



2026 DUBUQUE

Business Consortium



Classes begin in January each year

All classes are either located at the Town Clock Business Center, Virtual Live or On Your Own Time

What is the Business Consortium?

The mission of Northeast Iowa Community College Business and Community Solutions is to collaborate with businesses, industries and the community to provide tailored, high-quality professional educational opportunities that enhance personal and professional development. Realizing that organizations are facing increased fiscal responsibility, we have implemented a model that pools financial resources and allows employers to gain access and exposure to quality training at a reasonable cost, increasing the return on investment and providing a forum for employees to learn from expert trainers.

How Do We Become a Member?

- ✓ Invest in an annual membership of \$1,650 in addition to \$3 per full-time employee.
- ✓ Example: A company with 100 employees would pay annually the $\$1,650 + \$300 = \$1,950$. The annual investment per employee is \$19.50.
- ✓ Companies may send up to five participants per each class unless otherwise noted.

NICC MKT.082025



Learn More.

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Program Developer

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2026 Training

VIRTUAL LIVE

Stuck to Empowered: Overcoming Your Saboteurs

Build mental fitness to rise above any challenge with clarity and confidence. We all get stuck—but often it's our own inner "saboteurs" that keep us there. This workshop will help you recognize the thought patterns that limit your perspective and show you how to shift into an empowered mindset. Through interactive exercises, you'll learn practical tools to quiet self-sabotage, build mental fitness and create traction toward your goals.

- Identify your personal "saboteurs" and how they hold you back.
- Practice tools to shift from stuck thinking into empowered action.
- Learn simple mental fitness techniques you can use every day.
- Create strategies to build confidence, clarity and resilience in the face of challenges.

Date: Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026

Time: 9-10 am

Trainer: Honor Jensen

SELF-PACED

How to Run Effective Meetings

On any given workday, American workers will attend 55 million meetings, representing an annual cost exceeding \$1.4 trillion! For such a huge investment, employees and employers alike report a low return. This class will instruct participants on how to plan, deliver and participate in meetings that are so effective you will need fewer of them!

Learning Objectives include:

- Understand why most meetings go wrong before they even start and what to do about it.
- Learn to select the best meeting format, agenda and invitation list.
- Explore new tools to reduce wasted time and maximize the impact of your meetings.
- Discover how to attend fewer meetings and influence the outcome of those you do attend.

On Your Own Time: 1 Hour

*Self-paced Trainings can be accessed throughout the entire year.

Trainer: Tama-Lea Lorenzen

Three seats per company only.

Leadership Academy Tier 1

The Leadership Academy is a two-tiered program designed to develop and optimize one's leadership potential. Covering both business skills and relationship enhancement, each tier is eight weeks of one half-day sessions. This platform gives participants an opportunity for thorough training in an efficient, convenient time frame.

Who Should Participate?

- Tier 1 is focused on developing yourself and building foundational leadership.
- Those already in management positions who have a need to develop formal leadership skills.
- Managers who know the business side well and are seeking to enhance their interpersonal skills.
- Managers who excel at interpersonal skills and are seeking to learn more of the business side.
- Rising stars in an organization who could benefit from leadership training before being placed in a management role.
- Managers who feel "stuck" in their roles and/or lack confidence in their management skills and are looking to develop themselves.

Dates:

Thursday, Feb. 5, 12, 19 & 26, 2026

Thursday, March 5, 12, 19 & 26, 2026

Time: 8 am-Noon

Trainers: Multiple

Important: Two seats per company only and individuals must attend all eight sessions.

▶ nicc.edu/leadershipacademy

2026 Training

The Art of Accountability: Elevating Team Performance

Navigating the tricky waters of fostering accountability as a leader can be challenging and often uncomfortable. This workshop delves into the true essence of accountability, exploring its importance and what it truly looks like in practice. Designed to help you build confidence in your leadership accountability practices, the session will equip you with the tools needed to cultivate a culture of accountability within your team or organization.

Participants will learn to:

- Implement practical solutions, including quarterly check-ins, structured meetings and approaches for managing performance when conventional methods fall short.
- Understand Accountability with Empathy: Define accountability, understand its significance in a leadership context and learn how to approach accountability from a place of empathy.
- Implement Accountability Tools and Techniques: Learn practical tools and techniques for fostering self, team and employee accountability.
- Identify Best Practices for Performance Issues: Identify best practices to address and manage performance issues when traditional methods aren't effective.

Date: Wednesday, April 8, 2026

Time: 8-10 am

Trainer: Skye Mercer



Agile Leadership: Building Trust in Uncertain Times

Trust is one of the most critical ingredients for effective leadership, and one of the hardest to maintain in times of rapid change. In this session, Brooke Fitzgerald will explore why trust feels so fragile in today's workplaces and why it's essential for leaders who want to navigate complexity with confidence. Participants will reflect on their own relationship with trust, including the importance of self-trust, before learning practical ways to extend and earn trust with others. Through discussion and tools for everyday leadership, you'll leave with strategies to strengthen relationships, build resilient teams and lead with agility in uncertain times.

You'll learn how to:

- Recognize the impact of uncertainty on trust in the workplace
- Identify ways to build and repair self-trust as a foundation for leadership
- Practice extending and earning trust with your team to foster resilience and agility

Date: Wednesday, May 6, 2026

Time: 9-11 am

Trainer: Brooke Fitzgerald

Becoming a More Collaborative Leader

Collaboration is at the heart of meaningful work, strong relationships, and effective leadership, yet many leaders struggle to practice it well. In this session, Lindsay Leahy will introduce a simple framework to move from idea to implementation in ways that bring others along and strengthen trust and collaboration on your team. Together, we'll explore common pitfalls leaders face when collaboration breaks down, and how shifting beliefs and behaviors can create an environment where everyone's voice is valued. Participants will gain practical tools for inviting input, navigating discussion and decision-making, and clarifying roles and expectations to ensure successful execution. By slowing down the process and engaging diverse perspectives, leaders can move from "me" to "we" and build teams that thrive.

You'll learn how to:

- Apply a step-by-step framework for effective collaboration
- Identify common mistakes that derail collaboration and how to avoid them
- Practice behaviors that build trust, invite diverse perspectives and strengthen team results

Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026

Time: 9-11 am

Trainer: Molly Knuth

2026 Training

Thriving Through Change

Change is constant—but it doesn't have to feel overwhelming. In this dynamic session, you'll discover how to navigate the change cycle with confidence and clarity. Together, we'll unpack why people respond to change the way they do, and more importantly, how to shift those responses into growth and opportunity. Guided by Molly's expertise and research-based strategies, you'll gain practical tools to build resilience, spark innovation and inspire others during times of transition. You'll walk away with a personalized action plan designed to help you proactively manage change—at work and in life—with confidence and momentum.

Date: Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2026

Time: 9-11 am

Trainer: Molly Mackey

Leadership Academy: Tier 2

The Leadership Academy is a two-tiered program designed to develop and optimize one's leadership potential. Covering both business skills and relationship enhancement, each tier is eight weeks of one half-day sessions. This platform gives participants an opportunity for thorough training in an efficient, convenient time frame.

Who Should Participate?

- Tier 2 is focused on developing your team and retaining leadership.
- Those already in management positions who have a need to develop formal leadership skills.
- Managers who know the business side well and are seeking to enhance their interpersonal skills.
- Managers who excel at interpersonal skills and are seeking to learn more of the business side.
- Rising stars in an organization who could benefit from leadership training before being placed in a management role.
- Managers who feel "stuck" in their roles and/or lack confidence in their management skills and are seeking to develop themselves.

Dates:

Thursdays, Sept. 3, 10, 17 & 24, 2026

Thursdays, Oct. 1, 8, 15 & 22, 2026

Time: 8 am-Noon

Trainers: Multiple

Important: Two seats per company only and individuals must attend all eight sessions



2026 Training

Navigating Workplace Conflict

Conflict in the workplace is inevitable—but it doesn't have to be destructive. Handled well, it can lead to stronger relationships, better communication and innovative solutions. In this interactive session, participants will learn to recognize the sources of conflict, understand different conflict styles and apply proven strategies for addressing tension constructively. Through real-world examples and practical tools, you'll gain the confidence to de-escalate challenging situations, foster collaboration and turn conflict into an opportunity for growth. Walk away equipped to navigate tough conversations with professionalism and ease, while strengthening trust across your team.

Date: Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2026

Time: 8-10 am

Trainer: Sarah Hermanson

VIRTUAL LIVE

Emotional Intelligence: Enhancing Professional Boundaries and Communications

This session delves into the essentials of emotional intelligence in the workplace, offering actionable strategies to enhance presence, set healthy professional boundaries and lead with empathy.

Participants will :

- Explore effective techniques for constructively navigating their own emotions and communicating with clarity and kindness, ultimately strengthening connections and amplifying their leadership impact.
- Define and identify personal and professional boundaries and how to communicate boundaries clearly and kindly.
- Discuss effective strategies for self-awareness managing emotions in the workplace to build relationships and maintain leadership presence.
- Examine leadership strategies that foster trust, strengthen relationships and enhance your ability to inspire and influence others.

Date: Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2026

Time: 8-10 am

Trainer: Skye Mercer



Meet Your Instructors



Paulette Milewski

Paulette brings energy and 25+ years of experience in leadership, sales, customer service and project management, making training workshops interactive and enjoyable. Through storytelling, real-life examples and thought-provoking dialogue, workshops provide participants practical application. Paulette has facilitated training with clients in insurance, healthcare, consumer products and services, utilities, college and universities, banking and manufacturing.

She earned her master's degree in Organizational Leadership from St. Ambrose University and has picked up other certifications along the way including Strategic Doing (an Agile method of strategic planning), Real Colors® Personality Profile, Mental Health First Aid, and Prime for Life® (drug and alcohol prevention).



Skye Mercer

Skye Mercer, MBA, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, is an eastern Iowa-based certified HR consultant with 20+ years of professional HR experience. Skye's diverse experience, from managing national HR services for 3,000+ employees in a Fortune 500 company, to working as an HR department-of-one for a 100-employee organization, helps her understand and provide solutions to your unique HR challenges. Skye consults with organizations nationwide to build people-centered, inclusive, compliant and sustainable HR practices to create organizational cultures where employees want to stay and do their best work. Skye HR Consulting, LLC provides on-demand HR advice, monthly retainer HR consulting, employee handbooks and leadership training.



Molly Knuth

Molly Knuth is a storyteller, strategist, and Connection Creator based in rural Iowa. A former teacher turned entrepreneur, she spent nearly a decade leading Molly Knuth Media, helping small-town businesses share their stories online with heart. Now, as Managing Director at The Restoration Project and host of The Found Podcast, Molly helps leaders reconnect with themselves, their purpose and their people. Blending practical tools with heartfelt reflection, she inspires others to move from overwhelmed to aligned and reminds us all that connection is the foundation of meaningful leadership.



Kathie Rotz

Kathie Rotz is a leadership expert, speaker, author and trainer with over 25 years of experience helping leaders reach their full potential. As the president of Unity Consulting, LLC and a trainer with NICC Business and Community Solutions, she specializes in leadership development, mindset transformation and behavioral analysis. Certified in DiSC® Behavioral Analysis and holding a TTI Success Insights 12 Driving Forces Curriculum Instructor Certificate, Kathie brings a deep understanding of human behavior to her work. Kathie is also a John C. Maxwell certified coach, speaker and trainer, serving on the President's Advisory Council. She is passionate about challenging outdated mindsets and inspiring radical accountability to help individuals and organizations build stronger, healthier teams. Kathie is the author of *Winners Are Quitters: The Art of Thinking Differently*, a bold exploration of how letting go can be the key to success. Her signature program, *You Have Superpowers*, helps leaders tap into underutilized strengths, and her ThinkDiff™ Model offers a practical framework for shifting behavior and sparking meaningful change.



Tama-Lea Lorenzen

An award-winning speaker and entrepreneur, Tama-Lea Lorenzen has served as a presenter and educator for over 20 years. She loves sharing her passion for leadership, marketing and entrepreneurship. Taking theoretical information and making it applicable to daily life, participants describe her approach as "humorous and helpful in applying what you learn to your day-to-day." Tama-Lea earned her B.S. in Business Management with an emphasis on Small Business Strategy and Entrepreneurship from Iowa State University and an M.B.A. from Clarke University.

Meet Your Instructors



Brooke Fitzgerald

Brooke Fitzgerald is the Energy Builder and partner at The Restoration Project, where she empowers teams and individuals to grow with confidence, connection and purpose. With a passion for helping people tap into their potential, Brooke brings energy, clarity and encouragement to every development journey.



Molly Mackey

Molly J. Mackey received her undergraduate degree and Masters of Business Administration from the University of Iowa. In fall 2021, she earned her Certified Professional of Talent Development (CPTD) designation from the Association of Talent Development. She has a passion for business, strategy, leadership and learning. Molly has over 17 years of business and speaking experience. She currently serves as the Director of Knowledge Acquisition and Transfer at Optimae LifeServices and chief learning officer at the LEAdErNship Institute, LLC. She has taught business classes at a collegiate level since 2009.



Michael Leytem

Michael Leytem is an NICC Business and Community Solutions trainer and the CEO, founder and author of *Catching Leadership*. He has been a leadership coach and talent management consultant since 2011, and has worked with hundreds of Fortune 500 leaders to customize talent strategies and leadership solutions that drive personal and organizational growth. As a published academic with an M.A. in Industrial-Organizational Psychology, Michael has studied the mental processes and social pressures that influence effective leadership. His lifelong passion for leadership, psychology and mindfulness transcends throughout his work and interactions with others.



Honor Jensen

Honor Jensen, MBA, PCC is passionate about helping leaders and entrepreneurs unlock their potential and design lives and careers they love. With more than 25 years in corporate leadership and executive coaching, she has guided individuals and teams to grow with confidence, energy and clarity. Her work blends business strategy, leadership development and mental fitness to create lasting transformation.

Honor is a Professional Certified Coach with the International Coaching Federation and holds multiple certifications, including Business Made Simple, Positive Intelligence, Ramsey Master Financial Coach and Success Principles. She is known for her engaging, down-to-earth teaching style that leaves participants not only inspired but equipped with tools they can use immediately to thrive in business and life.



Sarah Hermanson

As an entrepreneur, farmer and human resource professional Sarah has experienced firsthand the challenges of running a business and wearing all the hats. She has over 27 years of human resources and recruiting experience working with Iowa businesses including start-up companies, manufacturing, technology, faith-based organizations and many other industries. Sarah is a technical expert with an outstanding ability to connect, ascertain needs, and provide creative solutions. She loves utilizing her gifts of discernment and bringing people together to help create efficient processes, meaningful relationships and healthy organizations.

Sarah loves learning new things and excels at asking meaningful questions to gain deep insight and open up creative dialogue. Sarah has always been a natural consultant and an expert at helping to guide conversations. She walks alongside her clients to help discover customized solutions to improve efficiency, scalable processes, and ultimately business outcomes.

Schedule

Date & Time	Class Title	Instructor
On Your Own Time:1 Hr	SELF-PACED How to Run Effective Meeting	Tama-Lea Lorenzen
Wed., Jan. 21, 2026 9 - 10:30 am	VIRTUAL LIVE Stuck to Empowered: Overcoming Your Saboteurs	Honor Jensen
Thursdays, Feb. 5- March 26, 2026 8 am-Noon	Leadership Academy Tier 1	Multiple
Wed., April 8, 2026 8-10 am	The Art of Accountability: Elevating Team Performance	Skye Mercer
Wed., May 6, 2026 9-11am	Agile Leadership: Building Trust in Uncertain Times	Brooke Fitzgerald
Wed., June 10, 2026 9-11 am	Becoming a More Collaborative Leader	Molly Knuth
Tues., Aug. 11, 2026 9-11 am	Thriving Through Change	Molly Mackey
Thursdays, Sept. 3-Oct. 22, 2026 8 am-Noon	Leadership Academy Tier 2	Multiple
Wed., Nov. 18, 2026 8-10 am	Navigating Workplace Conflict	Sarah Hermanson
Tues., Dec. 8, 2026 8-10 am	VIRTUAL LIVE Emotional Intelligence: Enhancing Professional Boundaries & Communications	Skye Mercer

