INFORMS Practice Section Newsletter – October 2025

President, INFORMS Section on Practice

By Rajesh Tyagi, GE Research (Retired); rajeshtyagi@yahoo.com

Greetings! The 2025 INFORMS Annual Meeting in Atlanta is coming up soon, and we have many exciting Practice-related events planned:

• The Daniel H. Wagner Prize competition, along with reprise presentations from the 2025 Franz Edelman Award and UPS George D. Smith Prize winners.

• A joint breakfast with the Analytics Society from 7-8am on Monday, October 27, which will showcase the two communities. The Practice Section will provide an overview of its various activities and events. **The breakfast is free and open to all, with no registration required.**

• Cluster of practice-focused presentations. For details, please see the writeup from Nitish Umang in this newsletter.

A complete list of the Practice Section sponsored sessions, including their scheduled time, is shown at the end of this newsletter. I look forward to seeing you at the conference and hope you will attend some of these events.

I invite you to visit the Practice Section website to learn more about the section and all its activities. We are always looking for ideas and volunteers. If you have suggestions for new activities and/or would like to volunteer to support the existing activities, please contact me at rajeshtyagi@yahoo.com.

Updates from the Vice President, INFORMS Section on Practice

By Patricia Neri, Intelligent Analytics Solutions, LLC; patricianerib@gmail.com

In this newsletter, I'd like to provide an update on three new initiatives that you are welcome to participate in.

#1 Practice Section Showcase Profile
In each newsletter, we will showcase profiles of two Practice Section members. In this edition, you can read about Dr. Uthman Kareem, Industrial Engineer at Transsolutions LLC. and Dr. Carrie Beam, Academic Director of the MS in Business Analytics program at UC Davis in San Francisco.

If you would like your profile to be showcased in a future newsletter, please send it to nitishumang86@gmail.com with the header "Practice Section Showcase Profile".

#2 Student Corner and Early Career Practitioner Corner

We would like to receive contributions for the "Student Corner" and "Early Career Practitioner Corner". We invite you to contribute your articles (maximum 250 words) featuring past or upcoming events, opinions, opportunities, and more. Please send your contributions to patricianerib@gmail.com.

#3 INFORMS Mentoring Program
We invite our season Practice Section members to participate in the INFORMS mentoring program and discover the energetic and rewarding experience of mentoring. The mentorship experience offers opportunities for growth, learning, and sharing experiences. Mentee and mentor meet once per month for five months.

Important dates to remember:

- Next session begins on November 3, 2025, and runs until April 4, 2026.

- Mentors may enroll between September 3 and October 5, 2025.

- Mentees may enroll and request a mentor between October 6 and October 17, 2025.

For more information https://connect.informs.org/mentor-pages-bucket/mentoring

Updates from the Edelman Award Committee Chair

By Irv Lustig, CAP-X, Optimization Principal, Princeton Consultants irv@princeton.com

Submissions for the 2026 Edelman Competition were due on October 1, and the Edelman Committee is reviewing the initial set of submissions in the first 2 weeks of October. The semifinalists will be notified during the week of October 20 about their selection, and the verification process for each of them will begin shortly thereafter. At the time of writing this article, we don't know how many submissions we will see.

If you are coming to Atlanta, there are two sessions related to the Edelman Award:

- Monday, October 27, 8–9:15am, in Building A Level 4 A402, Session MA16: "Edelman Finalist Reprise." The WM and Amazon teams from the 2025 competition will be doing reprisals of their finalist presentation.

- Tuesday, October 28, 5:45–6:45pm in Building A Level 4 A412, Keynote Session is the Edelman Winner Reprise by the 2025 winner USA Cycling describing their project "Project 4:05— Optimizing Olympic Gold Medal Performance for USA's Women's Team Pursuit."

I hope to see you at both of these sessions!

Updates from the Wagner Prize Chair

By Konstantina Mellou, Microsoft Research; kmellou@microsoft.com

If you are attending the INFORMS Annual Meeting in Atlanta, come join us for the final round of the Wagner Prize Competition!

The Wagner Prize is awarded annually by INFORMS to recognize and reward quality and coherence of analysis used in practice, good writing, strong analytical content, and verifiable practice successes. This award, given in memory of the late Daniel H. Wagner, was established by a generous endowment from the firms Metron, Inc.; Daniel H. Wagner, Associates, Inc.; and Applied Mathematics, Inc.

The Wagner committee met in August and selected the four finalists for this year's competition. Each team will present their work on Sunday, October 26, in two sessions dedicated to the Wagner Prize Competition:

Daniel H. Wagner Prize (8–9:15am)

- **Analytics for Urban Bike Infrastructure Planning: A Multi-Year Collaboration with the City of Toronto**
  Bo Lin, University of Toronto; Madeleine Bonsma-Fisher, University of Toronto; Shoshanna Saxe, University of Toronto; Timothy Chan, University of Toronto.

- **Deepstock: Inventory Management with Policy Regularizations**
  Will Ma, Columbia Business School; Xinru Hao, Taobao & Tmall Group; Jiaxi Liu, Sichuan University; Yaqi Xie, University of Chicago; Linwei Xin, Cornell University; Lei Cao, Taobao & Tmall Group; Yidong Zhang, Taobao & Tmall Group.

Daniel H. Wagner Prize (11am–12:15pm)

- **Optimizing Multimodal Rideshare Pricing via Quasi-Convex Efficiency Objectives**
  Sajjad Taghiyeh, Lyft Inc.; Hao Yi Ong, Lyft; Zeyad Kassem, Lyft.

- **Rebalancing and Pricing of near-Expiry Inventory in Online Grocery Retail**
  Long He, George Washington University; Ziyuan Zhou, The George Washington University; Zhengling Qi, George Washington University; Guangrui Ma, Meituan Group; Yuanbo Peng, Meituan Group; Yushu Yao, Meituan Group; Zhongyi Zha, Meituan Group; Mingyong Zhao, Meituan Group; Zhenyu Zhuo, Meituan Group.

Please spread the word about these sessions and hope to see you there!

THE UPS GEORGE D. SMITH INFORMS PRIZE

By Fidel Rodriguez, LinkedIn; fidelr3843@gmail.com

The UPS George D. Smith Prize is a cornerstone of the INFORMS community, recognizing departments and programs that are preparing the next generation of leaders in Operations Research and Analytics. Celebrating these contributions is exactly what keeps our field vibrant and forward-looking.

Congratulations once again to our 2025 winner, the National University of Singapore Master of Science in Business Analytics program (https://msba.nus.edu.sg). NUS' program is an outstanding example of the innovation, academic rigor, and industry relevance that produce exceptional analytics practitioners.

I am honored to serve as the 2026 Chair of the Smith Prize committee, and I look forward to building on the tremendous momentum created by my predecessor, Anne Robinson (https://www.linkedin.com/in/anne-robinson-449225).

If you are considering applying for the prize or are interested in volunteering with the committee, please don't hesitate to reach out.

For more information on the UPS George D. Smith Prize, visit: https://informs.org/Recognizing-Excellence/2024-UPS-George-D.-Smith-Prize

2025 INFORMS Annual Meeting: Practice Track Sessions – A Preview

By Nitish Umang, Johnson & Johnson; nitishumang86@gmail.com

We are only a few weeks away from the INFORMS Annual Meeting 2025, scheduled to be held October 26-29, 2025 in Atlanta, GA.

We have an exciting line-up of sessions in the Practice Track at the Annual Meeting, showcasing the application of advanced analytics at the intersection of operations research, artificial intelligence and management science to solve real-world problems. The Practice Track comprises 58 presentations across 13 technical sessions, covering topics such as Supply Chain, Logistics, Manufacturing, Energy, Aviation, Healthcare, and more. Speakers come from a wide range of companies, with a few from universities, offering a broad perspective on how analytical tools and techniques are being successfully used to create high-impact results in practice.

The detailed program is already available at the Annual Conference website and at the end of this newsletter. For those on a tight schedule, don't miss the **keynote on Sunday** for **Edelman Winner Reprise (USA Cycling)**, **Edelman Finalist Reprise (MA16)** and the **Wagner Prize (SA01, SB01)** sessions, to listen to outstanding applications from the Practice Track.

The Annual Meeting is a great opportunity to interact and network with fellow analytics professionals and catch up on the exciting work happening across industry practice and academia. **Register today** to learn about high-quality, practical applications of advanced analytics across organizations.

Educate Yourself on the new Practice Relevant Technologies at the 2025 INFORMS Annual Meeting

By Segev Wasserkrug, IBM Research; segevw@il.ibm.com

The variety of sessions at INFORMS' Annual Meetings provides a unique opportunity for practitioners to become aware of and educate themselves on the leading-edge technologies that would allow them to remain at the forefront of OR and Analytics practice. One such technology is AI – whose presence has become increasingly prominent in INFORMS conferences. A second more up and coming topic, is the use of new computing architectures, such as GPUs and quantum computing, to help solve large and complex optimization problems in a significantly faster manner.

To help practitioners learn about these topics at the annual meeting, we used ChatGPT to analyze the conference agenda and generate spreadsheets containing a set of relevant candidate presentations, as well as indicate which ones are related to practice. On the topic of AI, ChatGPT marked 679 presentations as AI/Generative AI, with between 328 to 598 of them being relevant to practice (depending on whether ChatGPT used a stricter or looser definition of a presentation being related to practice) and with 35 of them being formal practice track sessions. On the topic of GPUs/Quantum Computing, ChatGPT marked 89 presentations as relevant, with between 40-68 being related to practice. These GPU/Quantum presentations include a *TutORial* on "Solving Quadratic Unconstrained Binary Optimization Models on Quantum Computers" (Sunday, October 26 at 2:45pm) and the Geoge B. Dantzig session Dissertation Prize Presentation "New Theory and New Practical Methods for Solving Large-Scale Linear and Conic Optimization" (Sunday, October 26 8am) on a new algorithm, and efficient GPU based general-purpose conic problem solver utilizing this algorithm, for solving large scale optimization problems.

We also found that analyzing the spreadsheets and understanding the outcomes can serve as a valuable lesson in the application of LLMs – both regarding the correct way to use their output and the need to address the possible errors they make. The sheer number of presentations means that we cannot validate every spreadsheet entry, which means that it is up to the attendee to check the correctness of the information, including in terms of content, relevance and presentation time. In addition, we found at least one practice presentation which we know is related to AI, but which ChatGPT neglected to include in the spreadsheet. We also found however, that in the same session, ChatGPT found another relevant presentation. This would seem to suggest that, when presentations of interest are found by using these spreadsheets, attendees may want to look at other presentations in the same session to see if they may also be of interest. This would also seem to suggest that the correct way to use these spreadsheets is as a starting point for possible presentations of interest in the conference agenda – using the conference agenda as the source of truth to validate and augment the suggested presentations in the spreadsheet.

We include the spreadsheets here: GenAI and Quantam in the hope that they serve as a helpful resource for identifying sessions of interest and navigating the conference more effectively.

Wishing everyone a successful and inspiring 2025 INFORMS Annual Meeting!

INFORMS Practice Section Webinar Series

By Rajesh Tyagi, GE Research (Retired); rajeshtyagi@yahoo.com

The Practice Section has been conducting a webinar series that showcases (1) individual analytics applications and (2) panels on areas such as recruiting and training analytics professionals and managing analytics projects.

Our recent webinars include:

- GenAI & Your Career: Navigating Shifts, Skills, and Opportunities

- Delighting a Billion Indian Customers through Supply Chain Optimization at Flipkart (2025 Edelman Finalist)

- Data-driven Optimization of Ferro Alloys Usage In Steelmaking at JSW (India)

Those interested in learning about upcoming webinars should check out our webpage at: https://connect.informs.org/practice/events/upcoming-webinars. And those interested in viewing past webinars can find them at: https://connect.informs.org/practice/events/past-webinars.

If anyone is interested in giving a webinar or has suggestions for a speaker or topic, please contact Rajesh Tyagi (rajeshtyagi@yahoo.com).

Early Career Professionals' Network (ECPN)- Two Decades of Connecting Analytics Leaders

By Subramanian Narayanaswamy, 2026 ECPN Chair; snsubbu@gmail.com

Eleven years ago, as a master's student at the University of Cincinnati, I attended the INFORMS Early Career Professionals' Network (ECPN), formerly known as the INFORMS Professional Colloquium (IPC). That experience truly shaped how I think about analytics, collaboration, and leadership. Fast forward to 2026, I'm both happy and humbled to serve as Chair of the very program that helped shape my career. For me, ECPN has always been more than just a program; it is a community that grows with you and connections that stay with you long after the conference ends.

What Is ECPN? Bridging Academia and Practice

The Early Career Professionals' Network (ECPN) is designed for recent graduates, soon-to-be graduates, and new professionals in analytics and operations research (O.R.). It offers a unique opportunity to build professional networks and gain real-world insights from experienced practitioners. Participants connect with peers, learn from mentors, and engage directly with leaders from top organizations, all while developing skills essential for success in analytics and O.R.

What makes ECPN truly unique is its emphasis on hands-on learning and early career connections. Instead of just listening to lectures, participants take part in interactive workshops on communication and storytelling, along with one-on-one speed mentoring sessions. Past events have featured role-playing as analytics consultants, creating "elevator pitches," and learning how to turn technical findings into business

value. This experience boosts confidence, enhances soft skills, and helps participants see how analytics add value in real-world situations.

Beyond the workshop itself, ECPN becomes a lifelong network. Each cohort forms lasting bonds with mentors and peers who continue to support one another long after the conference ends. Many alumni hold significant responsibilities in the corporate world and academia, and often return as mentors to pay it forward. That spirit of connection, learning, and giving back is what defines the ECPN community.

Join Us for ECPN 2026 - INFORMS Analytics+ Conference

- **Date:** Sunday, April 12, 2026

- **Location:** Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, National Harbor, MD

- https://meetings.informs.org/wordpress/analytics/early-career-professional-network/

If you are interested in attending the next ECPN or know someone who could benefit from this unique opportunity, consider applying or nominating a candidate for the 2026 program. For more information, email ecpn@mail.informs.org.

Finally, we would like to thank the Practice Section for sponsoring ECPN and all the members who volunteer their time and experience. Your support keeps this community thriving. We look forward to working together to make ECPN 2026 a great experience.

Practice Section Showcase Profile

By Dr. Uthman Kareem, Transsolutions LLC; kareemuthman305@gmail.com

My name is Uthman Kareem. I recently completed my PhD in Industrial Engineering at the University of Texas at Arlington. I currently work as an Industrial Engineer at Transsolutions LLC. I work on airport capacity analysis, operations research, statistical modeling and discrete event simulation modeling.

During my PhD program, I worked on National Science Foundation sponsored project focused on Water Distribution Network Systems Optimization using a design and analysis of computer experiments approach. This research lies in the intersection of operations research, data science and statistical modeling.

During this period, I got more involved with INFORMS and I was one of the founding members of University of Texas at Arlington INFORMS chapter.

My exposure to INFORMS has been very beneficial to me socially, academically and career-wise. Hence, I believe I have taken more than I have given the organization. As a result, I always like to volunteer for more INFORMS programs. Recently, I was one of the few people sponsored by INFORMS to attend the 2025 INFORMS Analytics+ conference under the framework of Early Career Professional Network (ECPN) program. As a reward for attending the ECPN program, I was given an opportunity to become INFORMS Practice Section member, which I accepted.

Professionally, I continue to explore opportunities and path that would deepen my expertise in operations research and data science because of my passion for data driven decision making, values derived from mathematical optimization solutions approach and their relevance across different industries.

By Dr. Carrie Beam, UC Davis; carrie@carriebeamconsulting.com

My name is Carrie Beam, and I've been an INFORMS member so long I can't actually remember when I joined. Most likely it was as a PhD student at UC Berkeley in the 90's, but let's put some margin of error around that.

What am I doing now? Literally 48 hours before writing this, I was at INFORMS San Francisco's IRAC conference, learning about quantum computing from Gurobi and about what people do with those big trucks on the freeway from Amazon.

I currently serve as the Academic Director of the MS in Business Analytics program at UC Davis in San Francisco. It was at INFORMS when a casual conversation led me here, so I can also say I found my current job through INFORMS.

INFORMS has provided opportunities for me to learn so much. I learned people management and how to identify excellence from the Franz Edelman Award for Achievement in Advanced Analytics, Operations Research, and Management Science, as I served in pretty much every capacity, from noob verifier to coach to judge to competition chair and now (best gig ever) simply a raving fan. I learned about problem framing when we ran the Freestyle O.R. Supreme competition for students. I learned how to expand my network at Annual Meetings over two decades. I learned how to follow up and say thank you when organizing a panel.

And I am always learning something new from INFORMS. I would welcome new connections with any INFORMS members who want to join me on this learning journey.

On the Horizon: Practice Section Office Hours?

By Zohar Strinka, Secretary, INFORMS Practice Section; zstrinka@gmail.com

Over the past several years, The Practice Section has hosted monthly networking happy hours via zoom. The approaches varied depending on the organizers, with an exclusive focus on networking this year.

However, there have been times where sharing expertise was the main benefit. Whether that be via an impromptu discussion with the whole group, or a mini-talk to kick things off.

To bring a new way to learn from experts as a Practice Section member benefit, we are planning to test an "Office Hours" meeting idea. This will be in addition to the happy hours, where networking will continue to be the focus.

Our idea is that an organizer will line up an expert to answer questions (perhaps monthly, or less often). The experts will vary – with a published biography each time. That way attendees know what areas to ask about, or which sessions interest them most.

It may make sense to solicit questions ahead of the session for prep, or we could stick with the office-hours structure where the expert answers questions live.

We don't yet have an organizer, or our first event scheduled. It's also yet to be seen if this is a popular option for our members. Still, as we look for ways to increase engagement as a section, it seems like a good thing to try.

If you have thoughts or would like to volunteer to help, please send me a note: zstrinka@gmail.com.

INFORMS Practice Section Events at Annual Meeting in Atlanta, October 26–29, 2025

INFORMS Awards Presentations:

1. SA01 and SB01 - Daniel H. Wagner Prize
   Sunday, October 26, 8–9:15am and 11am–12:15pm, Bldg A Lvl 3 A301

2. Keynote - UPS George D. Smith Prize Winner Reprise: National University of Singapore
   Sunday, October 26, 5:45–6:35pm, Bldg B Lvl 2 B206

3. Keynote - Edelman Reprise: USA Cycling
   Tuesday, October 28, 5:45–6:45pm, Bldg A Lvl 4 A412

Monday Breakfast:

INFORMS Analytics Society and INFORMS Practice Section Joint Breakfast
Monday, October 27, 7–8am, Location: Omni International Ballroom A & B, North Tower, Level M2
The breakfast is free and open to all, with no registration required.

Practice Section Sessions:

1. SA16 - AI: From Prototype to Production
   Sunday, October 26, 8–9:15am, Bldg A Lvl 4 A402

2. SB16 - AI-enabled decision intelligence in business operations
   Sunday, October 26, 11am– 12:15pm, Bldg A Lvl 4 A402

3. SC16 - Optimal Sourcing at Amazon
   Sunday, October 26, 1:15–2:30pm, Bldg A Lvl 4 A402

4. SD16 - Innovations in Fulfillment and Logistics Operations
   Sunday, October 26, 2:45–4pm, Bldg A Lvl 4 A402

5. SE16 - Optimization Meets Generative AI: Applications and Insights from the Industry/Academia
   Sunday, October 26, 4:15–5:30pm, Bldg A Lvl 4 A402

6. MA16 - Edelman Finalist Reprise
   Monday, October 27, 8–9:15am, Bldg A Lvl 4 A402

7. MB16 - Prescriptive and Predictive Analytics in Logistics and Supply Chain
   Monday, October 27, 11am–12:15pm, Bldg A Lvl 4 A402

8. MC16 - Supply Chain Optimization at Amazon
   Monday, October 27, 1:15–2:30pm, Bldg A Lvl 4 A402

9. MD16 - Practical Applications
   Monday, October 27, 2:45–4pm, Bldg A Lvl 4 A402

10. ME16 - Forecasting and Optimization Methods and Models for Last Mile Operations
    Monday, October 27, 4:15–5:30pm, Bldg A Lvl 4 A402

11. TA16 - Optimizing Product Supply Reliability With Advanced Risk Models
    Tuesday, October 28, 8– 9:15am, Bldg A Lvl 4 A402

12. TB16 - Amazon Last Mile Planning
    Tuesday, October 28, 11am–12:15pm, Bldg A Lvl 4 A402

13. WA17 - Future of Work: AI Automation, and Human Collabration
    Wednesday, October 29, 8–9:15am, Bldg A Lvl 4 A403

Practice Section Exclusive: Delta Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul Facility Tour

Wednesday, October 29, 2–4pm. **Must be pre-registered. Free but limited spots.**