

# iwf-atlanta-2026 lookbook

RIG Intelligence — Field Lookbook

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## 01 · The Event & The Play

IWF Atlanta is North America's woodworking heavyweight: **~26,000 attendees and 900+ exhibitors** across 740,000+ sq ft — cabinet, furniture, closet, millwork, and casework manufacturers, shop owners, and plant management. It is a buyer's show (83% call it the must-attend North American event), and unlike the tech-conference circuit, the people here own machines, payrolls, and quote packets held together with email.

The play: IWF's own program says the quiet part — three AI-titled sessions, and the recurring prerequisite is **clean, governed production data before automation pays**. The CNCs are world-class; the back office is 40 years older. RIG's wedge: AI governance as operational readiness — get the data and the rules right, then the robots earn their keep.

## 02 · Who's in the Room

| Category                    | Companies                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Machinery (heavy iron)      | BIESSE, SCM North America, Stiles Machinery (HOMAG), WEINIG USA, FELDER Group, Thermwood, Altendorf, Laguna, MultiCam, ShopSabre, C.R. Onsrud, Cefla, Barberan |
| Hardware & materials        | Blum, Häfele America, Richelieu, EGGER, KRONOSPAN, Wilsonart, States Industries, Osborne Wood                                                                  |
| Software                    | Microvellum, Hexagon, Cyncly, KCD Software, Vectric, EnRoute (SAi), Docket AI                                                                                  |
| Dust, automation & robotics | Oneida Air, Nederman, TigerStop, 7robotics, AutomaTech Robotik, OMNIROBOTIC, Robotic Solutions                                                                 |

Speaker names are not published on the public schedule — target by session topic and by booth. Software exhibitors know exactly which of their shops is scaling.

## 03 · People Worth Your Time

- **Shop owners at the AI sessions** — the people who show up to "AI and Running Your Business" are pre-qualified: they know the gap and they showed up to close it.
- **Software exhibitors (Microvellum, Cyncly, KCD, Docket AI)** — the integration layer; they know which customers have clean data and which are drowning. White-label co-pilot conversations start here.
- **Stiles/SCM/BIESSE product managers** — the iron is getting smarter; their customers will ask what the data layer looks like. Be the answer they refer to.
- **Robotics exhibitors (7robotics, OMNIROBOTIC)** — automation without governed data is scrap at machine speed; a natural alliance.

## 04 · Must-Attend Sessions

- **"AI + Automation: The Future of Woodworking Intelligence"** (Tue Aug 25, 11:00a) — the thesis session; sit with the shop owners.
- **"AI and Running Your Business: What Business Leaders Should Consider"** (Wed Aug 26, 1:30p) — the owner's session; your exact audience.
- **"Preparing for Automation: How High-Quality Data Powers People and Machines"** (Tue Aug 25, 1:00p) — quote this back all week: data readiness is governance.
- **"Mass Timber + AI: Market Trends"** (Tue Aug 25, 10:30a) — the growth segment.
- **"Industry 5.0 and the Smart Factory" power walk + "Leveling Up Your Shop with Automation and Robotics"** — the floor in one hour.

## 05 · The RIG Angle (30 seconds per persona)

- **For the shop owner:** "Your CNC is 40 years younger than your quote packet. The first AI that pays for itself in a shop like yours isn't on the floor — it's the quoting, scheduling, and change-order paperwork eating your margin. One workflow, governed, live in 90 days."
- **For the software vendor:** "Your customers ask why their data isn't AI-ready. We are the governed layer that makes their data — and your platform — the answer. White-label, your brand."
- **For the machinery buyer:** "Before the robot: the audit. We inventory every system and score it, kill the zombie pilots, and put the highest-ROI workflow into production first. The machines were never the hard part."

## 06 · Discovery Questions & Objection Handlers

1. How long from signed quote to production ticket — and how many inboxes does it touch?
2. Which number in your shop would you not bet a payroll on?
3. What did your last software rollout die from — the tool, or the data?
4. Who owns it when an automated quote goes out wrong?
5. If a big box customer asked for your on-time data tomorrow, could you produce it?

**"AI is for the big plants."** — Parsec's 2026 data: 72% of manufacturers have adopted AI somewhere; only 10% scaled it. The gap isn't appetite, it's plumbing — and plumbing is cheaper than iron. **"We're already automated."** — Automation moves material. Governance moves decisions. You need both, in that order's reverse. **"No time for a project."** — The first step is a two-week report in your numbers, not a project. If we're wrong about the payback, you don't pay.

## 07 · The Strike Plan

- **Mon Aug 24 (travel):** Booth map triage — five software, five iron, five materials. Book evening meetings now.
- **Tue Aug 25 (Day 1):** AI + Automation session, Mass Timber + AI, Data-Powers-Machines session. Two software-vendor meetings.
- **Wed Aug 26 (Day 2):** "AI and Running Your Business" — sit mid-room, owners self-identify in Q&A. Three discovery conversations with 20-200 employee shops.
- **Thu Aug 27 (Day 3):** Robotics aisle + dust/automation walk. Follow-ups same night.
- **Fri Aug 28 (Day 4):** Second meetings with the two warmest threads. Home with three scored opportunities, not a hernia from catalog bags.