

Influential Women Profiles Nikki Gustafson, CFEM, CGMP: Director Of Sales At Visit Greater St. Cloud In Hospitality

SAINT CLOUD, MN, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Promoting Greater St. Cloud as a Premier Meetings and Events Destination While Mentoring the Next Generation of Hospitality Professionals

Nikki Gustafson, CFEM, CGMP, is the Director of Sales at Visit Greater St. Cloud, where she has spent more than 13 years helping position Greater St. Cloud as a leading destination for conferences, meetings, conventions, and large-scale events. Through her expertise in destination marketing, client relations, and event planning, Nikki has played a significant role in attracting organizations and meeting planners to the region while fostering strong partnerships throughout the local hospitality community.



Her journey into the hospitality and tourism industry began at St. Cloud State University, where she earned a degree in Public Relations and Travel & Tourism. At the time, the Travel & Tourism program was newly established, providing Nikki with an opportunity to combine her passion for communication, service, and community engagement. During her junior year, she accepted an internship at the Travel Information Center, where she enjoyed assisting travelers and sharing information about destinations across Minnesota.

That early experience sparked a passion for tourism that would ultimately shape her career. Nikki later joined Visit Greater St. Cloud in a part-time capacity, distributing visitor guides and responding to visitor inquiries. What began as an entry-level role evolved into a long-term career with the organization, allowing her to gain experience across multiple areas of the business and develop a comprehensive understanding of destination marketing and event services.

Over the years, Nikki has built deep expertise in helping meeting planners identify venues, coordinate accommodations, and create successful event experiences. She has cultivated lasting relationships with hotels, convention facilities, service providers, and community stakeholders throughout the region. Her efforts have helped hundreds of organizations successfully host meetings and conferences with more than 250 attendees, contributing to both local economic growth and Greater St. Cloud's reputation as a welcoming and accessible destination.

Since being named Director of Sales in 2021, Nikki has expanded her leadership responsibilities by guiding and mentoring the sales team while continuing to advocate for the region on a national level. As a destination leader, she views herself as collaborative and strategic. She is passionate about helping team members grow professionally, build confidence, and maintain a healthy work-life balance while delivering exceptional service to clients.

Nikki attributes her success to a deliberate career journey and the diverse experiences that have shaped her understanding of hospitality and service. Throughout her career, she has developed a people-centered approach focused on collaboration, mentorship, and relationship-building. She believes that true success comes from helping others succeed and creating environments where individuals feel supported and empowered.

Although Nikki often celebrates the accomplishments of those around her, industry awards and professional recognition have reinforced her belief that her work is making a meaningful impact. More importantly, those experiences have strengthened her commitment to elevating both her team and the hospitality profession as a whole.

Among the most valuable lessons Nikki has learned is that while careers may evolve, individuals often know when they have found the profession that truly aligns with their strengths and passions. She also embraces the importance of continually challenging herself and striving to become the kind of role model that helps build future leaders.

For young women entering the hospitality industry, Nikki emphasizes the importance of recognizing and documenting their accomplishments. She encourages professionals to maintain a personal "win list" that highlights successful events, solved challenges, and positive client feedback. Revisiting these achievements can provide motivation, spark creativity, and reinforce confidence during difficult moments.

Nikki also believes that leadership is ultimately measured by the ability to elevate others. Creating opportunities for team members, supporting their development, and celebrating their achievements fosters a culture of loyalty and collaboration that benefits both individuals and organizations.

As the hospitality industry continues to evolve, Nikki sees adaptability as one of the most important qualities for long-term success. She recognizes that industry professionals cannot control every outcome, but they can control how they respond, learn, and grow from each

experience. Remaining aware of changing trends, embracing innovation, and maintaining flexibility are essential for staying competitive in a rapidly changing environment.

Outside her professional responsibilities, Nikki values spending quality time with the people she loves. She enjoys listening to audiobooks, visiting dog parks with her pup, playing board and card games, relaxing with gel-pen coloring projects, and binge-watching her favorite shows. These activities help her recharge while maintaining the balance she considers essential to personal and professional well-being.

Nikki is also a passionate advocate for mental health awareness. Her advocacy is rooted in personal experience. Following the birth of her eldest daughter in 2009, she faced significant mental health challenges during a period when conversations about maternal mental health were far less common. The lack of open discussion and available support left many women feeling isolated, and Nikki understands firsthand how difficult that experience can be.

Her commitment to mental health awareness deepened further as her daughter later experienced her own mental health struggles. These experiences reinforced Nikki's belief in the importance of supporting and encouraging honest conversations about emotional well-being.

Today, she remains committed to helping reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and encouraging greater understanding, compassion, and support. She believes that open dialogue can help others feel less alone and create stronger, healthier communities.

Through her leadership at Visit Greater St. Cloud, dedication to mentorship, and advocacy for mental health awareness, Nikki Gustafson continues to make a meaningful impact on the hospitality industry and the community she serves. By combining industry expertise, relationship-building skills, and a genuine commitment to helping others succeed, she continues to elevate both her profession and the destination she proudly represents.

Learn More about Nikki Gustafson:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/Nikki-Gustafson>

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