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Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership Showcases Downtown as Center for AI-Driven Business Growth at Robotics & AI Discovery Day 2025

The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP) sponsored a featured panel at the Pittsburgh Robotics Network's Robotics & AI Discovery Day 2025, highlighting senior leaders from global companies headquartered Downtown and their role in advancing AI innovation.

PITTSBURGH (November 6, 2025) – The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP) sponsored a featured panel discussion at the Pittsburgh Robotics Network's Robotics & AI Discovery Day 2025 held yesterday at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Downtown Pittsburgh. Titled "**How AI is Advancing Business in Downtown Pittsburgh**," the conversation explored how major employers are using artificial intelligence to transform operations, talent strategies, and customer experiences.

The panel featured senior leaders from three global companies headquartered Downtown:

- **Brad Budde**, Chief Digital Officer, PPG
- **Richard Clarke**, Chief Data and Analytics Officer, Highmark Health
- **Filipe Condessa**, Director, BNY's AI Hub

PDP President and CEO **Jeremy Waldrup** opened the session by emphasizing that AI is reshaping legacy industries rooted in Downtown. "Innovation districts like Oakland, Bakery Square, and the Strip District often get the spotlight," he said. "But Downtown Pittsburgh is quietly, and powerfully, emerging as a center of AI adoption across industries that have defined this city for generations."

The discussion was moderated by **Shannon Baker**, PDP Board Chair and President of Gatesman, a Downtown-based agency leveraging AI into their creative and strategic work. Baker underscored that organizational culture and leadership are as critical as the technology itself. "Technology alone is not enough," Baker said. "To realize AI's true value, leaders must align culture, talent, and strategy to empower teams and accelerate innovation. That work is happening right here in Downtown Pittsburgh."

Panelists shared real-world examples of AI already in practice, from reducing operational errors in manufacturing to improving patient experience, and enabling employees to focus on higher-value work. "AI is transforming healthcare—how people experience care and how work



gets done,” Clarke said. “Highmark Health is committed to ethical AI deployment that leads to better outcomes and more affordable care.”

Budde added: “At PPG, we’re leveraging AI to accelerate innovation in product development and customer experience. Through our Formulation AI, we’re bringing technology-advantaged products to market faster and with better performance. Looking ahead, our strategic use of AI will enable deeper collaboration with customers to solve coatings challenges with precision and speed.”

Discussion themes included scaling AI beyond pilots, upskilling the workforce, building a stronger talent pipeline, and strengthening Pittsburgh’s competitive position among national tech hubs. Baker closed with a regional call to action: “To maintain momentum, our public and private sectors must work together to build the talent, infrastructure, and innovation ecosystems that support responsible AI growth.”

PDP’s sponsorship reflects its commitment to promote Downtown Pittsburgh as a center for innovation, high-quality jobs, and long-term economic growth in the region’s expanding technology economy.

About Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership

Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP) is a dynamic, nonprofit organization comprised of business and community leaders, property owners, civic organizations, foundations, and residents who provide energy, vision, and advocacy for Downtown Pittsburgh. Working collaboratively with its partners, the PDP strives to create a positive Downtown experience for residents, workers, and visitors alike. The PDP’s strategic initiatives include clean and safe services, transportation, and economic development and advocacy. For more information, visit www.DowntownPittsburgh.com, follow us on X, Facebook, and Instagram @downtownpitt.