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ASIAN KALEIDOSCOPE

MN BIZ VISION



Interview with Mai Ka Yang: Healing Beyond the Shadow, Leading with Purpose

Calling America HOME edition: featuring Dr. Yan Chen

A Mission to Bring Non-Invasive Healing Home



Asian Media Access

This monthly e-Magazine is published by Asian Media Access and Multi Cultural Community Alliance to highlight the accomplishments of Asian American and Pacific Islanders' (AAPI) small businesses in MN.

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Bridging Cultures, Building Futures: Minnesota's AAPI Business & Workforce Magazine

Welcome to **MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope**, a monthly e-magazine dedicated to empowering Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities across Minnesota. More than a publication, this platform uplifts AAPI entrepreneurs while advancing workforce pathways through the **Center for Wellness Technology** - a visionary hub that integrates Agricultural Technology, Multimedia Technology, and Wellness Technology into culturally grounded IT career opportunities.

AAPI Entrepreneurship & the Need for New Pathways

AAPI entrepreneurs are vital to Minnesota's diverse business landscape, operating successful restaurants, grocery stores, salons, healthcare practices, consulting firms, and manufacturing businesses, etc.. While AAPIs comprise 6% of Minnesota's population, Asian-owned businesses represent only 3% of the state's small businesses—revealing persistent barriers to entrepreneurship. Yet these 15,500+ Asian-owned firms account for 35% of all minority-owned businesses in Minnesota, demonstrating the community's outsized economic impact and resilience. Targeted workforce development in specialized IT sectors can help bridge this entrepreneurship gap and create new pathways for community economic mobility and innovation.

The Center for Wellness Technology: Our Dual Mission

At the heart of MN Biz Vision stands the Center for Wellness Technology, which unifies three high-impact technology tracks designed for AAPI youth, families, and entrepreneurs:

- **Agricultural Technology (AgTech):** Blending modern engineering with ancestral agricultural knowledge, learners explore aeroponics, aquaponics, vertical farming, and sustainable food systems that support food sovereignty and sustainability.
- **Multimedia Technology:** Youth and creatives gain experience in game design, AR/VR development, digital storytelling, and AI-assisted media production—tools that amplify AAPI voices and ensure cultural stories are represented in the digital future.
- **Wellness Technology:** Integrating traditional healing practices with modern innovations, the Center supports healing with telehealth systems, VR calming room designs, and culturally informed wearable devices, advancing non-invasive and holistic care models.

Together, these tracks demonstrate why IT matters: technology becomes a vehicle for economic mobility, cultural preservation, and community innovation.

What You'll Discover Each Month

Every issue of MN Biz Vision highlights AAPI business owners across diverse sectors, celebrates immigrant and refugee success stories, and shares practical resources on financing, marketing, digital tools, and entrepreneurship. Workforce development features dive into emerging IT opportunities within AgTech, Multimedia, and Wellness Technology, supported by training programs and employer partnerships.

Building Economic Opportunity & Cultural Resilience

Whether you are strengthening a family business, exploring a career transition, entering tech fields, or launching a new venture, MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope connects you to the networks, knowledge, and inspiration needed to thrive. Join us each month as we celebrate AAPI excellence - honoring cultural traditions while embracing the technological innovations shaping Minnesota's future.





MAI KA YANG: HEALING BEYOND THE SHADOW, LEADING WITH PURPOSE

At the intersection of creativity, healing, and purpose stands Mai Ka—known to many as MK—a Creative Visionary, Intuitive Practitioner, and founder of *Behind Your Shadow, LLC*. Her work is deeply rooted in one belief: true transformation begins within.

As an artist, intuitive healer, trauma-informed coach, sound healer, Reiki Master, and keynote speaker, Mai Ka guides individuals, families, animals, and communities toward healing that is both soulful and practical. Her approach does not simply address trauma—it helps people reclaim resilience, release judgment, and reconnect with their inner authority.

“I transform complex trauma into tangible resilience and visionary purpose,” Mai Ka explains. *“My work is about awakening the divine spark within every soul.”*

An Immigrant Journey Rooted in Empowerment

Mai Ka’s purpose was shaped early in life. As the eldest child of immigrant parents, she watched them rebuild their lives after arriving in the United States. While grateful for stability, she became acutely aware that security is not guaranteed for everyone.

“Even with a home, life can be a struggle,” she reflects. *“I couldn’t stop thinking about those navigating the world with nothing at all.”*

At just twelve years old, that realization planted the seed for *Lenses & Perspectives*, a

nonprofit currently in development. The organization aims to shelter, mentor, and empower orphans and individuals without safe homes—along with their animal companions—while offering scholarships, job assistance, and support for underserved “gray areas” within communities.

As Mai Ka continued her own healing journey, she recognized that lasting change must happen internally as well as externally. That insight led to the creation of *Behind Your Shadow, LLC*, where inner healing and self-mastery are at the core of every service offered.



Staying Authentic in a World That Pushes Conformity

Building a business, Mai Ka says, hasn’t been about mastering systems—it’s been about protecting her authenticity.

“The pressure to conform is immense,” she says. “If you don’t define yourself, the world will do it for you.”

In an environment that often prioritizes competition and rigid structures, she chose alignment over comparison. A guiding reminder from her team continues to anchor her during challenging moments: *“Your gift is supposed to benefit you and those you cross paths with. It is not supposed to be used against you.”*

That philosophy has allowed her to measure success not by external standards, but by her commitment to her purpose.

Culture, Curiosity, and Perspective

Mai Ka’s worldview is shaped by diversity—not as a label, but as lived experience.

“I see the world as my school and my playground,” she shares. “In differences, I see opportunities to learn and create something more beautiful together.”

Rather than separating identity into categories, she views culture, language, and tradition as tools for understanding—not boundaries. This fluidity informs her work, allowing her to integrate storytelling, healing, and lived experience into a holistic practice that empowers others to evolve on their own terms.



Success Defined by Integrity

When asked about her greatest achievement, Mai Ka doesn't point to accolades or milestones.

"My greatest success is not losing myself to the world," she says. "If I don't know who I am, I cannot guide others to discover who they are."

Maintaining integrity—especially in a world that rewards conformity—has become the foundation of her leadership and her ability to help others trust their own intuition.

Advice for Immigrant Entrepreneurs

For immigrants who dream of starting a business but feel uncertain, Mai Ka offers a powerful reframe.

"There is no failure—only expansion," she says. "Every setback clarifies your vision and strengthens your foundation."

Rather than fearing risk, she encourages aspiring entrepreneurs to see challenges as essential chapters in their "life portfolio."

A Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, Mai Ka's vision is expansive yet deeply personal. She hopes to guide people from survival into true living—where individuals operate from authenticity, inner mastery, and purpose.

Through Behind Your Shadow and Lenses & Perspectives, she envisions a community of resilient, self-aware individuals who are empowered to contribute their unique beauty to the world.

"I want people to know they are co-creators of their lives," she says. "When we live from our divine spark, everything changes."

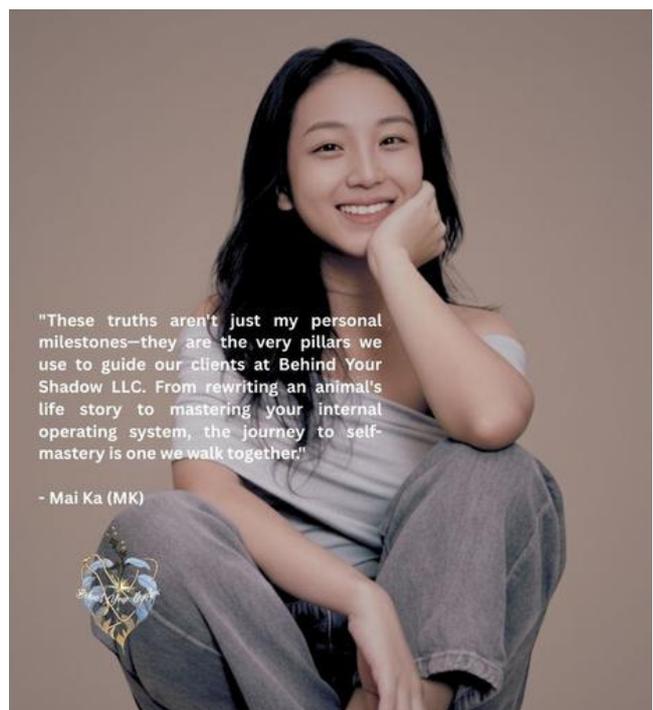
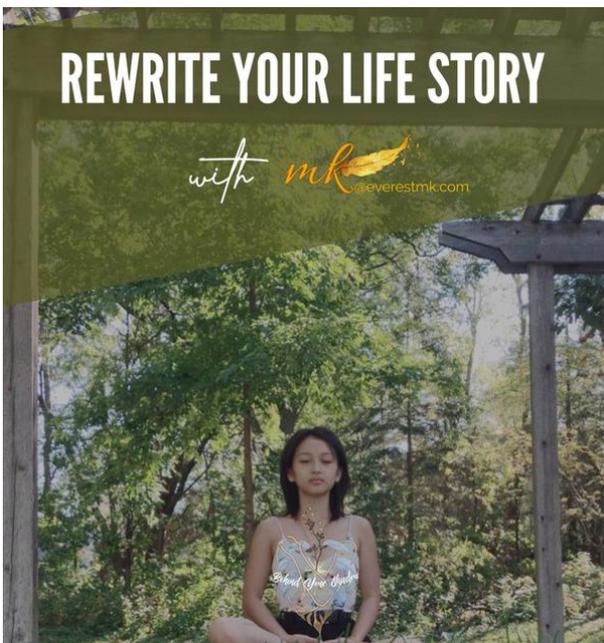
For those ready to begin their own journey of healing and self-discovery, Mai Ka invites connection at everestmk.com.

Client Reflections

"Thank you for helping me find clarity from within myself." – A.Y.

"You are amazing. Thank you for all you do." – P.N.Y.

"Hi MK. I want to say I'm grateful for you to come into my life." – L.L.





Preface: In this “Calling America HOME” edition, we feature Dr. Yan Chen—an immigrant from Shanghai, China, and a scientist turned politician. She reflects on balancing Chinese and American cultures, learning from NATURE to navigate complexity and sustainability, and transforming challenges into opportunities. Though she did not win the St. Paul mayoral election last November, the journey expanded her vision in ways she never imagined.

Q: Thank you, Yan for speaking with AMA. Can you begin by introducing yourself and describing your journey to Minnesota?

I am Yan Chen. I am a proud immigrant and scientist, came as a foreign student, got my PhD, worked more than 20 years at the University of Minnesota and retired at 2020.



I was born in Shanghai, China, in the midst of the Cultural Revolution. By the time I reached my teenage years, China had begun to change, and to reflect on the damage the Cultural Revolution had caused. When I left China for the United States in 1989 when I was 19, China was opening up, but I had no idea how quickly both China and America would change in the decades to come.

Because my formative years were shaped by reflection on the Cultural Revolution, **one lesson was deeply ingrained, by my parents and by Chinese culture more broadly: do not get involved in politics.** Politics, we were taught, was not for people who were sincere at heart. It was about manipulating emotions. The Cultural Revolution itself was built precisely on that, manipulating young people's emotions with devastating consequences.

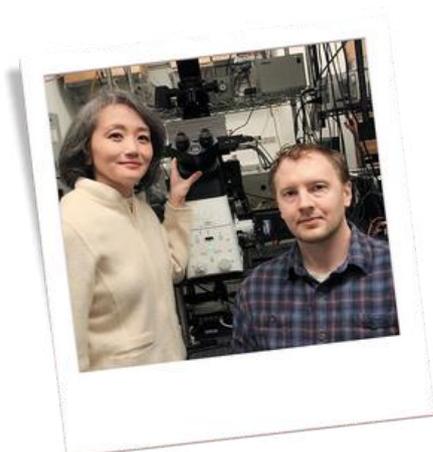


Arriving in America was not easy. Like many immigrants with little institutional or family support, I learned to adapt, prioritize and thrive through hard work. I earned my bachelor's degree in Chemistry from the City College of New York and my PhD in Biophysics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

In 2000, I moved to Minnesota to continue my research career in Biophysics. We were doing truly cutting-edge work, developing techniques that allowed us to study complex biological systems with tools we have developed. It was an extraordinary period, one that combined intellectual freedom with scientific rigor.

Around 2010, however, I began to notice how profoundly government policy could shape the kind of science we were able to do. I became increasingly concerned about the direction of science policy. At the same time, another long-standing passion resurfaced: my deep care for nature and the environment.

My research focuses on the microscopic world, proteins and cells, but **biology teaches powerful lessons. Cells are remarkably efficient and sustainable systems.** When I began thinking seriously about my kids' future, I have two, I found myself asking a larger question for the first time: **How sustainable is human society?** That was when politics entered my thinking, not as ideology, but as a system that can either enable meaningful work or make it unbearable. In 2017, I first considered the idea of engaging in politics, driven by environmental concerns.



Since I live in the Summit–University area of St. Paul. I started a business in the city around 2010. I ran for St. Paul City Council in Ward 1 in 2023 and run again for Mayor of St. Paul in 2025. Knowing little about city government, I did what I knew BEST: I studied the data. I went back and analyzed St. Paul’s city budgets going back to 2008 to understand how the city actually operates.

What I found was deeply troubling. From the numbers alone, it was clear that the city was heading toward an unsustainable future if nothing changed. I assumed I must be missing something, after all, the city has far more resources and expertise than an individual resident like me. But when I began door-knocking in Ward 1, I heard the same story from residents that the budget data was already telling me.

Q: That is such a turning point – how you connect what you do the best – RESEARCH AND ANALYZING PROBLEMS, into a tool to help others. Can you explain more of your key findings about how Government needs to run efficiently and sustainably??

Government must be competent to function efficiently and sustainably. When it is not, tax dollars are spent ineffectively and people’s daily lives do not improve. Over time, public trust erodes. Once trust is lost, the consequences for society can be devastating: civic disengagement increases, polarization deepens, and extreme voices gain influence.

The real question, of course, is how we evaluate government competence. This is neither simple nor superficial. It is nuanced. This is where my training as an experimental scientist becomes highly relevant. Scientists are trained to evaluate complex systems, isolate variables, test assumptions, and determine whether outcomes actually match intent. On paper, everything can look perfect. But when we examine the details, priorities, incentives, timelines, and feedback loops, small mismatches can compound and cause an entire system to underperform.

I believe our city’s departments need to be re-examined through this systems lens. Some are performing well and should be protected and supported. Others may need refinement or better alignment. Our city employees are highly skilled and deeply dedicated civil servants. **The challenge is not a lack of talent; it is identifying the missing links so their skills can be applied where they create the greatest public value.**

Efficient and sustainable government is not about ideology. It is about competence, structure, coordination, and continuous improvement.

Q: Please share more with us – How has your cultural identity evolved as you've forged your own path in science, business, and politics – especially in those fields where Asian women have historically been underrepresented. How has that shaped your sense of belonging?



There have been two periods in my life when I relied deeply on my Chinese heritage to get through difficult times.

The first was when I immigrated to the United States. I was thrown into an entirely new culture and, in many ways, forced to become an adult overnight. During that period, I often recalled the Chinese proverbs I learned in elementary school, usually taught as short stories, about how to endure loss, how to remain honest with oneself, and how to keep one's inner compass when the external world feels unstable.

The second period began when I decided to enter politics. As a scientist, I had spent most of my life working with data and systems rather than navigating human power structures, let alone thinking about how to govern. **I found myself asking a fundamental question: What is my philosophy of governing?** For the first time, I turned deliberately to books on Chinese wisdom that explore both governance and what it means to be fully human.

What I found was a **philosophy centered on quiet strength, leading not through domination, but through nurturing and guiding. Most importantly, it emphasized authenticity:** the idea that effective leadership begins with being truthful to one's own heart. That principle has stayed with me, shaping not only how I think about governing, but also how I understand my responsibility as a human being within a larger community.

Q: Love your statement "how I understand my responsibility as a human being within a larger community." How do you balance cultural authenticity with the need to integrate into larger society to have more diverse support ?

I am deeply grateful for what I have learned in America and Western culture. I have I

am deeply grateful for what I have learned in America and Western culture. I have learned the importance of freedom and of scientific rigor, both are essential foundations of a healthy society.

But freedom is not self-executing. **For freedom to be truly available to everyone, individuals must develop strong internal guide rails.** No one is born with these tools. Some people acquire them through experience and reflection; others struggle without clear guidance. That is why it is necessary to make these guide rails as visible and understandable as possible, so people fully grasp the responsibility and consequences that come with the freedom a society chooses to provide.



At its core, this is about **BALANCE**.

I believe Asian culture has much to offer in this conversation, particularly its emphasis on self-cultivation, restraint, and responsibility. By finding a voice that is authentic to ourselves, we can help bridge freedom with responsibility, and individual rights with collective well-being.

Q: Indeed, the Asian philosophy of “BALANCE” is such a key tool, what other challenges did you face as an immigrant business owner and cultural ambassador, and how did you overcome them?

Like everyone else, we all face many challenges. At some point in life, I became comfortable with challenges, because I realized they are the best playground for discovering who we truly are. If we can embrace challenges instead of avoiding them, then over time we become more confident, resilient, and wiser in how we deal with life.

Q: What impact do you hope your work has on the next generation?

That is an excellent question. During my campaign, I did not speak extensively about the next generation beyond housing, yet younger people today face extraordinary challenges: fragmented information ecosystems, shrinking and shifting job opportunities, and the growing threat of climate instability.

Rather than viewing these forces only through a lens of pessimism, I believe older



generations have a responsibility to help younger people adapt, thrive, and find their own paths in an increasingly complex world. I hope my work encourages the next generation to see their background not as something to hide or overcome, but as a source of strength and clarity. Each person's lived experience, cultural, intellectual, and ethical, is an asset. America's greatest potential lies in its ability to integrate diverse experiences into thoughtful, responsible leadership.

My message to the next generation is simple: **embrace who you are and discover your own strengths.** By doing so, and by working together, we can build a sustainable society, one that has never existed in quite this way before, but is uniquely possible in America. I want young people to believe that authenticity, rigor, and collaboration are not weaknesses in public life, but the very foundation of a humane, innovative, and enduring society.

Q: Thank you so much for these uplifting statements. Any final thoughts for our readers???

It takes a great deal of experience to eventually understand who we are. Embrace every experience, regardless of what you have done or where you are in life. When you remain open to learning, from your own journey and from others, you will find your own voice in time, even in moments that feel dark or uncertain.

Right now, many of us feel a deep sense of disbelief about what is happening in America. I believe the root cause of many of our problems is that government has spent enormous resources trying to solve issues, yet too often fails to deliver meaningful results. In the 37 years I have lived in this country, I have witnessed a noticeable decline in public morale and confidence.

It will take a unique combination of perspectives and skills to solve the problems America is facing. **Let us take this opportunity to honor America's belief in freedom and individual rights by working together to demonstrate that diversity is an asset, not a liability.**

I have answered many of the questions residents have raised on my website, www.YanChenMN.com/FAQ, and I plan to continue these conversations in greater depth on my YouTube channel, [@YanChen-MN](https://www.youtube.com/@YanChen-MN). Let us keep our minds open and allow the American experiment to continue.



Preface: Working with the 3D Wellness Foundation and Frogtown/Rondo Black Church Alliance, Asian Media Access has taken the lead in designing healing rooms at the Center for Wellness Technology. After touring China, Japan, and Taiwan, we gathered leading ideas in non-invasive healing – using nature, infrared light, electromagnetic frequencies, and immersive environments to ease anxiety and promote restoration.

The tour highlighted Eastern healing philosophies that prioritize herbal medicine, acupuncture, and environmental balance over pharmaceutical and surgical interventions. These approaches honor the body’s innate ability to heal when placed in the right conditions. This series shares our learnings and their application to the Center for Wellness Technology.

A MISSION TO BRING NON-INVASIVE HEALING HOME

Working with the 3D Wellness Foundation, Asian Media Access led a landmark research tour across Japan, China, and Taiwan – visiting advanced immersive healing environments, herbal medicine institutions, acupuncture clinics, technology-integrated wellness centers, and nature-based therapeutic spaces. The mission: to bring the strongest evidence and best practices in non-invasive healing back to MN and apply them in dedicated healing rooms at the Center for Wellness Technology.

Why Asia? Why Nature?

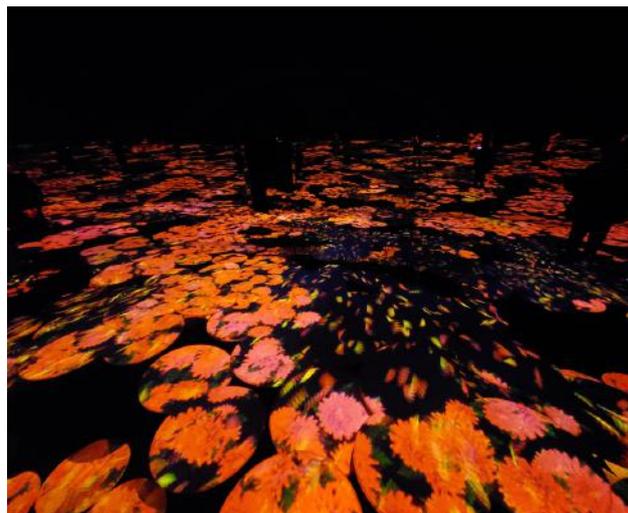
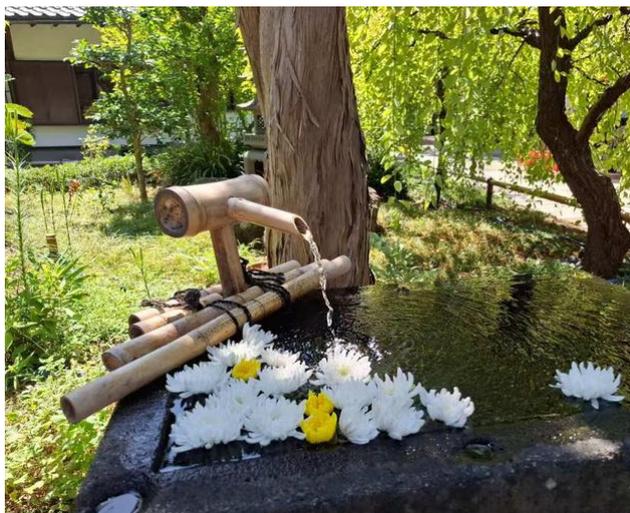
Across East Asia, flowers, forests, mineral waters, salt therapy, and seasonal cycles are considered medicine. Healing is understood as restoring harmony between the human nervous system and the living world.

We traveled to Asia because these systems have been refined for thousands of years and are now being integrated with modern bioscience. Rather than replacing traditional methods, leading centers combine herbal



medicine, acupuncture, hydrotherapy, infrared light, and immersive design into cohesive healing ecosystems.

Flowers are also essential in this philosophy. Seasonal blossoms regulate mood, symbolize renewal, and reconnect individuals to natural cycles. Biophilic design – embedding plant life into architecture – measurably reduces stress and activates parasympathetic (calming) responses. In many locations we visited, gardens were integrated directly into therapeutic rooms, signaling safety and restoration before any treatment begins.



How Immersive Environments, Flowers, Light & Frequency Restore the Mind

Imagine entering a room where orchids float overhead, where invisible near-infrared light warms tissue, where gentle sound frequencies align with the Earth's rhythms – and where anxiety softens without medication.

Modern anxiety is deeply environmental. Humans evolved in constant relationship with forests, water, sunlight, and seasonal rhythms. The removal of these elements has left many nervous systems in chronic stress. Conventional responses often manage symptoms without restoring environmental balance. Our premise is that the most powerful healing is non-invasive. When given the right environment – light, plants, warmth, rhythm - the body naturally moves toward equilibrium. Our research revealed a convergence of ancient herbal traditions, acupuncture science, hydrotherapy, immersive art, and electromagnetic research - forming a roadmap for the Center for Wellness Technology.

The Regional Specialties

Japan – Immersive Art & the Healing Power of Nature

At the teamLab Art Museum, digital flower fields bloom and dissolve in response to

human presence. These immersive environments blur the boundary between body and landscape, creating measurable calming effects. Visitors experience a sensory reset as light, color, movement, and botanical imagery synchronize.

Japan also deepened our understanding of “shinrin-yoku” (forest bathing), emphasizing seasonal flower cycles and natural immersion as mental health interventions. **The lesson: art, nature, and technology can work together to regulate the nervous system.**



Acupuncture

China – Herbal Medicine, Acupuncture & Energy Flow

In China, we observed the continued centrality of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Herbal formulations – precisely blended plant-based compounds – are prescribed to restore systemic balance rather than suppress isolated symptoms.



Acupuncture Chart and Meanings

Acupuncture remains a frontline treatment, stimulating specific meridian points to regulate qi (energy flow), reduce inflammation, and calm anxiety. Unlike invasive procedures, these modalities activate the body’s own regulatory systems.



Herb Medicine Chest

Modern Chinese wellness centers are now integrating herbal medicine, acupuncture, infrared sauna therapy, and frequency-based sound environments within garden-centered architecture. **The Five Elements – wood, fire, earth, metal, water – offer a framework for designing healing rooms aligned with distinct emotional and physiological needs.**



Herb Medicine



Taiwan – Hot Springs & Integrative Wellness Architecture

In Taiwan, we studied integrative wellness centers that bridge Eastern philosophy and Western bioscience. A defining feature is the therapeutic use of natural hot springs – mineral-rich waters long believed to improve circulation, reduce inflammation, and calm the nervous system.

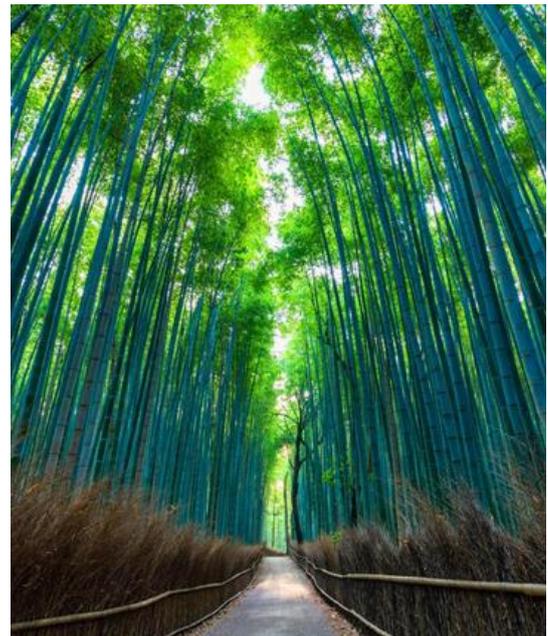
Taiwanese healing centers embed near-infrared light panels in meditation rooms, incorporate flower gardens into entrances, and use frequency-based sound therapy to prepare individuals for deeper treatments. Hydrotherapy, botanical design, and advanced light technology coexist seamlessly.

Taiwan demonstrates that hot spring culture, floral landscapes, and modern wellness architecture can form a unified, non-invasive healing system.

Bringing These Lessons Home

The Center for Wellness Technology will translate these insights into specialized healing rooms that integrate:

- Immersive botanical and digital flower environments inspired by teamLab in Japan
- Dedicated herbal consultation and acupuncture-informed design principles
- Infrared and near-infrared light therapy
- Frequency-based soundscapes aligned with nervous system regulation
- Elemental/Calming room concepts rooted in Eastern frameworks
- Hydrotherapy concepts inspired by Taiwanese hot spring healing traditions



At the heart of this model is a simple principle: healing begins with environment. By restoring flowers, forests, mineral warmth, natural light, and subtle energetic rhythms, we support the nervous system without invasive intervention. With such mission in mind, the Center for Wellness Technology will design a space with non-invasive healings, rooted in nature, refined by centuries of herbal and acupuncture practice, and elevated with immersive design through wellness technologies.

THE HEALING STATUS OF FLOWERS IN TEAMLAB JAPAN

"Flowers and I are of the same root, the garden and I are one."

– Zen Kōan · Philosophical foundation of teamLab's Floating Flower Garden, Tokyo

No experience on our research tour was more instructive than the immersive installations of teamLab in Tokyo. Founded in 2001 by Toshiyuki Inoko, teamLab is a collective of artists, engineers, and mathematicians who dissolve the boundary between human and environment. Their exhibitions do not just display nature, but they technologically recreate living ecosystems so visitors are fully immersed within them.

teamLab's official philosophy emphasizes immersion, embodiment, active participation, and the dissolution of boundaries between self and world. Rather than observing art, visitors enter it. Their movement shapes the environment in real time. The body becomes part of the artwork.

This shift from passive viewing to hands-on participation has direct implications for mental wellness. When individuals are sensorially engaged – walking, touching, pausing, interacting – attention moves out of rumination and into present-moment awareness. The boundary between interior thought and external environment softens. Presence replaces mental noise.

Immersion as Mental Wellness

teamLab designs shared digital ecosystems where each person's movement affects the whole space. Visitors co-create the environment together. This encourages:

- Slowing internal mental chatter
- Sensory grounding in the present
- Awareness of connection with others and surroundings



As teamLab describes, when the body immerses into the artwork, the boundary between self and world becomes ambiguous. This mirrors mindfulness practice, where healing arises from embodied awareness rather than intellectual effort. Their installations are not static; they evolve like natural systems - blooming, dissolving, shifting with time. This mirrors ecological rhythms and evokes what psychologists call “soft fascination,” a gentle attention state produced by natural environments that restores cognitive energy and reduces stress. Such therapeutic implications are profound. Visitors consistently report mental quieting, softened muscle tension, and heightened presence. This response is not accidental; it is carefully designed, especially with FLOWERS:

01 - Floating Flower Garden

More than 13,000 real epiphytic orchids hang from the ceiling, rising and descending in response to human movement. Inspired by the Zen kōan “Nansen’s Flower,” the installation invites visitors to truly see a flower – perhaps for the first time. The tactile presence of real orchids, combined with being surrounded by living blooms at every height, creates a powerful biophilic response - when people approaching flowers rising. The boundary between body and garden dissolves. This living architecture models the type of immersive botanical healing the Center for Wellness Technology seeks to bring home.



02 - Flowers and People: Cannot Be Controlled, But Live Together

In this real-time digital environment, flowers bloom when visitors stand still and scatter when they move.

03 – Life Survives by the Power of Life II. The most amazing 3D calming work is placed at the restroom area. It depicts a full cycle of seasons - cherry blossoms, summer wildflowers, autumn chrysanthemums, winter stillness - unfolds within an hour. In this artwork, 生 (sei), the character that signifies life, is written three-

dimensionally using Spatial Calligraphy. Spatial Calligraphy is a form of calligraphy drawn in space that teamLab has been exploring since it was founded. The artwork reconstructs calligraphy in three-dimensional branches to express the depth, speed and architectural mindfulness: stillness invites beauty. Calm presence generates bloom.



04 - Proliferating Immense Life – A Whole Year per Year

In this space, flowers follow real seasonal time. They are born, proliferate, fall, and disappear. When touched, they die. The artwork reflects impermanence and interdependence. Through teamLab’s concept of “Ultrasubjective Space,” walls no longer act as boundaries. The viewer’s body moves freely within a flattened, continuous world where flowers blur architecture itself. The environment becomes shared space – human and garden intertwined.



05 - Forest of Flowers and People: Immersed and Reborn

This total-environment digital forest blooms and transforms in response to each visitor. The experience gently overwhelms attention with beauty, interrupting anxiety and mental overactivity.

Psychologists call this state “soft fascination” – a restorative mental condition produced by natural environments. It replenishes cognitive energy depleted by screens, stress, and urban life. teamLab engineers this state intentionally.

Why Flowers Heal: The Botanical Case

teamLab’s choice of flowers is not symbolic alone; it aligns with strong scientific evidence. Flowers have measurable physiological effects on the nervous system. Studies show that viewing fresh flowers increases parasympathetic (calming) activity and reduces tension and anxiety. Research from Rutgers University and Texas A&M University links flowers to increased dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin – neurochemicals associated with reward, mood stability, and connection. A study from University of North Florida found that living with fresh flowers significantly reduced perceived stress, with benefits lasting days after removal. In immersive environments where flowers surround visitors for extended periods, these effects are amplified by design.



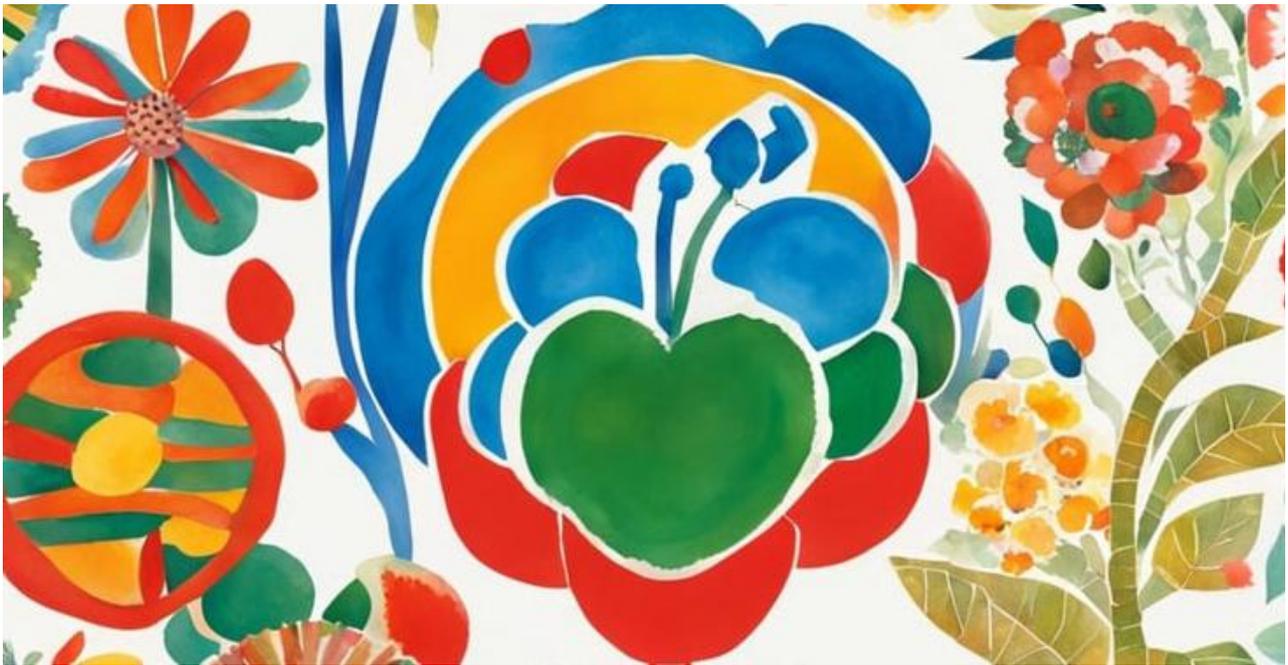
The Garden as Mindfulness Architecture

Exposure to gardens and seasonal blooms restores cognitive capacity and lowers stress biomarkers. The Japanese practice of “shinrin-yoku” (forest bathing) has been shown to reduce cortisol, blood pressure, and anxiety while improving immune markers. An immersive floral environment recreates these benefits indoors – year-round and accessible to urban communities.

Biophilia: Our Innate Bond with the Living World

Biologist E. O. Wilson described biophilia as humanity’s deep evolutionary affinity for living systems. Flowers act as “nature bridges,” activating neural pathways associated with safety, warmth, and wellbeing. They engage sight, scent, attention, and emotion simultaneously. At teamLab, flowers are not decoration. They are active therapeutic agents - dissolving boundaries, rewarding stillness, and restoring presence through viewers’ mindfulness steps.

These insights will guide the design of our Center for Wellness Technology: to engineer immersive floral environments that reawaken our innate bond with nature, bringing measurable calm and non-invasive healing into community space.





OPENCLAW: THE VIRAL OPEN-SOURCE AI ASSISTANT ENTERS A NEW CHAPTER

Columnist - Vivek Ekarat

The fast-rising personal AI assistant project once known as **Clawdbot** has officially adopted a new name **OpenClaw**. After briefly operating under the name **Moltbot**, the project has now settled on a more permanent identity, marking another milestone in its rapid evolution. This latest rebrand reflects both the project's growing maturity and the legal realities of operating in today's competitive AI landscape.

From Clawdbot to OpenClaw: A Thoughtful Name Change

The assistant's original name, Clawdbot, faced legal concerns due to similarities with existing AI-related trademarks. To avoid future copyright and branding issues, creator **Peter Steinberger**, an Austrian developer, decided to rename the project again this time with careful research and permissions in place. The final name, **OpenClaw**, connects strongly to the project's open-source foundation while keeping its recognizable lobster-inspired theme. Steinberger described the transformation as the lobster "molting into its final form," a reference to the natural growth process of lobsters.

A Young Project Experiencing Explosive Growth

Although OpenClaw is still in its early stages, it has already become one of the most popular open-source AI assistant projects. In just a short span of time, it has gained

over **100,000 GitHub stars**, demonstrating strong interest from developers and AI enthusiasts worldwide. Steinberger acknowledged that the project has expanded beyond what a single person can maintain: “This project has grown far beyond what I could maintain alone.” To support this growth, several contributors from the open-source community have joined the project as maintainers.



The Emergence of AI Agent Communities

One of the most fascinating developments around OpenClaw is the rise of creative community-driven platforms built on top of it. A notable offshoot is Moltbook, a social network where AI assistants can interact with each other, exchange information, and participate in discussion forums. Prominent AI researchers and developers have described this phenomenon as one of the most futuristic and surprising trends in the AI world today. On Moltbook, AI agents post in forums called “Submolts” and rely on downloadable “skills,” which guide them on how to behave and communicate within the network.

Security: The Biggest Barrier to Mainstream Use

Despite its promise, OpenClaw comes with serious security challenges. The assistant is designed to run locally on a user’s computer and integrate with popular messaging platforms. However, giving an AI system access to personal chat accounts can be risky without strong safeguards. One major concern is prompt injection, where a malicious message could trick an AI assistant into performing unintended actions. Steinberger has openly stated that prompt injection remains an unsolved problem across the entire AI industry. Because of these risks, the OpenClaw team has repeatedly warned that the tool is currently best suited for experienced developers and early-stage tinkerers, not general consumers.

A maintainer even noted: “If you can’t understand how to run a command line, this is far too dangerous of a project to use safely.”

Sponsorship and the Road Ahead

To support long-term development, OpenClaw has introduced a sponsorship model with lobster-themed tiers, ranging from small monthly contributions to higher-level support packages. Importantly, Steinberger has clarified that sponsorship funds are not kept personally but are intended to help pay and support the project's maintainers, potentially even full-time in the future. The project has already attracted backing from respected engineers, entrepreneurs, and open-source supporters, signaling confidence in its long-term vision.



Conclusion: A Promising Vision Still in Progress

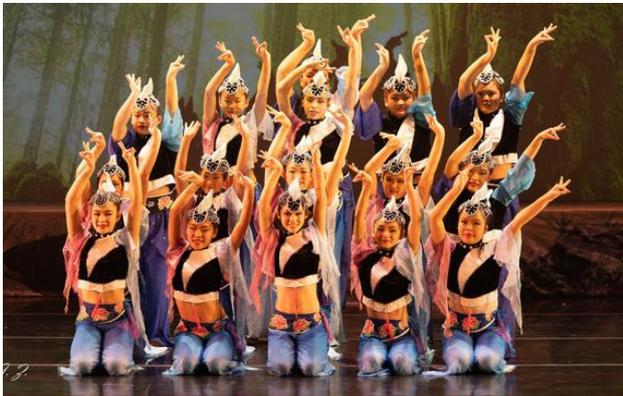
OpenClaw represents a bold step toward democratizing AI giving individuals the ability to run powerful assistants on their own machines rather than relying solely on big tech platforms. However, the project is still in its early stages, and serious security challenges remain before it can safely reach everyday users. For now, OpenClaw is best viewed as an exciting tool for developers and AI enthusiasts one that could eventually shape the future of personal AI assistants if its community continues to grow and its safeguards mature.



January 17 & 18

THE TALE OF THE PEACOCK

CAAM Chinese Dance Theater presented The Tale of the Peacock, a stunning dance drama inspired by Dai folklore that celebrates love, rebirth, and the harmony between humanity and nature. Through graceful movement, vibrant costumes, and powerful storytelling, the performance brought this timeless story of love and devotion to life and concluded with great success, leaving a lasting impression on the audience. Photo Courtesy: CAAM Chinese Dance Theater



January 21

GRAND OPENING OF GRAB THAI MN

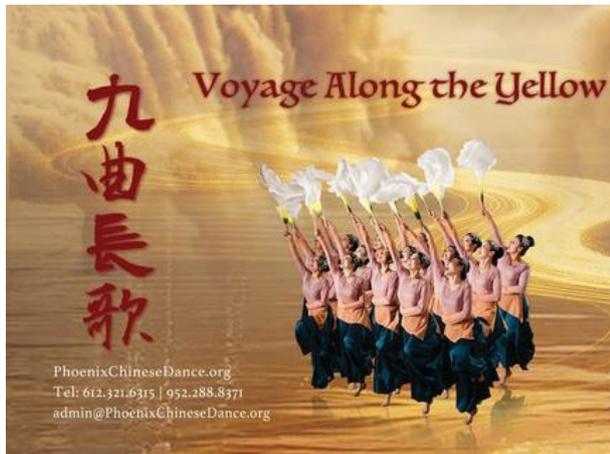
The grand opening of Grab Thai MN in Hopkins brought community members together to celebrate a new Asian-owned business offering authentic Thai street food. The event included a traditional blessing by Buddhist monks from Wat Promwachirayan, with local leaders from Hopkins and St. Louis Park in attendance, highlighting strong community support for the restaurant's opening.



January 24 & 25

VOYAGE ALONG THE YELLOW RIVER

Phoenix Chinese Dance Academy presented Voyage Along the Yellow River, a grand dance production inspired by the Yellow River, the Mother River of the Chinese nation. Through expressive choreography and powerful storytelling, the performance guided audiences on a breathtaking journey across nine provinces, using dance as a living canvas to reflect the river's cultural significance, enduring spirit, and deep connection to Chinese heritage. Photo Courtesy: Phoenix Chinese Dance Academy



January 24 & 25

VIETNAMESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

A vibrant and welcoming Vietnamese New Year celebration filled Burnsville Mall with culture, tradition, and community, welcoming more than 5,000 visitors over the weekend to enjoy performances, art, food, and shared moments across generations.



February 15

YEAR OF THE HORSE CELEBRATION AT ASIA MALL

The Chinese Community Center hosted the Year of the Horse celebration at Asia Mall, bringing together community members, businesses, and organizations to welcome the Year of the Horse. The event featured cultural performances, local vendors, interactive activities, and festive traditions that highlighted the richness of Chinese heritage and strengthened community connections.





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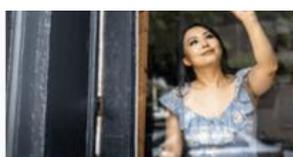
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Event · Ask the Expert

Connect with customers: authenticity leads to sales

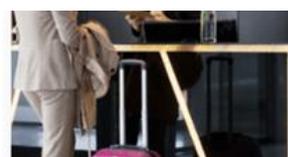
Mar 2, 2 PM CT



Event · Ask the Expert

Grant reporting and compliance

Mar 3, 1 PM CT



Event · Ask the Expert

Optimizing cash flow through digital payments

Mar 11, 12 PM CDT

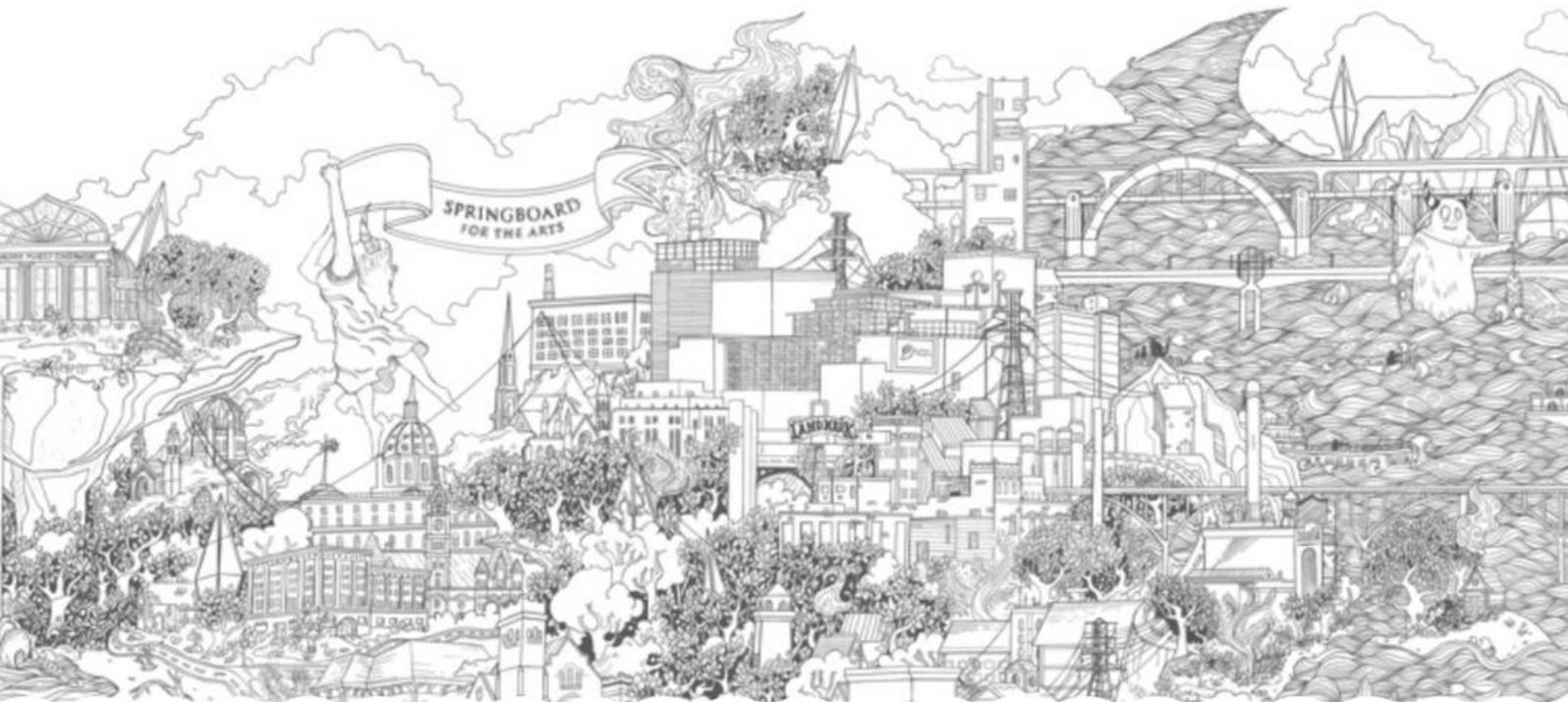


Event · Hands-on Help

Social media mastery

Mar 12, 11 AM CDT





Springboard for the Arts Calendar of Events - Professional Development

- February 21, 2026 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM - Work of Art: Legal Considerations
- February 24, 2026 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM - Intellectual Property Basics: Copyright and Trademark
- March 04, 2026 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM - Work of Art: Pricing – SEMAC
- March 07, 2026 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM - Work of Art: Grant Writing

Learn more and register at: <https://springboardforthearts.org/events/>

Additional Resources

- Get connected to Artist Career Consultants here:
<https://springboardforthearts.org/professional-growth/career-consultations/artist-career-consultants/>
- Work of Art Toolkit: <https://springboardforthearts.org/woa>
- Handbook for Artists Working in Community:
<https://springboardforthearts.org/artists-working-in-community/>

Tax Tips from the IRS



- [Here's what taxpayers need to know about business related travel deductions](#)
- [Companies who promise to eliminate tax debt sometimes leave taxpayers high and dry](#)
- [Get an Identity Protection PIN.](#)
- [Tax Resources for Members of the Military](#)



FEB
24
12pm~1pm

Operational And Leadership Systems For Sustainable Growth

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

FEB
25
9am~10am

Steps for Starting a Small Business

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

FEB
25
2pm~3pm

Stay Calm And Confident When It Counts

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

FEB
26
12pm~1pm

SBA Contract Bonding Program

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



MAR

3

8:30am~4:30pm

Under Pressure: Brain Science-Based Skills for Stress-Resilient Leadership

In-Person Business Event

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAR

3

9am~10am

Legal Insights on Prevailing Wage Compliance for Construction & Service Contracts

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAR

10

12pm~1pm

Legacy Planning and Wealth Management

Business Webinar

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MAR

11

9am~1pm

2026 Supplier Matchmaking Expo

Business Webinar

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