

SPEAKER & WORKSHOP DETAILS



SUMMER CONFERENCE

THURSDAY 19 JUNE 2025

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Association of Business
Leaders in Education



Morning Keynote and Workshops

Negotiation and Thinking Skills – Victoria Maitland, Laughology

Vicky's experience working in the charity, business and education sectors means she can adapt quickly to any audience. She has a background in the arts, which makes her an engaging facilitator, host and development consultant. She delivers sessions using creative improvisation and brings energy and fun to a room.



Vicky is a go-to for communication, performance and presenting skills and specialises in voice development, a key skill in improving confidence and team building.

She's passionate about engaging people through humour, laughter and thinking creatively. Vicky always ensures her sessions are fun and interactive, and that people leave with new skills feeling happy and confident.

She has consulted for the Northumbrian Water Innovation Festival, delivered communication and confidence skills for University of Cambridge staff, and delivered training for Diabetes UK and Crisis. She has over ten years of experience supporting Laughology in delivering transformation programmes for blue-chip clients.

Keynote Overview

Getting communication and negotiations right lead to better relationships throughout an organisation and closer cohesion between people and departments. Problems come in many shapes and sizes; expansion, contraction, lack of budgets and resources, new competition, personnel challenges, mergers, acquisitions and transformation. To cope and conquer we need to be innovative and creative problem-solvers as well as great communicators.

It's about understanding different communication styles, listening, body language, tone, adapting your message to the situation and a myriad of other nuanced factors. Master these and master the art of making yourself understood.

Workshop Overview - Team Building Skills – Victoria Maitland, Laughology

Teams that don't gel become fragmented. Conflict and division can arise and relationships can break down. Team cohesion can make or break an organisation and managing an unhappy team can be timely. A team that is fragmented can mean the customer or stakeholder loses out, vital information is missed and ideas don't develop.

A happy, motivated team, working together with a shared vision and a clear direction however, will be more productive, creative and innovative. Happy teams record less absenteeism, give more discretionary effort and are more likely to remain loyal, working for you and your organisation. Not everyone will always get on, but understanding each other and celebrating strengths and differences is more desirable and productive than division.

Using psychological research and neuroscience, Laughology helps leaders and individuals understand their own working and thinking styles and identify their strengths and the strengths of others. This opens the door to improved teamwork, leadership, customer relationships, creativity and problem-solving. This fun, enlightening and dynamic workshop encourages delegates to expand their ability to motivate others and communicate effectively.

Workshop - Standing out from the crowd – 5 essential marketing tactics for schools– Justin Smith

Following a career spent in private sector business development and marketing, Justin moved into the education sector over 20 years ago and has worked as a senior leader in 3 large secondary schools in East Anglia.

In 2017 Justin established his own business, Chameleon Consultancy and Training, designed to provide specialist marketing, income generation and bid writing services to the education sector.

A vastly experienced bid writer, Justin has secured over £8 million in additional income for schools, from a variety of sources including conventional grants and trust funds, commercial sponsorship and donations.

Justin is an assessor with Best Practice Network, assessing school leaders for the School Business Professional Apprenticeship and the Diploma in School Business Management. In 2024 Justin was appointed Chair of MarCommEd (East Anglia) a community interest company established to support and promote the work of marketing professionals in the education sector.

Justin was awarded the Guardian/ISBL Marketing Award in 2015 and is a Fellow of the Institute of School Business Leadership.



Workshop Overview

Effective marketing of your school isn't just about attracting more pupils or recruiting staff. Being really clear about what your school stands for, and how it differentiates itself from others, can bring huge benefits in all sorts of ways. In this workshop we will spend time understanding how some simple tactics can drive up the profile of our school. From your online presence and SEO to parental endorsements and community engagement, we will pull together our Top 5 Essentials – actions you can get to grips with back in school.

You'll learn how these tactics can reinforce your reputation, supercharge your fundraising campaigns and help communicate positive messages to the wider community. Don't worry – this isn't a jargon filled workshop – this is a practical session that will help you to see school marketing in a different light!

Workshop - Top 5 Essentials for Cyber Security – Gary Hardy – Atom IT

Gary has worked in Education IT for over 20 years. Initially trained as a Secondary School IT Teacher, he understands school IT systems and their impact on teaching, learning and management in these unique environments. A committed attendee at all ABLE and ANME* events, he'll always try to offer sound, practical advice and guidance to the many schools Atom IT support (and anyone else who'll listen).

*Association of Network Managers in Education

Workshop Overview

You're going to get hacked. Gary will walk you through the 5 things you (and your IT support provider) can do to manage, detect and respond to what's coming. He'll run through key elements of network and cloud security, and offer some top tips and takeaways.



Afternoon Keynote and Workshops

Keynote – Beyond the Pressure: Thriving In Challenge and Change

Rachael Edmondson-Clarke is an international speaker, trainer, and coach with deep expertise in high performance, wellbeing, and leadership psychology.

Former Regional President of the Professional Speaking Association, Rachael has worked with senior leadership teams, global organisations, and elite athletes to help them thrive under pressure and navigate challenges and change with confidence. She lives locally with her husband and their two young boys.



Keynote overview

Some days, it feels like everything rests on your shoulders - tight budgets, endless demands, and the pressure to hold it all together.

This keynote will help you move beyond the pressures and thrive. You'll learn practical strategies to boost your energy, manage stress, and lead with confidence - turning challenges into opportunities for growth.

Backed by world-class research and a proven programme trusted by elite performers and global corporations these insights will help you consistently perform at your best, and inspire those around you.

Workshop - From Insight to Action: Thriving in Challenge and Change: Practical Strategies for Everyday Success – Rachael Edmondson-Clarke

This interactive workshop is your opportunity to turn insights into action. Together, we'll explore the practical and biological aspects of wellbeing, performance, and relationships - diving into how your mood, energy, and ability to handle stress are deeply connected to your biology, psychology, and leadership impact.

Through hands-on activities, you'll:

- Analyse your personal ecosystem to identify quick wins for restoring mood, boosting energy, and increasing your capacity to manage stress.
- Use a clinically proven mood-monitoring tool to enhance self-awareness and elevate performance.
- Develop practical strategies to restore, resolve, and regulate your mood and emotions, optimising your leadership impact.
- Built on cutting-edge research and tools designed for high-performing leaders, Olympic teams, the British Army, and global corporations, this session equips you with actionable steps to sustain your capacity to lead, thrive under pressure, and inspire those around you.

Workshop - Play Areas and Outdoor Learning – pitching to funders for your school projects– Justin Smith

According to the latest research, 2.3 million children under the age of 9 in Britain don't have a playground close to home (2024 Green Space Index). Many of these children rely on their schools to provide access to outdoor play areas. We all agree that outdoor play is fundamentally important for the social development and wellbeing of our young people, not to mention the benefits to their physical health. This workshop will explore how your school can approach and submit funding applications for outdoor play and learning spaces. We will look at the funding grants that are available and how to pitch for them as well as other forms of fundraising, from community crowdfunding to commercial sponsorship.

Delegates will come away from this workshop with a clear plan and invaluable advice that's proven to work!

Workshop - Emergency Planning- Andrea Gardner, Resilience Officer, Leics County Council

Andrea is a Resilience Officer for Leicestershire County Council, working in the Resilience and Business Continuity team. Andrea has worked in resilience and emergency management for many years, in the past 5 years for Local Authorities, and previously in many different environments which have included large sporting stadia, national sporting events such as the Commonwealth games, and across various entertainment and festival arenas throughout the UK, as well as in various learning environments. Andrea is involved in the planning for, responding to, and recovery from various risks to communities within Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.



Andrea has supported the response to a range of incidents over the years, examples of which are widespread flooding, community gas outages, and political and cultural events.

Workshop Overview

This workshop will provide delegates with an overview of emergency planning and how they can apply simple principles to ensure that their senior leadership, staff, students and key stakeholders are prepared to respond to sudden on-set or rising tide incidents.