★ HONORING AMERICA'S VETERANS BUSINESS SUMMIT ★

Strategic Growth: Plan, Execute, and Brand for Success

Thursday, July 23, 2026 | 7:30 AM – 12:15 PM | University of Phoenix, 4035 S. Riverpoint Pkwy, Tempe, AZ 85040

The Veteran Entrepreneur Lifecycle

This summit guides veteran entrepreneurs through a complete business journey from strategic planning and AI-powered execution to brand authority, corporate connections, and long-term sustainability.

Plan	Execute	Brand	Connect	Sustain

Workshop Agenda

Time	Session & Presenter	Session Focus
7:30 AM	**Check-In, Breakfast & Networking** Resource tables open. Grab breakfast and connect with fellow veteran entrepreneurs before the program begins.	*Meet, greet, and prepare for the summit*
8:00 AM	**Pledge of Allegiance & Welcome** **UOPX: John Ramirez** **HAV: Paula Pedene & Dale Villani** HAV 250 / 30th Anniversary recognition.	*Welcome to UOPX* *Opening remarks and mission overview*
8:10 AM	**Sponsor Welcome** **Freddy Alvarez** Recognizing our sponsors and the Veteran Service Brands opportunity.	*Veteran Service Brand Partnership*
8:30 AM	**Module 1: Business Planning (30 min)** **Jay Gladney, SCORE** Building the internal structure — a strategic roadmap and organizational foundation that sets the stage for every decision ahead.	*The Internal Structure: Strategic roadmap and business foundation*
9:00 AM	**Module 2: Execution & Scaling with AI (45 min)** **John Choate, SCORE** Automating your plan and scaling output using AI tools — without adding headcount. Essential skills for veteran solopreneurs.	*The Execution: AI tools to automate and scale your business*
9:45 AM	**Morning Break (15 min)**	Refresh and network
10:00 AM	**Module 3: New & Traditional Media — Building Your Brand (40 min)** **Terri Ouellette, ABC 15 Sonoran Living** **Dave Pratt, Pratt Marketing Agency** **XXXX, Phoenix Business Journal**	A media panel on establishing market reputation — an essential component of any business plan. *The Brand Story: Build your market reputation and media presence*

Time	Session & Presenter	Session Focus
10:40 AM	**Module 4: Corporate & ERG Panel (35 min)** **University of Phoenix | APS | Bank of America** How to bridge the gap between veteran talent and corporate procurement, workforce development, and ERG partnership opportunities.	*Workforce Camaraderie: Corporate pipelines and partnership opportunities*
11:15 AM	**Stretch Break and Grab To Go Lunch (10 min)**	Quick break and to go lunch
11:25 AM	**Module 5: Life/Work Balance (40 min)** **Jessica Pierce, Career Connectors** The discipline that carried you through service can quietly burn you out in year two. This closing session is an honest conversation about building a company without losing your health, your family, or your purpose.	*Sustainability & Peer Advice: Protect your health, family, and mission for the long run*
12:05 PM	**Microgrant Awards** **Dale Villani, Freddy Alvarez, Carter Dowdy & Paula Pedene** Celebrating this year's microgrant recipients and the veteran-led initiatives they represent.	*Microgrant Presentations and celebration lunch*
12:15 PM	**HAV & SCORE Wrap-Up** **Paula Pedene & Camille Jesmont** Closing remarks and introduction to the follow-on SCORE educational webinar series — where summit inspiration becomes implementation.	*Transition to SCORE Online Educational Tracks*

Program Value Proposition

This program is built around one core idea: a veteran-owned business is a Growth Engine. The plan (internal), the technology (execution), and the story (external) must work in coordination to succeed. Here is how each element delivers:

1	**Strategic Continuity — The Plan-Execute-Brand Model** • Business owners gain a direct path from internal roadmap (Module 1) to AI-powered execution (Module 2) to brand authority (Module 3). • ERGs and affinity groups can use this model to mentor veteran employees and partners in transitioning military leadership into a civilian business framework.
2	**Skill Development & Authority Networking** • Specific, high-demand skills: Module 2 teaches veteran solopreneurs to use AI to scale operations without increasing headcount. • Warm professional introductions: the media panel and corporate ERG representatives (UOPX, APS, Bank of America) create direct access — not just casual networking.

3	**Professional Sustainability — The Human Engine** • Module 5 addresses the veteran-specific challenge of transitioning from a high-stress "mission-first" mindset to sustainable long-term business leadership. • Attendees leave with a self-audit for early burnout signals, a clear picture of sustainable entrepreneurship, and renewed clarity heading into the microgrant awards.
4	**Direct Access to Corporate & Media Pipelines** • Module 4 provides ERGs and affinity groups a structured path to understanding how to connect veteran talent and businesses with large corporate procurement and workforce systems. • The media panel in Module 3 equips attendees to pitch their story to local and regional outlets — an often-overlooked growth lever for veteran-owned businesses.

After the Summit: SCORE Educational Webinar Series

The summit provides the strategic vision and high-level roadmap. The follow-on SCORE online seminar series delivers the technical training required to sustain it — translating summit inspiration into real-world implementation.

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