

★ 2026 ★

**Sharpen Your Skills.
Strengthen Your Business.
Expand Your Network.**



SMALL BUSINESS SKILL SHARE

SEPTEMBER 22, 2026 · 9:00 AM - 11:45 AM

Innovate Springfield, 1 Horace Mann Plaza

Are you ready for what's next?

*Skill Share gives you practical tools and fresh ideas to
strengthen your business and fuel your next stage of growth.*

One morning. Four experts. Plenty of ideas to move your business forward.



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS | SPRINGFIELD

**Innovate
Springfield**

ABOUT...



Visit the offices of the Illinois Small Business Development Center for assistance in starting or growing your business. You can take advantage of a variety of services... from our growing catalogue of information-packed seminars to our extensive library of business and personal resources. Or, visit with any of our impressive roster of advisors. We are here to help find the answers to all of your business questions. Plus, nearly all of the services and programs provided by the Illinois SBDC are offered at no cost to the client.



Illinois Local is a Springfield-based membership community built to help local businesses support, grow, and celebrate one another. Members connect through monthly networking events hosted by fellow members throughout Illinois's capital city, and the organization amplifies their stories through features on its website, a monthly newsletter, and an active presence on social media. Illinois Local is more than a networking group; it's a thriving ecosystem where Springfield-area businesses show up for each other.



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS | SPRINGFIELD

Innovate Springfield

Innovate Springfield is the University of Illinois Springfield's downtown business incubator and innovation hub, serving as a catalyst for entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic growth in central Illinois by cultivating entrepreneurial ventures, developing talent, and bringing together startups, creators, and social change makers in a collaborative environment where ideas become viable businesses. Founded in 2014, it was designed to accelerate statewide job creation and economic development.



SPEAKERS...



STACEY SKRYSAK

News Anchor - NewsChannel 20/WICS-TV

Stacey Skrysak is an award-winning television journalist, speaker, and advocate, calling Springfield home for the past 14 years. She's the proud parent of a 22 weeker surviving triplet and a "rainbow" baby. Through her experience, she's become a national voice for NICU families and child-loss awareness. Stacey and her husband founded Triple Heart Foundation, a non-profit charity that gifts books and care packages to families in the NICU.



GEMMA LONG

Public Relations Professional & Entrepreneur, Gem PR & Media/Illinois Local

Gemma Long is a public relations professional and entrepreneur specializing in media relations, strategic communications, and community engagement. She is the founder of Gem PR & Media, where she develops creative PR strategies that help businesses and organizations gain visibility and grow. Gemma also co-owns Illinois Local, a network of more than 130 independent businesses and causes across Illinois. Most recently, she launched Gather & Grow, a Gem PR & Media service that brings business and organization leaders together through workplace speaking opportunities to share expertise and build professional relationships. With more than two decades of experience as a journalist, editor, and PR professional, Gemma brings a storyteller's perspective to helping organizations communicate effectively and reach new audiences.



DANIEL REIFENBERGER

President, Loyal Tribe

Daniel Reifenberger is an entrepreneur from Springfield, IL who started at Apple focused on designing world class customer experiences before leaving to work with the best online marketers doing millions in sales every year. Daniel is a customer loyalty expert who helps companies profit wildly by building a tribe of repeat customers. He has personally managed 1,100 – 400,000+ customer lists and been able to consistently prove ROI. Daniel's clients are some of the fastest growing eCommerce brands in the United States and he has helped them gain a dominant presence in their respective online markets.



MYLAS COPELAND

General Manager & Managing Partner, Green Family Stores

Mylas Copeland is General Manager and Managing Partner of an automobile dealership with three new car franchises. With nearly 30 years in the auto industry, including 28 years at this dealership, he leads a team of almost 100 employees and ten department managers. He is one of the first minorities to hold the position of Managing Partner for three new car franchises in the Midwest, placing him among the fewer than 3% of minority executives in the industry. Known for his hands-on market knowledge and strong leadership style, he's committed to mentoring his team and delivering top-tier customer service.

AGENDA

TIME	SESSION	SPEAKERS
9:00 - 9:15	REGISTRATION AND NETWORKING Coffee and refreshments will be available	
9:15 - 9:25	WELCOME & OVERVIEW	Kevin Lust
9:25 - 9:55	SKILL SHARE 1 Brand Storytelling	Stacey Skrysak
9:55 - 10:25	SKILL SHARE 2 PR Fundamentals	Gemma Long
10:25 - 10:35	Morning Break	
10:35 - 11:05	SKILL SHARE 3 AI for Small Business	Daniel Reifenger
11:05 - 11:25	SKILL SHARE 4 Customer Service as Strategy	Mylas Copeland
11:25 - 11:45	PANEL Q & A WITH MODERATOR	Kevin Lust All Speakers
11:45 AM	PROGRAM CONCLUDES	

READ MORE FROM OUR SPEAKERS...

SPEAKER 1	SPEAKER 2	SPEAKER 3	SPEAKER 4
			
STACEY SKRYSAK, <i>NewsChannel 20/WICS-TV</i>	GEMMA LONG, <i>Gem PR & Media/Illinois Local</i>	DANIEL REIFENBERGER, <i>Loyal Tribe</i>	MYLAS COPELAND, <i>Green Family Stores</i>

Notes:



Thank you for
attending!

