

2026 Mini-Con



30 April 2026, 8 am – 5 pm

Taco Comfort Solutions, Cranston, RI



**THE MODERN QUALITY
PROFESSIONAL**
SKILLS, TOOLS, AND MINDSETS

8:00	Registration, coffee and pastries, networking	
8:30	Welcome and opening remarks	
8:45	Ben White, President, Taco Family of Companies	
9:15	Carlos Da Silva, Expert, ESCALA Consulting Group <i>"Global Competition in the Age of AI"</i>	
10:15	Break, Exhibit Hall open	
10:30	John Kulungian, Founder and Principal, Intentional Partners, LLC. <i>"Building Organizational Capability & Innovation: The Human Side of Modern Quality"</i>	
11:30	Lunch, networking, Exhibit Hall open	
1:00	Eric Reidemeister, Andy Willner CAEDENCE Consulting, LLC. <i>"Revolutionizing Problem Solving with Visual CAPA™"</i>	Plant Tour
2:30	Break	
2:45	Eric Reidemeister, Andy Willner CAEDENCE Consulting, LLC. <i>"Revolutionizing Problem Solving with Visual CAPA™"</i>	Plant Tour
4:15	Closing remarks	



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“Global Competition in the Age of AI”

Carlos Da Silva, Expert, ESCALA Consulting Group

Session Description:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a future trend; it is redefining global competition today. Organizations across industries are facing a new reality where competitiveness depends not only on technological adoption, but on how leaders integrate people, processes, and AI-driven insights into a coherent strategy.

In this session, Carlos Da Silva shares a practical framework for navigating this transformation by:

- Build trustworthy systems that align quality, security, and AI governance.
- Transform workforce capabilities to keep pace with the half-life of skills.
- Design integrated strategies that turn disruption into competitive advantage.

This session is a call to action for young professionals and change leaders who want to ensure their organizations thrive in the next decade of global competition.

Speaker:

Carlos Da Silva is a globally recognized leader in Quality Management, Operational Excellence, and Integrated Management Systems, with more than four decades of experience across the automotive, electronics, semiconductor, and aerospace industries. His career reflects a consistent focus on aligning people, processes, and technology to improve performance, strengthen customer experience, and reduce the cost of poor quality.

His background includes senior leadership roles such as Vice President of Quality at NewPower Worldwide, Director of Global Quality at Axcelis Technologies and Quality & Lean Manager at Rockwell Automation, leading multicultural teams across the United States, Europe, and Asia.

Carlos is a Certified Manager of Quality and Organizational Excellence, Software Quality Engineer, Quality Auditor and a long-term contributor to international standards development. He represents the United States on ISO technical committees under ANSI/ASQ and is certified Lead Quality Auditor on Information Security (ISO 27001) and Artificial Intelligence (ISO 42001) Management Systems by the British Standards Institution (BSI).

A mechanical engineer with advanced studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Center for Creative Leadership, Carlos is also an experienced keynote speaker and mentor, helping organizations integrate quality, information protection, and AI governance to prepare for the future of work.

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“Building Organizational Capability & Innovation: The Human Side of Modern Quality”

John Kulungian, Founder and Principal, Intentional Partners, LLC

Session Description:

This session explores how modern Quality professionals integrate human-centric practices to strengthen and enhance innovation in the organization. Drawing on current research and practical examples, it highlights the mindsets, skills, and adaptive leadership behaviors, such as self-awareness, active listening, and reflection, which enables inclusive, and high-performing quality cultures. Attendees will learn how human-centered capabilities amplify technical excellence, improve decision-making, and unlock innovation in complex systems. Quality managers, engineers, and project leaders will gain practical perspectives to evolve the Quality body of knowledge and lead effectively at the intersection of people, processes, and technology.

Speaker:

John Kulungian is an organizational leader, executive coach, consultant, mentor, and advisor. Working with people and organizations in a more personal and powerful way is his passion. John believes that everything begins with leadership at all levels. John collaborates closely with leaders and organizations in small to mid-sized manufacturing companies to navigate a pathway for them to achieve and realize more success.

He has more than 30 years' experience, from the shop floor to the boardroom in start-up, mid-sized and large complex organizations across the manufacturing sector, including Fortune 500 companies United Technologies Corp., Black & Decker, Goodrich Aerospace, Raytheon, Sonnax Industries, and Axcelis Technologies.

John recently earned a master's degree in organizational psychology from William James College. This complements an ICF accredited Graduate Certificate in Executive Coaching (GCEC) also from William James College. He also holds a Master of Science, General Management from Rensselaer Polytechnical Institute and Bachelor of Science, Industrial Manufacturing Technology from Central Connecticut State University.

John is a longtime member/leader of ASQ and served as the chair of the Merrimack Valley Section 2014-16. He is a recipient of the John Pizar Award for outstanding contributions to the section. He also belongs to the Institute of Coaching (IOC) and has numerous professional certifications: ASQ CQM/OE, Quality Auditor, and Juran Six Sigma and Lean Manufacturing.

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“Revolutionizing Problem Solving with Visual CAPA™”

Eric Reidemeister, Co-Founder and Managing Director, CAEDENCE Consulting, LLC.

Andy Willner, Co-Founder and Managing Director, CAEDENCE Consulting, LLC.

Workshop Description:

Revolutionize your team’s problem-solving with Visual CAPA™

When the customer loses faith in your problem-solving, they get increasingly aggressive. That’s when managing CAPA updates becomes really stressful. Once your team is on the defensive, things go downhill fast. CAEDENCE will teach you some of its proven visual approaches to put your team in the driver’s seat - providing answers to customer questions before being asked, resulting in fast issue resolution with less friction. Intended audience: Quality, Engineering, and Manufacturing professionals and managers.

You will leave this workshop understanding why, despite being trained on conventional structured problem-solving, teams take too long to solve problems, don’t solve them permanently, and irritate customers in the process. Using case study examples from medical devices, automotive, and semiconductor, the CAEDENCE team will show you how to construct a Root Cause Journey Map™ to “connect the dots” between the hypotheses developed from your Fishbone Diagram and your Action Plan, a critical gap for most teams.

Speakers:

Eric Reidemeister - Eric is co-founder and Managing Director of CAEDENCE, where he specializes in transforming teams and organizations to achieve excellence. Before CAEDENCE, Eric ran several successful multi-million-dollar businesses, routinely meeting and exceeding quality and financial targets. While in charge of global Quality at Texas Instruments and Sensata, Eric transformed the organizations to achieve world-class quality performance with laser-focused customer engagements, deployment of robust systems, and infusing engineering depth into the Quality function. He has published in Quality Progress magazine, holds 7 patents, and is a certified Six Sigma DMAIC and DFSS Black Belt. LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/eric-reidemeister-655b3053/>

Andy Willner - Andy is a co-founder and Managing Director of CAEDENCE specializing in resolving clients’ most urgent and challenging quality, cost, and product development problems, as well as coaching leaders and engineers. Prior to CAEDENCE, Andy held engineering and leadership roles at Sensata Technologies, Texas Instruments, and Pratt & Whitney where he led many successful new product development, quality improvement, and cost reduction projects. Throughout his career, Andy has created a wide range of technical & business skills workshops. He holds 8 patents, is a registered Professional Engineer, and a frequent speaker at university and professional society events.

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/andy-willner-p-e-508792/>

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