develop critical management skills and develop leaders in the skill areas of effective communication, customer service, developing people, managing change, negotiation, problem-solving, raising productivity, strategic thinking and team building.

Desmond Clark



Desmond Clark is a former professional football player who played tight end in the NFL for 12 seasons. Clark spent three years with the Denver Broncos and one with the Miami Dolphins before beginning his notable eight-year tenure with

the Chicago Bears (2003–2010). During his time with the Bears, he was a Pro Bowl alternate in 2005 and helped the team reach Super Bowl XLI in 2006. He retired having compiled 323 career receptions for 3,591 yards and 27 touchdowns, finishing his career as the Bears' second all-time tight end in receptions, yards and touchdowns behind only Mike Ditka.

Since retiring from football in 2012, Clark has successfully transitioned his focus from the field to entrepreneurship, leadership and public speaking. He is an author, business coach and inspirational keynote speaker who shares the "Principles of Winning" through his published book and corporate consultations. He's now an entrepreneur serving as the owner, president and CEO of Bear Down Logistics.

Susan Frew



Susan Frew is a dynamic entrepreneur, keynote speaker and an acknowledged "Super User of AI" who focuses on practical, profit-driven applications of artificial intelligence (AI) for business growth and leadership.

Her professional foundation was established in the fast-paced tech industry, including a role as an international general manager for a Fortune 20 telecom company, AT&T Wireless, where she oversaw operations in two Caribbean countries. Leveraging this corporate experience, she transitioned to entrepreneurship as the owner of Sunshine Home Services, a plumbing and heating company in Colorado. Under her leadership, the company achieved remarkable success, including a 535% growth that earned it a spot on the Inc. 5000 list. This hands-on experience allows her to deliver practical, actionable AI strategies to entrepreneurs and business leaders across various industries.

Recognized by LinkedIn Asia as an AI Thought Leader for her viral content, Frew now dedicates herself to demystifying AI through speaking engagements, workshops and consulting. She is known for translating complex technological concepts into easily digestible strategies, even creating custom GPT models for conferences to enhance interactive learning. Frew is the author of the book "Compete on Awesome with AI" and hosts the Compete on Awesome with AI podcast, advocating for businesses to leverage AI to save money and time.

Laura Helmrich-Rhodes



Laura Helmrich-Rhodes Ph.D. is a board-certified safety professional in comprehensive practice (CSP) and is an associate professor in the Safety Sciences and Environmental Engineering Department at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

She has served as SMI's regulatory and compliance consultant since 2014.

Her work experience is in insurance loss control and OSHA(7)(C)(1) consultation. She teaches OSHA standard-related courses, general introductory courses and supervises and coordinates senior intern activities. Rhodes earned her doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh, where her dissertation focused on the intersection of human resources and safety professions and the need for human resource professionals to gain graduate safety education. She holds a bachelor's degree in safety sciences and a master's degree in industrial and labor relations.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

**El Yunque Rainforest Tour**

12:15–4:30 p.m.

Buses depart from the hotel at 12:30 p.m.

Named after the good Indian spirit, Yuquiyu, and shelter to the Carib Indians for 200 years, El Yunque is the only tropical rainforest in the U.S. National Forest System. Your first stop will be at the visitors' center where you will learn about the rich history of the rainforest. Next you will take a relaxing stroll with a knowledgeable step-aboard guide who will point out the splendor of the surroundings. Afterwards you will be driven up to the Yokahu Tower to enjoy the breathtaking panoramic views. Lastly your tour will include a stop at a refreshing river where you will be able to swim.

Schedule

12:15	Meet at hotel main entrance and check in
12:30	Depart for El Yunque Rainforest
12:45–4:15	Rainforest Experience Starts Visit El Portal Visitor Center Yokahu Tower River Stop
4:15	Depart for Hotel
4:30	Arrive at Hotel

Level of Difficulty: Low

Health Concerns: Please inform us in advance of any health conditions or recent surgeries.

Required Attire: Comfortable clothing, closed toe shoes (no flip flops), towels, bathing suit (we recommend wearing it under your clothes) and a change of clothes.

Optional Attire: Hat, sunglasses, sunscreen lotion, bug repellent and camera.

Minimum number of participants: 18**Maximum number of participants:** 24

Price: \$225 per person. The tour includes round trip transportation to/from hotel and all taxes, fees and gratuities.

**Catamaran Sail and Snorkel Tour**

12:15–5:30 p.m.

Buses depart from the hotel at 12:30 p.m.

Set sail aboard a catamaran for a delightful day in the Caribbean waters and discover the Island's abundant living coral reefs. If you've never snorkeled before, here's your opportunity to learn the sport in a fun and relaxing setting. You'll have the opportunity to take short dives into the crystal-clear waters where you'll discover a world of fluid motion.

Schedule

12:15	Meet at Hotel Main Entrance and Check In
12:30	Depart for Marina
1:00	Arrive at Marina and Check In
5:00	Depart for Hotel
5:30	Arrival at Hotel

Level of Difficulty: Low

Required Attire: Sunscreen lotion (spray is not allowed), bathing suit or swimwear under clothes or synthetic (quick-dry) material clothing, and a towel.

Recommended Attire: T-shirt, short pants, change of clothes, flip-flops or water shoes. We do not recommend wearing any jewelry.

Optional Attire: Hat, sunglasses.

Restrictions: Participants must have basic swimming skills. Expecting mothers are not allowed to participate in this activity. Vessel is not handicap accessible. Please inform us in advance of any dietary restrictions, health condition or recent surgery. Please notify the Captain if you're not a good swimmer.

Minimum number of participants: 30**Maximum number of participants:** 44

Price: \$260 per person and includes private sailing charter, snorkeling equipment and floaters, light snacks and fruit, soft drinks and rum beverages, captain, crew, transportation to/from hotel and all taxes, fees and gratuities.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7



SMI Golf Tournament

Rio Mar Country Club
River Course
11:45 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

Take a hotel shuttle bus to the golf course beginning at 11:30 a.m. Return via shuttle bus at the conclusion of the tournament at approximately 5:30 p.m. The shotgun scramble tournament starts at 12:30 p.m.

The River Course is one of two championship 18-hole courses at the Rio Mar Country Club, located in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico, and is part of the Wyndham Grand Rio Mar resort complex. The course was designed by Hall of Fame golfer Greg Norman.

Schedule: 11:45 a.m. Shuttle to Golf Course
for Warm Up and Check In
12:45 p.m. Shotgun Start
5:30 p.m. Tournament Ends

Price: \$310 per person includes a boxed lunch, water and golf. Rental clubs are available at an additional cost of \$70 per set plus tax. The cost for rental clubs will need to be paid on the day of the event at the pro shop. Driving range privileges are included in your registration fee and available for use prior to the start of the tournament.



Barcardi Rum Tasting Tour

Barcardi Headquarters
12:30–4:30 p.m.

If you wish to awaken your five senses, then enhance yourself at the Barcardi Rum Tasting Tour and Seminar. Guests will understand why Bacardi Rum is the King of Rums and the Rum of Kings. Understand the profile, discover the aromas, taste the sensation of the most renowned rums Bacardi has to offer. Learn the true art of performing a rum tasting by one of the company's masters. See, smell and taste four of Barcardi's best rums. The tour includes a stop at the gift shop after the tasting seminar.

Schedule: 12:30 p.m. Gather in Hotel Lobby
1:45 p.m. Depart hotel
1:30 p.m. Arrival and Check In
2–3:15 p.m. Tour and Tasting
3:30 p.m. Depart for Hotel
4:30 p.m. Arrival at Hotel

The tour includes round trip transportation, entrance fee and one complimentary welcome drink. Must be 18+ to participate and a valid I.D. is required. Not suitable for expectant mothers. Please inform us in advance of any health conditions or recent surgeries.

Minimum number of participants: 18

Maximum number of participants: 30

Price: \$225 per person

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

Pickleball Round Robin Tournament

SMI's popular Pickleball event will be held at the Rio Mar Tennis Center, which is a short shuttle bus ride from the hotel. No previous playing experience required. A short rules refresher will be provided by our host pro Zulema Zelaya prior to the start of play. A round-robin format will be utilized.



Schedule: 1 p.m. Shuttle Bus to Tennis Facility
1:30 p.m. Rules Refresher and Tournament Start
4 p.m. Tournament Ends
Shuttle Bus Back to Hotel

Maximum number of players: 48

Price: \$100 per person includes beverages and paddles.

Emerging Leaders Conference

SMI's Emerging Leaders group will hold a one-day conference just prior to the start of the annual meeting on **Thursday, March 5, 1–4 p.m.** Emerging Leaders is a group of SMI members bringing innovative and experimental ideas to shape the future of SMI and the springmaking industry.

Packed with industry-specific content and opportunities for peer connection within our industry, this “conference within a conference” is focused on the needs of critical non-owner employees, emerging, future, and next generation leaders within our industry.

This year's event will feature a presentation by Raquel Chole, CEO of Global Leadership Resources, a leadership development company on “Strategic Foundations.” Could your future success be in jeopardy because strategic thinking does not fit into your daily activities? Or do you think that strategic thinking does not apply to you or your role in an organization? Or was a past generation the definer of the strategy you have inherited? Attendees will learn an effective approach to strategic thinking that can be employed immediately to both short- and long-term needs.



SMI's Emerging Leaders group exists to serve the needs of the emerging and future generation members and ensure that content and conferences evolve to meet the needs of emerging leaders and non-owner participants. This group is primarily geared toward those under 40.



Committee Meetings with Breakfast Buffet

Be sure to join us **Friday, March 6, 8–9:45 a.m.** for our Breakfast Buffet and Committee Meetings in the Caribbean Ballroom. Please join us for breakfast and sit in on one of our committees (no commitment) and help guide the future of SMI.

SMI Committees include Associates, Benchmarking, Communications, Convention Planning, Education, Emerging Leaders, Membership, Past Presidents, Regulatory Compliance, Technical and Women in Springs.



Newcomers Reception

By invitation only, SMI is excited to welcome newcomers to our annual meeting. There will be a reception hosted by SMI President Don Jacobson III, **Thursday, March 5, 5–6 p.m.** in Ocean Terrace 1. First time attendees will be paired with a more experienced SMI member who will serve as your host and resource during the meeting to introduce you to others and “show you the ropes.” We are excited to welcome our newcomers.



Women in Springs Luncheon

For the first-time ever, a special luncheon for SMI's Women in Springs group, will be held **Sunday, March 8, 11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m.** in El Morro 1. This is a great opportunity for women in the spring industry to meet and celebrate how they are succeeding in their career and personal lives.

REGISTRATION & TRAVEL.

Registration Rates

	Until Dec. 31, 2025	Jan. 1–31, 2026	Feb. 1, 2026– Event
Member	\$1,850.00	\$1,950.00	\$2,050.00
Spouse	\$1,450.00	\$1,550.00	\$1,650.00
Children (21 & Under)	\$175.00	\$200.00	\$225.00

Meeting registration and event fees will be charged upfront. Those who have paid the registration price and cancel their meeting reservations on or before February 7 will receive a full refund, minus a \$100 cancellation fee per person. **NO REFUNDS after February 11, 2026.**

Special Requirements

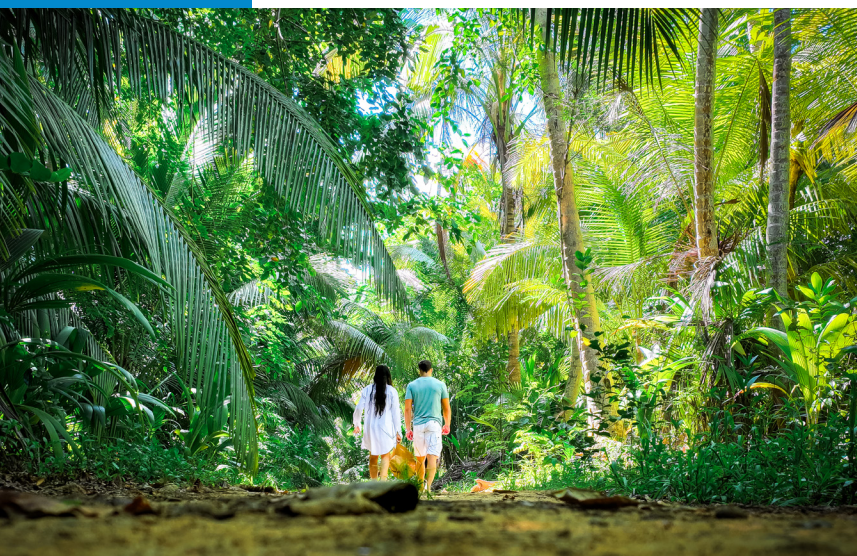
When you complete your registration for the SMI Annual Meeting, please note if you have a disability or dietary need that may require any special assistance or accommodation. A staff member will contact you for details.

Register Now

Use this link to register for this year's meeting.
<https://www.smihq.org/annual-meeting/>

Dress Code

Dress for all events is business casual.



Travel Information

The approximate driving distance between the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (SJU) in San Juan, Puerto Rico and the Wyndham Grand Rio Mar Puerto Rico Golf & Beach Resort in Río Grande is 23.8 miles or approximately 39 minutes.

Please note that Puerto Rico is a U.S. Territory and therefore does not require a passport to travel to.

The preferred option for transport to and from the hotel is via GSI, the in-house destination management company (DMC) and the airport shuttle transportation provider between SJU and the Wyndham Rio Mar Hotel.

Please see link below to make your reservations directly with GSI's tour and travel department. GSI also has an onsite agent at the hotel should you wish to arrange your return transfer to the airport after you check in.

Standard, shared shuttle transfers (paid on own by guests)

- Cost is \$44 per person, each way, subject to a minimum charge of 2 passengers per transfer.
- You can book online using this link:
<https://fareharbor.com/gsipuertorico-online/>

Shuttle operation hours (arrivals): 7 a.m.–10 p.m.

Shuttle operation hours (departure): 5 a.m.–5 p.m.

Call Center Contact Number: 787-354-7350

Transfers booked outside of the standard hours can be arranged by booking a private transfer for a 6-passenger minimum charge.

Private transfers are also available. Contact GSI at 787-354-7350 for more information.

The main rideshare app that is currently available on the island is Uber, which is readily available at the airport and in surrounding areas at the hotel.

More Information

To learn more about Puerto Rico, be sure to visit: <https://www.discoverpuertorico.com>

DISCOVER
Puerto Rico

DiscoverPuertoRico.com



WYNDHAM GRAND RIO MAR

6000 Rio Mar Blvd | Rio Grande, PR 00745-6100
787-888-6000

<https://www.wyndhamriomar.com>

Room Rates

Standard Guest Room Run of House: King or Two Queen Beds (single/double occupancy) at a discounted group rate of \$309 per night plus 11% tax. All guestroom rates are subject to and do not include the following:

- \$40.00 **Daily Flat Resort Fee** plus 11% government tax (see more information below on what is included in this fee)
- \$2.50 **Housekeeping Gratuity** per room per night, plus 11.5% tax
- \$7.00 **Porterage Fee** one-time fee per person, plus 11.5% tax
- **Third & Fourth Adult:** \$30.00 per adult, per night plus 11.5% tax
- **Children 0-17:** Free when sharing room with an adult

Please note this room category and rate is for Run of House rooms, meaning a King or Two Queen Beds will be assigned to you at check-in. You may make a specific room type request at this rate, but it is not guaranteed. Please see other upgrade and add-on options below.

The special SMI discounted group rate is available three (3) days pre/post conference dates based on hotel availability. The official meeting room block **begins on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, and ends on Monday, March 9, 2026.**

Cancellation policy is 3 days prior to arrival date. Cancellations made less than 3 days prior to arrival shall forfeit the deposit equivalent to first night room and tax.

All rooms included in the room block require a prepayment of 1 night's stay upon reservation confirmation.

A valid credit card is required during the check-in process.

Reservations can be made directly with the hotel by following this link: <https://book.passkey.com/e/51024088> or by calling the hotel directly at 787-888-6000. Be sure to mention that you are attending the SMI Annual Meeting.

Discounted Group Rate Deadline

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

Resort Fee

The Resort Fee is subject to tax which is currently 11% and provides for:

- Long-distance phone access (toll-free, credit card & collect calls)
- Unlimited local calls (town of Rio Grande only)
- Internal Resort shuttle transportation
- Unlimited use of Fitness Center
- Daily local English newspaper
- Use of in-room safe

- Unlimited driving range golf balls
- Recreational Amenities, Daily Guest Activities
- Beach & Pool Towels, Lounge Chairs and Umbrellas
- Beach Attendant Service
- 2 Complimentary Bottled Waters in Room with Daily Replenishment
- In-Room Puerto Rican Coffee and Tea Presentation
- Luggage Storage for Early Arrivals or Late Departures
- Use of Computers for Printing Boarding Passes

Upgrade and Add-On Options

Nightly upgrade fees per room category:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| • Pool View Rooms: \$80++ | • Pool Suites: \$330++ |
| • Ocean View Rooms: \$100++ | • Ocean Suites: \$350++ |
| • Rainforest Suites: \$230++ | • Discovery/Family Suites: \$500++ |

These upgrade fees are in addition to the group base rate of \$309++ and are subject to applicable hotel fees and taxes.

Example: Ocean View Room = \$309 (base rate) + \$100 (upgrade fee) = \$409 nightly, before taxes and fees.

Upgrades must be requested directly by attendees and will be confirmed on a case-by-case basis, depending on availability at the time of the request.

Other add-on options:

- Sleeping mattresses are available for king bedrooms at an additional nightly fee of \$25 plus taxes. For safety reasons, mattresses cannot be provided in standard rooms with 2-queen beds.
- Connecting rooms between standard king and 2-queen bedrooms are available for a nightly fee of \$30 plus taxes.
- Cribs are available upon request at no additional charge.

For questions regarding an upgrade or other add-on options, please contact Gabriela Cruz, Group Reservations Coordinator at the Wyndham Grand Rio Mar at 787-888-6000 Ext. 6369 or email: gabriela.cruz@wyndhamriomar.com.

Check-in/Check-out

Guest accommodations will be available at 4 pm on arrival day and reserved until 11 am on departure day. Any attendee wishing special consideration for early arrival should call the toll-free number, 800-474-6627. Any attendee wishing special consideration for late check-out should inquire at the front desk on the day of departure. Group members staying in their rooms beyond the check-out time without Hotel authorization will be charged for an additional night stay.

Parking Fees

Valet Parking: \$25 per night

Self-Parking: \$18 per night.