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AIST *Women in Steel Conference*

22–24 September 2025

**Marriott Indianapolis Downtown
Indianapolis, Ind., USA**

About the Event

This annual event supports the recruitment, engagement and professional development of women in the global steel industry. Over two-and-a-half days, the event will feature breakout sessions, panel discussions, keynote speakers, and plenty of networking opportunities to enhance attendee personal and professional growth. We are expecting an audience of more than 500 steel professionals, from operators to human resource personnel, representing individuals at various stages of their careers, to participate in this event.

Who Should Attend

This event is for women and men who are passionate about creating an equitable and inclusive workplace. It's ideal for those who:

- Want to collaborate to bridge the gender gap in the steel industry.
- Believe in the rewards and opportunities of a career in steel.
- Recognize the impact of unconscious bias in the workforce and aim to address it.
- Value the importance of female leadership and allyship in fostering success.

Join us to champion progress, celebrate leadership and work together for a stronger, more inclusive industry.



Professional Development Hours

This program may qualify for up to 13 Professional Development Hour (PDH) credits. Upon completion, attendees may request a certificate outlining the PDH credits earned. Please note, it is the responsibility of the attendee to verify with their certifying body whether these courses meet their requirements.

Hotel Accommodations

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Marriott Indianapolis Downtown. To reserve a room, please call the hotel at +1.877.640.7666 or reserve online by 1 September 2025 to secure the AIST discount rate of US\$249 per night for single/double occupancy.

Registration Fees

Advance registration by 11 August 2025: Member US\$650, Non-member US\$850. Registration fee after 11 August 2025: Member US\$750, Non-member US\$950. Registration includes receptions on Monday and Tuesday, and breakfast, lunch and networking breaks on Tuesday and Wednesday. Professional development workshop sessions are available for an additional fee and can be purchased with event registration.

Student Rate

The AIST Foundation is pleased to provide assistance to students interested in attending the AIST Women in Steel Conference. Program details are available online at the Steel to Students webpage or contact Courtney Young, cyoung@aist.org; +1.724.814.3096.

Company Discount

Groups of three or more individuals from the same facility attending one seminar will receive a discount per person. Not applicable with any other discounts. Please see discount levels below:

3+ attendees will receive a 10% discount per person
5+ attendees will receive a 15% discount per person
15+ attendees will receive a 20% discount per person
20+ attendees will receive a 25% discount per person

Sponsorships/Exhibits

An array of sponsorships are available and provide a unique opportunity to showcase your company's commitment to supporting diversity and innovation while gaining valuable visibility among leaders in the industry.

Additionally, a limited number of tabletop exhibits are available for US\$1,500. Sponsorships and Tabletop Exhibits can be purchased during registration. If you have questions, or would like further information, please contact Beniamina Dapra, bdapra@aist.org; +1.724.814.3058.



For more information, visit AIST.org/WISconference



Schedule of Events

Monday,
22 September 2025

Noon | **Registration Open**

1 p.m. | **Professional Development Workshops* — Session A** (Attendance: 50/workshop)

Inclusive Pathways: Tackling Workforce Challenges for Underrepresented Groups

This interactive workshop is designed to address the unique challenges minority groups encounter in the workforce. Participants will engage in collaborative discussions, share personal experiences, and explore actionable strategies for fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment. By leveraging diverse perspectives and innovative problem-solving techniques, this workshop will empower attendees to identify practical solutions that promote equality, representation, and career growth for underrepresented groups. Participants will leave with a toolkit of strategies to drive meaningful change and build a more equitable workforce culture.

*Presenter: **LaSheita Sayer**, Founder, Executive Director, Women Who Charge*

Navigating Difficult Conversations

Delivering difficult news, sharing constructive feedback, or responding to a frustrated colleague or client can be a source of stress in your workday. Communicating confidently requires preparation and skill, both of which come with practice. In this workshop, we'll confront the source of our uncomfortable feelings and introduce strategies on how to:

- Better understand your audience.
- Center empathy and listening to enhance your efficacy.
- Deliver information clearly and concisely.

*Presenter: **Rebecca Malotke-Meslin**, Founder, Pleasantly Aggressive Coaching & Consulting*

Your Brain Can Be a Real A-hole: Overcoming Self-Sabotage for Career Success

Your brain is a master manipulator — whispering doubts, fueling procrastination, and convincing you that you're not ready, not qualified, and not good enough. Sound familiar? The truth is, your brain isn't broken — it's just wired for survival, not success. But that "protection" comes at the cost of your growth and potential. In this high-energy, no-BS session, we'll break down the neuroscience of self-sabotage and expose the mental traps that hold you back. You'll learn how to rewire your brain for confidence and action with science-backed strategies and powerful brain hacks. Walk away ready to silence your inner critic, ditch self-doubt, and finally get out of your own way.

*Presenter: **Jamie Lewis Smith**, Chief Executive Officer and Leadership Psychologist, Pixel Leadership Group*

Caring for the Caregiver

This workshop addresses the challenges of caregiving while balancing work and home life. Brea Schmidt will discuss the overwhelming nature of caregiving (of all kinds) and the difficulty in prioritizing self-care and relationships. It's important for caregivers to embrace imperfection, release guilt and seek community support. The conversation is not just for parents and caregivers, but also for those who work with, lead, or support them, aiming to foster better understanding and advocacy for working caregivers.

*Presenter: **Brea Schmidt**, Keynote Speaker and Writer, The Thinking Branch*

3 p.m. | **Afternoon Networking Break**

3:30 p.m. | **Professional Development Workshops* — Session B** (Attendance: 50/workshop) **Same options as above**

5:30 p.m. | **Reception**

**Professional Development Workshops require an additional fee.*

Tuesday, 23 September 2025

8 a.m. | **Breakfast and Registration**

9 a.m. | **Welcome and Award Presentation**

9:45 a.m. | **Opening Session: An Interview With Laureen Meroueh**

Laureen Meroueh, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Hertha Metals

Jennifer Betts, Chief Executive Officer, Magnar Metals

10:45 a.m. | **Morning Networking Break**

11:15 a.m. | **Steel Industry Panel Discussion**

12:15 p.m. | **Lunch**

1:30 p.m. | **What About You? Embracing Self-Care as a Professional Business Tool and Not Just a Buzzword**

This reflective and interactive session explores the challenges of balancing mental wellness with the demands of our personal and professional lives. Brea Schmidt will share her journey of finding self-care amid her entrepreneurial path and will encourage honest conversation about embracing vulnerability, identifying personalized self-care, and using community support to achieve joy and fulfillment in all areas of life. The session aims to reflect on the pressures we face in modern society and prioritize mental well-being.

Presenter: Brea Schmidt, Keynote Speaker and Writer, The Thinking Branch

2:30 p.m. | **Afternoon Networking Break**

3 p.m. | **Breakout Sessions** (Attendance: 50/session)

Safety for Women in the Workplace

Safety means more than hard hats and steel-toed boots — it's about creating workplaces that protect health, support well-being and ensure everyone comes home safe. We'll explore a variety of topics, from physical safety and PPE fit to work-life balance, pregnancy-related safety needs, and navigating male-dominated spaces. Share your struggles, exchange stories, and discover new ideas and practical strategies to create safer workplaces. Leave inspired, equipped with actionable tools and connected to a community of women committed to making a difference.

Steel Sharpens Steel: Forging Your Network, Building Your Empire

In the steel industry, it's not just about what you know — it's about who knows you. Ready to stop waiting for opportunities and start creating them? This breakout session brings real strategies (and real talk) to help you network like a boss, call the shots as the CEO of your own career, and leverage connections to fuel your success. You'll leave with a powerful toolkit (and a serious fire) to forge stronger relationships, own your career path, and leave your mark on the industry — because waiting isn't a strategy. Building your empire starts now.

Building Confidence on the Shop Floor

This breakout session is designed to empower women in manufacturing by equipping them with the skills and mindset needed to thrive in a traditionally male-dominated workspace. The session focuses on practical strategies for assertive communication, overcoming



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self-doubt and establishing a strong presence on the shop floor. Participants will engage in discussions on navigating workplace challenges, advocating for themselves and fostering a supportive network among colleagues. Through real-world examples and interactive exercises, attendees will learn how to confidently contribute their expertise and leadership. By the end of the session, individuals will leave with actionable tools to enhance their workplace influence and take charge of their professional success.

Moms in Steel

The steel industry presents unique challenges for working mothers, who often find themselves juggling the demands of their professional roles with the responsibilities of parenting. This session seeks to delve into the complexities of achieving work-life balance amidst the chaos that comes with being a mom in the manufacturing sector. By sharing personal stories, practical strategies and insights, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted experiences of resilient women.

3 p.m. | General Session

The Bullsh*t We Tell Ourselves: A Wake-Up Call for Authentic Living

We're all in marketing, whether we realize it or not. Every conversation, every post, every room we walk into — we're telling the world who we are. The question is: are we telling the truth?

We all carry stories — little lies we tell ourselves to stay comfortable, quiet and playing small.

"I can't say that."

"They wouldn't get it."

"This version of me is more palatable."

Sound familiar? This keynote cuts through the noise and calls out the bullsh*t we use to protect ourselves from judgment, rejection or simply standing out. It's a wake-up call to stop performing and start leading with who you actually are. Because when you drop the act, you don't just show up — you stand out. And in a world full of noise, real is your most powerful marketing strategy.

Presenter: **Iris Goldfeder**, Founder, GasStoveCreative

4:15 p.m. | Asking for What You Need: Negotiating With Confidence

Have you ever considered asking for a promotion or more resources for your office, then quickly talked yourself out of it? What held you back? Effectively advocating and negotiating could have a lasting impact on achieving your goals and improving your organization's sustainability. In this session, you'll reflect on the barriers preventing you from asking for what you need. You'll create a plan to make your "ask" and learn to communicate confidently and negotiate effectively.

Presenter: **Rebecca Malotke-Meslin**, Founder, Pleasantly Aggressive Coaching & Consulting

5:15 p.m. | Reception

Wednesday, 24 September 2025

8 a.m. | **Breakfast**

9 a.m. | **Lighten Your Load: How to Stop the Cycle of Overwhelming Ownership**

Do you feel like you're constantly juggling a million responsibilities — at work, at home and everywhere in between? Women professionals often take on an invisible, exhausting burden: not just doing their jobs, but also anticipating others' needs, doing things for others they could do themselves, shouldering the emotional burden, and making sure everything runs smoothly. Whether it's coordinating meetings, keeping track of deadlines (yours and everyone else's), managing work projects, or handling household logistics, the mental load feels endless. Not only does this overload you, but you also unintentionally disempower and discourage others, creating a self-fulfilling loop that ultimately burns you out.

In this fun, interactive session, we'll uncover why women feel pressured to "do it all," how this impacts career growth and well-being, and — most importantly — how to break free from the cycle. Using psychology-backed strategies and brain-based neuro-hacks, you'll learn how to spot the invisible mental load that's draining your energy, delegate with confidence (without guilt or micromanaging), and build boundaries that actually stick. We'll bust the myth that doing more equals being more valuable and challenge the "Superwoman Syndrome" that keeps you trapped in over-responsibility. Most importantly, you'll gain tools to shift from carrying the weight of responsibility to empowering those around you — whether colleagues,

direct reports or family members — to step up and share the load. It's time to rewire your brain, reclaim your time and create space for what truly matters!

*Presenter: **Jamie Lewis Smith**, Chief Executive Officer and Leadership Psychologist, Pixel Leadership Group*

10:30 a.m. | **Morning Networking Break**

11 a.m. | **Steel Industry Panel Discussion**

Noon | **Lunch**

1:15 p.m. | **Prize Drawings**

1:30 p.m. | **Steel Industry Panel Discussion**

2:30 p.m. | **Afternoon Networking Break**

3 p.m. | **Keynote Presentation**

4 p.m. | **Adjourn**



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