

GIC 2026 Schedule

October 26-28, 2026 | Toronto Congress Centre North Building

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION / ACCESS	DETAILS
MONDAY, OCTOBER 26			
MONDAY ACTIVITIES			
6:30am - 11:30am	Industry Tour - Ontario Food Terminal	Westin Toronto Airport Hotel (950 Dixon Road) Access: Pre-registration required; CFGI retailers only	Meet at 6:30am in the LOBBY of Westin Toronto Airport Hotel (950 Dixon Road).
12:00pm - 3:00pm	Category Connect Meetings	Ballrooms A & B Access: Pre-registration required	
5:30pm - 7:30pm	Opening Reception	TCC North Building, Collaboration Corridor - J. Mitchell Lobby Access: All exhibitors and attendees welcome	
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27			
TUESDAY CONFERENCE - TCC NORTH BUILDING, BALLROOMS A & B			
7:30am - 8:00am	Continental Breakfast	Ballrooms A & B Access: Open to all	CFGI members registration/check-in. All welcome.
8:00am - 8:30am	CFGI Annual General Meeting	Ballrooms A & B Access: Full Delegate, Conference and Trade Show passes	CFGI updates with President & CEO Ron Welke.
8:35am - 9:20am	Grocery Code Panel Update	Ballrooms A & B Access: Full Delegate, Conference and Trade Show passes	Grocers Giancarlo Trimarchi, Vince's Market, and John Pritchett, Powell's Supermarket, join Unilever's Martin Payant. Moderated by Gary Sands, CFGI.
9:25am - 10:05am	The GLP-1 Basket Shift: What Shoppers Are Dropping, Adding & Buying Next	Ballrooms A & B Access: Full Delegate, Conference and Trade Show passes	Growing GLP-1 adoption isn't just shrinking overall grocery basket size - it's fundamentally rebalancing what goes into it. Join the Path to Purchase Institute's Cyndi Loza for an exclusive look at new proprietary research revealing how GLP-1 usage has altered cart contents and shopping habits. Gain actionable insights on what shoppers are pulling out of their baskets, what they are putting in, and how grocers and CPG brands can adapt to stay ahead of the curve.
10:10am - 10:50am	Economic Outlook: Navigating the Forces Shaping Grocery	Ballrooms A & B Access: Full Delegate, Conference and Trade Show passes	Hear from Michael Gregory, BMO Deputy Chief Economist, on the outlook for the sector and what these trends mean for grocery retailers, manufacturers and the supply chain.
11:40am	Ribbon Cutting	TCC North Building	
TUESDAY TRADE SHOW - TCC NORTH BUILDING, HALL I			
11:00am - 4:30pm	Trade Show	TCC North Building, Hall I	
INTERAC INSIGHTS & INNOVATIONS STAGE			

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION / ACCESS	DETAILS
1:00pm - 1:30pm	Session - To Be Confirmed	Interac Insights & Innovations Stage Access: All Trade Show and Conference pass holders	Session details to be confirmed.
TUESDAY EVENING EVENT			
4:30pm - 6:30pm	Merchandising Excellence Awards	TCC North Building, Collaboration Corridor - J. Mitchell Lobby; Ballrooms A & B Access: All registered delegates and exhibitors	
4:30pm - 5:00pm	Networking Cocktail & Reception	Collaboration Corridor - J. Mitchell Lobby; Ballrooms A & B Access: All delegates and exhibitors welcome	
5:00pm - 6:30pm	Master Merchandiser Awards Presentation	Ballrooms A & B Access: All delegates and exhibitors welcome	Best merchandising displays are awarded and the Top 10 in Grocery winners are announced.
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28			
WEDNESDAY CONFERENCE - TCC NORTH BUILDING, BALLROOMS A & B			
7:15am - 8:00am	Breakfast	Ballrooms A & B Access: Full Delegates and Conference pass holders; registration required	
8:00am - 8:35am	Boring AI Wins: What Actually Works for the Real World	Ballrooms A & B Access: Full Delegates and Conference pass holders; registration required	The AI headlines are all about chatbots and humanoid robots, but the AI that's actually moving the needle for traditional businesses is unglamorous: better forecasting, fraud detection, smarter procurement and sharper customer insights. Brian Wong will draw on real examples from venture-backed portfolio companies and the broader landscape of applying AI to unsexy, high-ROI problems. This session breaks down how independent grocers can apply the same playbook internally and externally without needing a data science team or big-tech budget.
8:40am - 9:15am	Retailer Spotlight on Store Experience & Layout	Ballrooms A & B Access: Full Delegates and Conference pass holders; registration required	
9:20am - 10:05am	Consumer Insights Session	Ballrooms A & B Access: Full Delegates and Conference pass holders; registration required	With NielsenIQ's Carman Allison.
10:10am - 10:20am	Coffee Break	TCC North Building Access: Full Delegates and Conference pass holders	Sponsor: Kraft Heinz.
CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS - 10:25am - 10:55am			
10:25am - 10:55am	Room 6 - State of Fresh	Room 6 Access: Full Delegates and Conference pass holders	Hear the key differentiation strategies in FMI's 2026 State of Fresh report. Learn to position fresh foods as a sales driver by spurring customer engagement and shopping appeal. Presented by David Haaf.

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION / ACCESS	DETAILS
10:25am - 10:55am	Room 7 - Small Enough to Move Fast: What Independent Grocers Can Do While the Big Chains Are Still Deciding	Room 7 Access: Full Delegates and Conference pass holders	Grocery is being reshaped by forces that favour agility over scale - slow ecommerce adoption across the sector, the rise of Instacart and DoorDash as ready-made delivery infrastructure, loyalty programs shifting from generic points to genuine customer relationships, and the early emergence of AI agents that shop and compare on customers' behalf. Drawing on two decades building loyalty, ecommerce and customer data programs at scale - including leading PC Optimum at Loblaw and roles at Parkland and Shoppers Drug Mart - Uwe Stueckmann will unpack what actually worked and what independent operators can act on immediately without massive enterprise budgets or headcount.
10:25am - 10:55am	Room 8 - Connecting with Consumers	Room 8 Access: Full Delegates and Conference pass holders	Insights into how retailers and brands are maintaining shopper connections amidst changing financial realities and shopping preferences, as well as the tools brands are using to stay connected with the Canadian shopper. Presented by Flipp.
10:25am - 10:55am	Room 9 - Improve Inventory Management with 2D Barcodes	Room 9 Access: Full Delegates and Conference pass holders	Hear about the retailer roadmap for technology and systems to enable reading of all approved 2D barcodes powered by GS1. Presented by GS1 Canada.
WEDNESDAY TRADE SHOW - TCC NORTH BUILDING, HALL I			
11:00am - 4:00pm	Trade Show	TCC North Building, Hall I	
INTERAC INSIGHTS & INNOVATIONS STAGE			
1:00pm - 1:30pm	Why Behind the Buy	Interac Insights & Innovations Stage Access: All Trade Show and Conference pass holders	Path to Purchase Institute's Cyndi Loza presents the latest consumer insights affecting grocery.
WEDNESDAY EVENING EVENT - INDEPENDENT GROCER OF THE YEAR GALA			
5:30pm - 9:15pm	Independent Grocer of the Year Gala	Collaboration Corridor - J. Mitchell Lobby; Ballrooms A & B Access: Dinner Ticket or Full Delegate with Dinner Pass; registration required	Payment onsite depending on availability.
5:30pm - 6:15pm	Reception	Collaboration Corridor - J. Mitchell Lobby	
6:30pm - 7:30pm	Dinner	Ballrooms A & B	
7:30pm - 9:15pm	Independent Grocer of the Year Awards	Ballrooms A & B	Awards are handed out to the top grocers in the country. NGA Show Prize Sponsor: Saputo.