

OPTICA
FOUNDATION

Formerly
OSA

CAREER ACCELERATOR

What they don't teach you in the lab.

21 - 25 January 2024

YMCA of the Rockies - Estes Park Center
Colorado, USA

optica.org/CareerAccelerator



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Welcome to the Career Accelerator.

Get ready to explore the core skills and expectations for the corporate environment you will need to advance your career.

Our goal is to fill a training and education gap by focusing on career paths and the professional and personal skills needed to acclimate you to the culture, language and methodology of the corporate world. Topics we will explore include:

- Budgeting & Financial Management
- Management & Decision Making
- Effective Communication
- Innovation & Product Development
- Team Building & Group Dynamics
- Business Strategy
- Marketing and Branding
- Negotiating
- Project Management
- Leadership Development

Explore other resources and engagement opportunities with the Optica Foundation.

Funding Opportunities & Meeting Grants

The Optica Foundation provides a variety of [scholarships and grants](#) to students and early career professionals in addition to several with the aim of improving [equity and inclusion](#) including [family care grants](#) to assist members attending Optica meetings..

Student chapters

Our chapters receive numerous benefits and participate in activities such as educational outreach, Student Leadership, IONS, and many other programs.

Level Up Leadership

Are you leading a team for the first time? Do you know how to handle conflicts? Are you feeling like an imposter? This program for early-career professionals explores these questions and the communication and leadership skills necessary to advance your career to the next level.

Siegman International School on Lasers

Created in honor of laser pioneer Anthony Siegman, you will experience an overview of laser science and technology like no other. For graduate students, attendees have the opportunity to connect with laser luminaries and are able to present their own research.

Innovation School

Learn how to take a great idea and turn it into product... and how to take an idea that isn't working and pivot to something else. Here, early-career professionals and students explore the lean-canvas model and customer problem fit on a team racing towards a pitch at the end of the four-day program.

Anti-Harassment Policy and Code of Conduct

Optica is committed to providing an environment that is conducive to the free and robust exchange of scientific ideas. This environment requires that all participants be treated with equal consideration and respect. While Optica encourages vigorous debate of ideas, personal attacks create an environment in which people feel threatened or intimidated. This is not productive and does not advance the cause of science. All participants in Optica and Optica-managed events and activities are therefore expected to conduct themselves professionally and respectfully.

It is the policy of Optica that all forms of bullying, discrimination and harassment, sexual or otherwise, are prohibited in any Optica or Optica-managed events or activities. This policy applies to every individual at the event, whether attendee, speaker, exhibitor, award recipient, staff, contractor or other. It is also a violation of this policy to retaliate against an individual for reporting bullying, discrimination or harassment or to intentionally file a false report of bullying, discrimination or harassment.

Bullying, discrimination and harassment of any sort by someone in a position of power, prestige or authority is particularly harmful since those of lower status or rank may be hesitant to express their objections or discomfort out of fear of retaliation.

Optica may take any disciplinary action it deems appropriate if, after thorough investigation, it finds a violation occurred.

For complete policy information visit optica.org/CodeOfConduct.

If you wish to report bullying, discrimination, or harassment you have witnessed or experienced, you may do so through the following methods:

- Use the online portal optica.org/IncidentReport
- Email CodeOfConduct@optica.org.

Agenda

Sunday, 21 January 2024

13:00

Bus #1

Departing: Denver International Airport (DEN) en route to YMCA of the Rockies – Estes Park Center

17:00

Bus #2

Departing: Denver International Airport (DEN) en route to YMCA of the Rockies – Estes Park Center

19:00 – 21:00

Opening Reception, Assembly Hall C

Welcome Remarks – Chad Stark

Executive Director, Optica Foundation

Icebreaker – Tom Hausken

Senior Industry Advisor, Optica

Monday, 22 January 2024

07:00 – 08:30 Breakfast, Aspen Hall

08:30 – 09:00 Introduction of the Day, Assembly Hall C

Tom Hausken

Senior Industry Advisor, Optica

09:00 – 10:30 Sustainable Networking for Scientists and Engineers

Christina Willis

Director of External and Government Affairs, Infleqtion

Sustainability applied to networking is about treating professional support and assistance like a resource and creating more of it than you take. This workshop introduces how to use sustainable networking to create mutually beneficial professional relationships and to set and accomplish career goals. Through individual and group activities, participants will come away with personalized goals and a practical action plan for how to incorporate sustainable networking into their professional lives.

10:30 – 10:35 Break

10:35 – 11:35 Explore Career Opportunities in the Corporate Photonics Sector

Brad Doerr

Director of Strategic Planning and Development, Keysight Technologies

Uncover the multitude of roles and growth prospects in the corporate sector for scientists and engineers. Learn about positions suitable for early-career professionals, ranging from R&D and sales to marketing, product management, and engineering. This session will help you navigate the corporate landscape while learning how Keysight is structured.

11:35 – 13:00 Lunch, Aspen Hall

- 13:00 – 14:00** **From Resume Review to Final Offer: Inside HR and the Hiring Process, Assembly Hall C**
Casie Hanson
Talent and Organizational Development Director, Ball Aerospace
- Get an insider's look at the hiring journey, from resume submission to the coveted job offer. Gain valuable insights on optimizing your resume for attention, acing interviews with do's and don'ts, and more. Explore the pivotal role HR plays in shaping corporate culture and providing valuable resources to staff.
- 14:00 – 15:00** **Negotiation Skills**
Amy Sullivan
Technical Content Manager, Thorlabs
- We will discuss a balanced approach to negotiation, so you can feel confident navigating the workplace, from initial salary discussions to everyday workplace conversations.
- 15:00 – 15:30** **Break**
- 15:30 – 16:30** **Leadership Styles and Teams in the Corporate Environment**
Simin Cai
President and CEO, Go!Foton
- Discover the critical qualities of successful leaders from entry-level to CEO and learn about the values and characteristics that Go!Foton cherishes in its leaders. Explore how diverse personalities and perspectives can strengthen teams and drive innovation.
- 16:30 – 17:00** **Daily Wrap Up**
- 17:00 – 19:00** **Dinner, Aspen Hall**
- 19:00 – 21:30** **Roller Skating Party**
Bob Ecker Skating Rink

Tuesday, 23 January 2024

07:00 – 09:00 Breakfast, Aspen Hall

09:00 – 09:30 Introduction of the Day, Assembly Hall C
Tom Hausken
Senior Industry Advisor, Optica

09:30 – 10:30 The World of Optical Engineering: Hardware Careers
Benjamin Cromey
Senior Optical Engineer, Ball Aerospace

Taking your hardware from the drawing board into reality can be an intimidating process, fraught with concerns about tolerances, manufacturability, and alignment. Dr. Cromey will break down the process, giving examples with the optical hardware he is responsible for on the Roman Space Telescope. This practical session will also cover some general engineering best practices to help you build the right approach into the design work at the beginning of a project.

10:30 – 10:35 Break

10:35 – 11:35 The Language of Business: Managerial Reporting and Accounting for Decision Making (Part 1)
George Bayz
Vice President and General Manager, Synopsys (retired)

The art of accounting. We will discuss budgeting, explore the art of accounting, visit the stock market and dive into why this is something all scientists in industry should understand.

11:35 – 13:00 Lunch, Aspen Hall

13:00 – 14:00 The Language of Business: Managerial Reporting and Accounting for Decision Making (Part 2), Assembly Hall C
George Bayz
Vice President and General Manager, Synopsys (retired)

More fun with accounting.

14:00 – 15:00 **Intellectual Property: Academia vs. Corporate Approaches**
Darius Sankey
Managing Director, Innovation Acceleration Capital

15:00 – 15:30 **Break**

15:30 – 16:30 **The World of Optical Engineering Software Careers**
David Vega
Lead R&D Engineer, Ansys

Optics modeling software supports the entire optics industry. I will expose how an optical engineer contributes to software, its impact, and how you can get involved. You will get insider perspectives of what it is like to work in software and how to succeed in this industry.

16:30 – 17:00 **Daily Wrap Up**

17:00 – 20:00 **Dinner, Aspen Hall**

20:00 – 21:00 **Putting Theory into Practice: The Financial Scavenger Hunt**

After learning about all things around financials, now you get to put your skills to the test. Small groups will review a public company's financial statement and report out about your organization. Can you find everything in time?

Wednesday, 24 January 2024

07:00 – 09:00 Breakfast, Aspen Hall

09:00 – 09:30 Introduction of the Day, Assembly Hall C
Tom Hausken
Senior Industry Advisor, Optica

09:30 – 10:30 Project Management for Engineering, R&D and Technology Teams
Kenneth Barber
Sr. Director, Engineering & Project Management, Edmund Optics

Discover what it really means to be a Project management for Engineering, R&D and Technology Teams. Learn how to apply fundamental Project Management tools to any project in a practical way. Understand how you can leverage your technical know-how into a career in project management and beyond. Learn about key concepts like the triple constraints with fun examples.

10:30 – 10:35 Break

10:35 – 11:35 Identifying Emerging Technology Trends: Innovation and Product Development
Jim Kafka
CTO at Spectra-Physics and Fellow at MKS

Embark on a journey to uncover the art of identifying emerging technology trends and seamlessly integrating them into research, development, and product strategies. Gain insights into how a visionary company like MKS thrives on innovation, and discover the specific skills and attributes sought after in employees with an entrepreneurial spirit. You will have a window into the dynamic world of innovation and emerging technology careers at MKS.

11:35 – 13:00 Lunch, Aspen Hall

13:00 – 14:00 **The Role of the Sales Professional, Assembly Hall C**
Heidi Westbrook
Director of Cloud Infrastructure Providers, Fujitsu Network Communications

Discover the key skills and attributes that companies prioritize when hiring for sales positions. Explore why young scientists and engineers should be interested in sales, leveraging their technical knowledge to bridge gaps and drive innovation. Uncover how sales seamlessly integrates with other company functions, such as marketing, product development, and research and development, to maximize organizational success.

14:00 – 15:00 **Navigating Corporate Strategy in Technology: Keys to Success**
Jun Shan Wey
Distinguished Engineer of Technical Staff, Verizon

Explore the essence of corporate strategy and its pivotal role in business success. Discover how technology companies formulate and implement their tech development strategies, and gain insights into the diverse range of job opportunities and sought-after skills within this dynamic field.

15:00 – 15:30 **Break**

15:30 – 16:30 **The Role of the Product Manager**
Olga Sachkouskaya
Product Manager, Brooks Automation

Dive into the multifaceted role of a Product Manager within the corporate structure. Explore the essential skills and attributes required, uncover exciting career prospects, and understand the pivotal role Product Managers play in driving innovation, collaborating with R&D, and bridging the gap between sales/marketing and customer needs.

16:35 – 17:35 **The Role of Marketing and Sales**
Anjul Loiacono
Vice President Quantum Matter Platforms, Infleqtion

Marketing plays a critical role in the success of businesses. In high-tech industries, such as ours, marketing varies widely across companies and often roles in marketing are opaque to job seekers. In this session I hope to demystify what is marketing, how it relates to sales and R&D, and how the role of marketing fits within high-tech companies' objectives. Upon the conclusion of this session, I hope you will have a better understanding of the marketing function in the high-tech industry, which will subsequently help you determine your future career direction.

- 17:35 – 18:05 **Daily Wrap Up**
- 18:00 – 19:00 **Open time**
- 19:00 – 21:30 **Dinner, Assembly Hall C**
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Thursday, 25 January 2024

- 07:00 – 09:00 **Breakfast, Aspen Hall**
Check out time

- 09:30 – 10:00 **Introduction of the Day, Assembly Hall C**
Tom Hausken
Senior Industry Advisor, Optica

- 10:00 – 11:00 **The Present and Future of Optics & Photonics**
Tom Hausken
Senior Industry Advisor, Optica

This talk will survey the optics and photonics market, across it's breadth and top to bottom. It will emphasize the broad perspective of the market, rather than the details of marketing or specific opportunities. We will discuss the future of optics and photonics, and how one can identify trends for your own needs.

- 11:00 – 12:00 **Adjournment and Lunch, Assembly Hall C**

- 12:00 **Bus #1**
Departing: YMCA of the Rockies – Estes Park Center en route to Denver International Airport (DEN)

- 12:00 **Bus #2**
Departing: YMCA of the Rockies – Estes Park Center en route to Denver International Airport (DEN)
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- 05:00 **Bus #3 – 26 January 2024 (Friday shuttle)**
Departing at 5 AM Local Time (MST): YMCA of the Rockies – Estes Park Center en route to Denver International Airport (DEN)

Speakers



Kenneth Barber

*Sr. Director, Engineering & Project Management
Edmund Optics*

Kenneth has over 23 years of experience in the photonics industry, specializing in Project Management and Product Development. During his career, he founded and helped develop Edmund Optics' Project Management department and New Product Introduction process. As Director of Engineering and Project Management, he leads a global team of Designers and Project Managers in the US, China, and Germany in the development of new products. Kenneth holds a graduate certification in Project Management from the New Jersey Institute of Technology and received his BS in Optics from the University of Rochester in Rochester, NY.

- Founder and Co-chair of Edmund Optics' US Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
- Certified Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Published Articles contributed to:
- Optics that focus on manufacturing
- [Hemispherical Display Uses Single Lens and Digital Projector](#)



George Bayz

*Vice President & General Manager
Synopsys (retired)*

George Bayz joined Synopsys as the Vice President and General Manager of the Optical Solutions Group with the Synopsys' acquisition of Optical Research Associates (ORA) in October 2010. Bayz has over 25 years of senior management experience with high-technology firms. Prior to Synopsys, Bayz was President and CEO of ORA, served on the ORA Board of Directors and chaired the ORA Audit Committee, which provided oversight of the reporting practices of the company and the quality and integrity of the company's financial statements. Prior to ORA, he was President and CEO of PeoplePoint Systems, Inc., an enterprise software company; General Manager and Executive Vice President at Artemis International Solutions Corp., a provider of advanced project management solutions; President and CEO of Thinq Systems, a workforce automation solutions provider; and President and CEO of MAI Systems Corporation, a provider of information technology to the hospitality industry. Bayz received a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Southern California and a J.D. from Loyola Marymount University. He is a Member of the California Bar and is a California Certified Public Accountant.



Simin Cai

*President and CEO
Go!Foton*

Simin Cai serves as President and CEO for Go!Foton – an optics technology company he founded in 2009 through a management buyout with operations in US, Japan, Philippines and China. Go!Foton brings innovation to the market with its expertise in optics and photonics to solve real world problems for its customers. Simin’s strategy of vertical integration downstream with core competencies helps Go!Foton to grow rapidly in optical communication market serving brand name customers including Tier 1 services providers and OEMs. Go!Foton also serves customers in medical devices market. Before creating the company in 2009, Simin joined NSG America, a wholly-owned US subsidiary of Tokyo-based NSG Group, as a Regional Sales Manager in January 1998 and worked in various sales, marketing, and business development positions before being promoted to President and COO in 2001 and later CEO in 2005. Prior to joining NSG, Simin had worked for several start-up companies involved in optics and optical instrumentation and participated in the founding of Avanex, now part of Lumentum, after several mergers and acquisitions. Simin started his career with China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC) in 1988. Simin also served two terms on Corporate Associates Committee, and later a two-year term as Chair of OIDA, now Corporate Engagement Council at OPTICA. He also served a term on OPTICA’s Board and its Finance Council. Currently, he serves on the Board of OPTICA Foundation. Simin is a contributor to Entrepreneur Magazine where he shares his perspectives with other entrepreneurs. Simin holds a BS degree in Applied Physics from Shanghai Jiao Tong University in Shanghai, China, a Master of Engineering degree in Engineering Optics, and a Ph.D. degree in Physics, both from Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, NJ.



Benjamin Cromey

*Senior Optical Engineer
Ball Aerospace*

Benjamin Cromey is a Senior Optical Engineer at Ball Aerospace in Boulder, Colorado. He received his Bachelors in 2015 in Optical Sciences and Engineering studying 3D Holographic Displays at the James C. Wyant College of Optical Sciences at the University of Arizona, and liked it there enough to stay for his PhD as well, which he received in 2020. His dissertation focused on the design and applications of all-reflective multiphoton microscopes and the lasers that power them under Dr. Khanh Kieu, using the microscopes to study objects as diverse as pancreatic cancer tissue and gems and minerals. At Ball Aerospace, Ben works in the Civil Space Business unit, where he is the optical design and analysis lead at Ball for the Wide Field Instrument on the Roman Space Telescope. He also stays involved in exciting technology development areas for future missions, investigating extremely accurate measurement devices. Ben also stays involved in educational outreach activities through Ball, sponsoring senior design projects, and giving science talks at comic con events. Ben has been an Optica member since 2012, and was very involved in the U of A student chapter between undergrad and grad school, serving four years in officer roles. He served as the conference chair for the IONS Tucson 2016 conference, and had a wonderful time participating in IONS Okinawa 2017. Ben attended the Seigman school in 2018, and has served as a reviewer for applicants to that wonderful event for several years. He has peer reviewed for several Optica Journals, and also serves on the scholarship selection panel for the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation, and on the Education and Outreach Committee for SPIE. Ben found out about optics at an outreach event as a high school student, which is part of why he is so passionate about spreading the word about this great field of study to other younger students. He had several excellent mentors as a student, and is excited about the chance to pay it forward by helping Optica with professional development materials in his new role as Ambassador.



Brad Doerr

*Director of Strategic Planning and Development
Keysight Technologies*

Brad Doerr has been Vice President and General Manager of Keysight's Digital and Photonic Center of Excellence for the past 4 years. He has been with Keysight/Agilent/HP since 1988 and is now transitioning to a leadership role with Keysight Strategic Planning and Development. Mr. Doerr has handled a wide range of roles in R&D development, R&D management, Planning and Business Development with teams in the US, Europe and Asia developing and marketing new electronic and optical measurement products and solutions. Mr. Doerr holds BSEE from the University of Minnesota (1988), MSCS Stanford University (1994) and has been granted 3 US patents.



Casie Hanson

*Talent and Organizational Development Director
Ball Aerospace*

Casie currently leads the Talent and Organization Development team at Aerospace and Defense contractor, Ball Aerospace. She has over 13 years of experience in a variety of functions in Human Resources in the finance, hospitality, media, and aerospace and defense industries. She has a Masters in Organizational Psychology and Change Leadership from Columbia University, paired with a passion for helping individuals and teams thrive in today's uncertain, complex, and ambiguous work environment. She has valuable insight into the behind the scenes hiring processes from working in HR in a variety of industries. Casie also has significant hiring manager experience, having held multiple positions that required her to quickly build and scale teams within HR to support rapidly growing organizations. She enjoys thinking about and influencing the candidate and employee experience in all aspects of the employee lifecycle.



Tom Hausken

*Senior Industry Advisor
Optica*

With over 35 years in optoelectronics, Dr. Hausken focuses on industry activities at Optica. This includes the industry side of Optica (formerly OIDA), where he held a position earlier in his career. For 13 years until 2012, Dr. Hausken led market research and strategy consulting for lasers, image sensors, and a range of other photonic products at Strategies Unlimited. He was also a telecom policy analyst at the U.S. Congressional Office of Technology Assessment and held R&D and production positions at Alcatel and Texas Instruments in photonics and electronics. He has a Ph.D. from the University of California at Santa Barbara in optoelectronics.



Jim Kafka

CTO at Spectra-Physics and Fellow at MKS

Jim Kafka received the B.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the Institute of Optics at the University of Rochester in 1977 and 1983, respectively. For the last 40 years, he has been developing new products and is currently the Chief Technology Officer for Spectra-Physics, and a Fellow of our parent company MKS. In addition to authoring numerous journal articles, conference presentations and seminars, he co-authored a book chapter on Ultrafast Nonlinear Optics and holds 45 patents. Jim was the principal designer on three products, the Tsunami, the Opal, and the Millennia X, which have won technology achievement awards. Jim has served the optics community as the Ultrafast Phenomena topical editor for JOSA B and the co-chair for the CLEO and Advanced Solid-State Photonics conferences. He is a Fellow of Optica and has served as a Distinguished Traveling Lecturer for the Division of Laser Science of the APS. Jim is currently Vice President of Optica and is excited to progress through the presidential chain over the next few years.



Anjul Loiacono

*Vice President Quantum Signal Processing
Infleqtion*

Dr. Anjul Loiacono is the VP of Quantum Signal Processing at Infleqtion. She brings a deep bench of experience in both the management and marketing of complex optics and photonics systems. During her 12-year tenure at Thorlabs, a designer and manufacturer of photonics equipment for research, manufacturing, and biomedical applications, Anjul oversaw the development and release of their flagship Optical Coherence Tomography product line, developed corporate strategies, managed strategic partnerships, and completed several acquisitions worldwide. Anjul received her Ph.D. from Duke University and also serves on the Optica Corporate Engagement Council, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting knowledge in optics and photonics worldwide.



Olga Sachkouskaya

Product Manager
Brooks Automation

In the intricate world of technical innovation, few roles carry as much significance and complexity as that of a Product Manager. This role requires not just an understanding of cutting-edge technologies but also the finesse to orchestrate interdisciplinary talents. Olga has had the privilege of working as a Product Manager for advanced technology products, serving both the semiconductor and life science industries. What truly motivates her is her unique position at the intersection of engineering and business—a less conventional path, but one she finds deeply fulfilling, especially since most people tend to lean toward either pure engineering or business-oriented roles. Olga's track record includes work in optical metrology for contact lenses, developing inspection and automation systems for wafers and photomasks, creating high-precision photolithography mirrors, and advancing optical modules for DNA sequencing systems. With an academic background in Physics and Optics, she quickly rose through the engineering ranks to reach a pivotal role in product management. Olga's contributions earned her a nomination within the SPIE Women in Optics community. Her profile was chosen to be featured in the 2024 Optics Planner, with over 7,000 copies to be distributed in 25 countries worldwide. Additionally, an online version will be accessible on the SPIE Women in Optics website. During her leisure time, you'll often find Olga at the ice rink, baseball field, or volleyball court, watching her two high school-aged children engage in these sports. She also takes pleasure in global travel and reading.



Darius Sankey

Managing Director

Innovation Acceleration Capital

Dr. Sankey is the former president of Ocean Tomo China Technology. He served as the Senior Director of Portfolio Management at Intellectual Venture, overseeing investments and developing licensing programs for the \$5B Invention Investment Funds 1 and 2. Dr. Sankey was a General Partner at Zone Ventures with Tim Draper, and he worked as a management consultant at McKinsey & Company, Inc. He has also held strategic planning, consulting, and R&D positions at RAND and AT&T Bell Laboratories. He holds a BS in Physics, a BS in Electrical Engineering from MIT, and a PhD in Optical Engineering.



Amy Sullivan

*Technical Content Manager
Thorlabs*

Amy Sullivan is a Technical Content Manager in Marketing at Thorlabs. She earned her BA at Bates College, and her MS and PhD in Physics from the University of Colorado. She has held a variety of research and engineering positions in industry, mostly at smaller startup companies. She has also been a tenure-track professor, and taught at a variety of institutions, including a community college, liberal arts college, and major research university. She has worked on atomic physics, liquid crystal applications, built lasers for laser radar systems, and done materials development and characterization for structured light and augmented reality systems as well as teaching students from middle school to PhD level. Her current role at Thorlabs utilizes her broad range of technical knowledge, teaching experience, and negotiation skills.



Heidi Westbrook

Director of Cloud Infrastructure Providers
Fujitsu Network Communications

Driving rapid and sustainable revenue growth for technology/telecom companies is where Heidi Westbrook excels as a high-energy sales and marketing leader, managing cloud operator, service provider, enterprise and channel sales teams in the U.S., Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Time and again, she has developed sales strategy, recruited and retained top talent, instilled structure and discipline, and built winning cultures that drive growth and brand recognition. Most recently at Fujitsu Network

Communications, Ms. Westbrook led the turnaround of a \$1M division and paved the path forward to \$50M in revenue over 3 years following significant product challenges. In this capacity as Director of Client Executives, she led 2 teams—North American Carrier Accounts and Cloud Infrastructure Providers comprised of 28 members—through organizational restructuring and change. Previously at Lightriver Technologies as Sales Director, US Cloud & Data Center and member of the leadership team, she built the cloud business, brand awareness and revenues. Within 6 months of hire, she closed a new strategic customer taking the opportunity from \$50K to \$1.6M+ and was awarded “Best Customer Evolution” by vendor partner. In this role, she drove all sales, coordinate business development and marketing efforts while managing multiple technologies in a consultative engagement. In a prior role as Area Vice President of Sales for Xtera Communications, a leading provider of high capacity terrestrial and subsea optical solutions, Ms. Westbrook was brought in post-IPO to diversify revenues and develop the North America market. In just 90 days, she built a \$30 million sales pipeline. Following her career as Area Vice President – Regional US Sales for Optelian, Ms. Westbrook assumed a newly created role to diversify revenues, build a sales team and structure, and deliver results in North America, the Caribbean, and Latin America through direct sales, channel sales, and strategic partnerships. Under her leadership, the company became a market leader in 100G applications, set a robust and compelling product roadmap, and established a formal channel partner program. However before joining Optelian, Ms. Westbrook served as Sales Director for Tellabs for six years. After rebranding the company into an optical powerhouse and making the necessary internal changes to restore growth, strategic account sales more than quadrupled to \$70 million in five years. Her loyal, customer-focused team of 38 sales, engineering, and support staff maintained the highest new customer acquisition metrics of any Tellabs team in North America. Recruited to BlueCat Networks as Sales Director for the Western Region, Ms. Westbrook expanded the Western U.S. business for a startup Canadian company. The structure and processes she put in place resulted in 312% goal attainment. Progressing through the ranks of Alcatel (now Nokia), Ms. Westbrook rose to Senior Sales Manager for a \$24 million business. In each of her positions, Ms. Westbrook developed strategies to meet and exceed quotas. She negotiated complex deals earning her promotions and ranking in the top 10% of Lucent’s sales force as National Account Manager for strategic accounts. Believing that people are a company’s most valuable asset, Ms. Westbrook is an avid networker and has recruited and retained elite teams and individuals in a competitive hiring market for companies of all sizes. Ms. Westbrook graduated with a B.S. degree in Marketing and Business Administration from the University of Arizona.



Jun Shan Wey

Distinguished Engineer of Technical Staff
Verizon

Dr. Jun Shan Wey is a Distinguished Engineer at Verizon Communications. Her dedication to developing optical networking and video media industry standards ecosystem has played a crucial role in Verizon's network strategy and architecture planning. Currently, she represents Verizon in the ITU-T, FSAN, IEEE 802.3, and ATIS standards development organizations. As an editor of multiple ITU-T Recommendations for optical access networks, her contributions have led to widespread commercial deployments of passive optical networks worldwide. Before joining Verizon, Dr. Wey's career journey encompassed diverse roles, spanning from research faculty in academia and an R&D engineer in startups, to a technologist specializing in standards development in large corporations. She also ran her own successful consulting firm, advising executive leadership on technology strategy. Beyond her professional achievements, Dr. Wey is a passionate volunteer and mentor. She is a long-time contributor to the Optical Fiber Communications (OFC) Conference, including serving as a program co-chair in 2020 and general co-chair in 2022. She currently chairs the steering committee and co-chairs the IEEE INGR Optics working group. Dr. Wey is a dedicated mentor at the University of Washington CoMotion innovation center, guiding the next generation of entrepreneurs. With over 50 publications in top international journals and conferences, 6 granted patents and 12 pending, Dr. Wey is a recognized authority in her field. She is a frequent speaker at prestigious conferences and events. Dr. Wey holds a B.Sc. in electronics engineering from National Chiao Tung University in Taiwan, and a M.S. and Ph.D., both in electrical engineering, from the University of Maryland, College Park. She is a Senior Member of IEEE and a Fellow of Optica.



Christina Willis

*Director of External and Government Affairs
Infleqtion*

Christina C. C. Willis is a laser scientist, author, and public speaker with a passion for public policy. She served a year in the United States Senate as the 2019-2020 OSA / SPIE Arthur H. Guenther Congressional fellow and currently works as a Senior Analyst at the Boulder-based quantum technology company Infleqtion. In her free time she teaches yoga and volunteers as a firefighter. You can download her book *Sustainable Networking for Scientists and Engineers* for free from SPIE Press (<https://spie.org/christinawillisbook>) and you can find her on Twitter @willischristina.



David Vega

Lead R&D Engineer
Ansys

Dr. David Vega is a Lead R&D Engineer specializing in Zemax optical simulation technologies at Ansys. He received his bachelor's in physics from CalPoly, Pomona, and his master's and Ph.D. in Optical Sciences from the University of Arizona. As the lead of a global team dedicated to innovating, developing, and updating simulation technologies that serve optical engineers around the globe, Dr. Vega works at the intersection of software development and optics R&D. His work supports and enables optical engineers to model the most complex and next generation of optical systems. Software is a continuously evolving product, and Dr. Vega has helped to develop and implement an R&D development cycle that can serve today's demands on optical simulation technologies. His strong background in R&D processes, innovation, team leadership, and mentorship has enabled the rapid cycle implementation that also focuses on the team members' personal development. Dr. Vega is a strong supporter of academic efforts and especially enjoys mentoring students transitioning to the industry.

Attendees



Ofonime Akpasom
United Nations
Office on Drugs &
Crime, NIGERIA



Gazy Albedry
Kaunas University of
Technology,
LITHUANIA



Alfred Albert
National Taiwan
University of
Science, TAIWAN



Riccardo Albiero
Politecnico di
Milano, ITALY



**Alyssa
Almekinder**
Sydor Optics, USA



Abhishek Anchal
Ribbon
Communications,
ISRAEL



Ali Angulo
Institute of
Photonics, GERMANY



**Benjamin
Asubam Weyori**
UENR, GHANA





Jacopo Baglioni
Universita degli
Studi di Padova,
ITALY



**Aahana
Bajracharya**
Washington
University in St.
Louis, USA



Pasquale Barbato
Politecnico di
Milano, ITALY



Astrid Barreiro
Technische
Universiteit
Eindhoven,
NETHERLANDS



Mariia Bastamova
Aston University,
UNITED KINGDOM



Selasie Brown
University of
Professional Studies,
GHANA



**Inés Cáceres
Pablo**
Consejo Sup
Investigaciones
Cientificas, SPAIN



Marcus Cai
Australian National
University,
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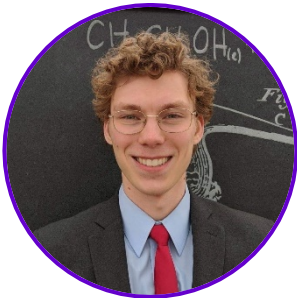
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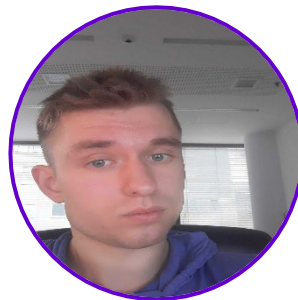
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