



Marketing Professionals Workshop 2026

April 13 - 15, 2026

Highlands Event Center, Mitchell, SD

Monday, April 13

1:00 – 2:30 pm Lana Loken – Taking Care of You: It IS okay to say NO!

Life pulls us in many directions, and with the multiple roles we play, finding a healthy balance can feel overwhelming. This presentation guides participants in identifying their biggest challenges and recognizing the early signs of burnout. We will explore practical strategies for coping, building resilience, and self-care that are realistic and sustainable—designed to fit into even the busiest lives. YES – we’ll also talk about the power of saying NO as a vital part of protecting your well-being.

15 Minute Break

2:45 – 3:45 pm SDN Communications – Threat of “Badbox 2.0” and Compromised IoT Devices

Presented by:

- Chris Schuette, SDN Network Architect
- Philip Brooks, SDN Managed Services Technician
- Ryan Jackovich, SDN Junior Network Engineer
- *Potential*: Representative from Dakota State University’s MADLABs

Low-cost Android streaming devices, such as SuperBox or generic "unlocked" TV boxes, have become a household staple for consumers seeking free content. However, research reveals these devices are often pre-infected with malware. This presentation breaks down how these devices are enabling sophisticated cyberattacks like the Kimwolf botnet and massive DDoS campaigns. We will explore the dual threat of copyright infringement and network security, share frontline experiences from SDTA members, and discuss the how to best address their use amongst the collective telecommunications networks in South Dakota.

3:45 – 4:15 pm Calix - Embracing AI in Your Experience Journey

Presented by: Chad Mohling

The rapid rise and continuous evolution of AI is promising to redefine operational efficiency and create new customer experiences, impacting every aspect of broadband service delivery. AI technology is cool and astounding, but AI adoption is not about technology – is it people and business transformation that will require changes to executive decision-making and leadership approaches. This session will explore insights from across the broadband service provider

community and how leaders are adapting strategies, evolving mindsets, and driving innovation to engage teams and measure the impact in an AI-powered future.

4:15 pm OPEN DISCUSSION – SHARING OF IDEAS

5:00 pm - Networking Social: Hosted drinks and light food at Blarney's

Tuesday, April 14

7:30 – 8:00 am Breakfast - provided

8:00 – 9:00 am  **Office Etiquette - Go along to get along.**



9:00 – 12:00 Andy Masters – Creating TRUE Customer Loyalty in the NEW Era of Customer Experience.

Andy illustrates why creating a culture of world-class customer experience is more important NOW than any time in history. Therefore, we must re-evaluate every touchpoint in the customer experience process.

- Interactive brainstorms on improving services through new innovations
- Anticipate challenges and complaints; then plan and prepare accordingly
- Embrace empathy for those served
- Be a light of positivity and solutions, during stressful and turbulent times.
- Manage customer expectations to improve quality, and decrease internal stress
- Increase customer confidence through communication, signage, and social media

Powerful service principles are based on Andy's award-winning book "*Kiss Your Customer*", as he proves that we must "create a transformation from doing a job to creating a bond". Andy also shares examples from around the globe on how to create customer loyalty, avoid dissatisfaction, and improve reputation—including on social media. Our best customers are also our most effective—and least expensive marketing. Therefore, there will be no better opportunity than the NEW customer who will be visiting us tomorrow. Enjoy this timely, interactive, and impactful program which provides critical solutions to serve in today's "high-expectation" world.

12:00 – 1:00 pm Lunch – provided

1:00 – 1:30 pm **Regulatory Update by Marlene Bennett, Consortia Consulting**

1:30 – 2:30 pm Current Trends: Identity Theft, Fraud, and Cyber Threats

Presented by: Carrie Kerskie, Kerskie Group, LLC.

Fear and confusion often open the door for scammers to succeed. Staying aware is the most effective way to protect yourself from identity theft, fraud, and cybercrime. This session will examine the latest threats, highlight emerging risks for the coming year, and provide practical strategies to keep you safe.

15 Minute Break

2:45 pm – 3:15 pm Vantage Point - 20 Sales & Marketing Tips in 30 Minutes

Presented by: Ruby Hibbens

Whether you are a mighty team of one or a mighty team of many, this session will give you insight to 20 customizable, totally take-able marketing and sales tips for your organization. In this fast-paced, high-energy session, hear from Ruby Hibben, Director of Marketing Services at Vantage Point Solutions, on ways to maximize your current processes and implement new ideas to best serve your end users.

3:15 – 3:45 pm Pinnacle Marketing Group - SEO vs. GEO: What Broadband Providers Need to Know About AI Search

Presented by: Autumn Ricke

Generative AI is reshaping how people search for and discover essential services, including broadband. While Search Engine Optimization (SEO) has long determined online visibility, a new frontier called Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) is changing the rules. In this session, we'll break down the difference between SEO and GEO, explore how each impacts broadband providers, and explain why preparing for this shift is important. Using real-world examples and clear takeaways, we'll show how you can position your brand to stand out in local markets and stay visible in the age of AI-driven search.

3:45 pm OPEN DISCUSSION/ROUND TABLES

6:00 pm Attendee Dinner – Sponsored by:



LOCATION: Cattlemen's Club Steakhouse, 601 E. Norway Ave, Mitchell, SD 57301

Wednesday, April 15

8:30 – 9:00 am Breakfast – Provided

9:00 – 12:00 Noon Shawna Suckow - Small is Your Superpower!

The marketing world has changed—and most big businesses didn't get the memo. While big brands are still shouting through megaphones and polishing their media, small businesses are quietly winning hearts, attention, and loyalty. How? By doing something revolutionary: being human. In this insight-packed presentation, Shawna unpacks the rise of the underdog in a trust-crisis era. She'll reveal why today's consumer is more skeptical, more distracted, and more craving of authenticity than ever before—and why that gives smaller organizations an unprecedented edge. This keynote is your marketing reset button. It's not about doing more—it's about doing it differently. Whether you're a solo entrepreneur, a lean business team, or a scrappy organization trying to compete with the big guys, you'll walk away with practical strategies.

Backed by behavioral data, packed with relatable humor, and rooted in Shawna's decades of experience in buyer psychology, this keynote proves that small isn't a liability—it's the new marketing advantage.

Thank you for attending!