



Organized by **Leaders Lounge Events**

We invite you to join 16 of your peers in HR, Learning and Talent Development with Chicago's leading employers to think-tank over drinks and dinner at the Tortoise Club

RSVP: by Wednesday 27th May 2026 to shomik@leaders-lounge.com

The Talent Breakthrough

What's Actually Working at the World's Most Ambitious Companies

A Private Curated Executive Think-Tank over Dinner



Wednesday 24th June, 4:30PM-7:30PM

at The Tortoise Club, 350 N State St, Chicago, IL 60654

Sixteen seats. Sixteen of the most thoughtful talent development minds in enterprise.

One evening to think out loud together.

Hosted by

Guild

Arrive hungry. Leave inspired.

*"Leaders lounge is like a retreat for the mind. There are few spaces where I can completely unplug and dive headfirst into my own learning and growth. It's more important now than ever for HR professionals to be exposed to industry trends outside our expertise and hear from the thought leaders moving our profession forward. This is a can't miss, must attend event. I count down the days to each session and look forward to seeing what I can take away and implement the next day I return to the office." - **Stephen Grove, VP DEI at Blackstone***

The Setting

Tucked inside one of Chicago's most quietly distinguished addresses, the Tortoise Club has been a refuge for serious conversation since 1993. Dark wood, warm leather, unhurried service, and a room that feels like it was built for exactly this kind of gathering. Just the right people, the right atmosphere, and an evening with nowhere to be but present.

The Spirit of the Evening

Something remarkable is happening inside a handful of enterprise organizations. Learning leaders who quietly rewired their talent architecture over the last two years are now seeing outcomes that are turning heads in the C-suite: promotion rates climbing, retention holding, and L&D finally earning a seat at the revenue conversation.

This dinner is a chance for the sharpest minds in talent development to share what's breaking through, get help with what's not, and to imagine what becomes possible when the pieces finally connect with the right group.

No pitch. No panel. No slides. Just sixteen peers in a room that invites honesty and action.

Enjoy a thoughtful evening together as we gather for drinks and then get seated in the private dining room for dinner, with Guild as your host and Matthew Daniel as the facilitator who has spent his career at the intersection of workforce data, education design, and human possibility.



The Three Thinking Courses

01 Permission to dream out loud – Stepping Outside the Org Chart

Redesigning the talent development function from scratch with everything you know today - what would you build first, and what would you finally stop doing?

This is the question that sends people home still thinking. It invites CLOs and VPs to step outside their org charts, their legacy systems, and their inherited programs and articulate their actual vision. It's forward-facing, energizing, and when the table is right, it produces the kind of candid peer dialogue that makes executives clear their path to an uninhibited way forward.

02 Surface the conditions that made your successes possible - Peer Storytelling Unlocks this Room

What talent investments surprised even you with its results? and what did it teach you about what your workforce is actually capable of?

Spectrum's CLO didn't expect 24% higher promotion rates. Target didn't expect 90% frontline engagement. Neither saw it coming until the data did. This question invites leaders to celebrate what's working, and in doing so, surface the conditions that made it possible. It's energizing, grounding, and sets a tone of possibility for the whole evening.

03 AI Framed as opportunity, not threat – Hearing Genuine Leadership in Development

AI is creating the most exciting moment in workforce development in a generation, so where are you placing your biggest bet? and what's your agile milestone plan?

Guild's own data shows AI fluency enrollment growing 1.5x in a single year. The appetite inside the workforce is real and accelerating. This question lets CLOs share where they're leaning in: frontline upskilling, leadership readiness, blended human-AI team design. It surfaces bold thinking and gives the table permission to be genuinely optimistic about a topic that usually gets discussed defensively.

" What wonderful wisdom from these senior HR leaders! Enjoyed not only their discussion but also the connections across all of the leaders at our gathering" - **Kyle Webb, Global People Partner at S&P Global Ratings**

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