

Influential Women Highlights Carmen Placencia: Senior Sales Executive In The Fresh Produce Industry

SALINAS, CA, UNITED STATES, August 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Bringing More Than Two Decades of Sales and Commodity Management Experience to Strategic Customer Development, Industry Relationships, and Supply Chain Partnerships

Salinas, California – Carmen Placencia is a Senior Sales Executive in the fresh produce industry with more than 20 years of experience in sales and commodity management. She currently works at Coastline Family Farms Inc., where she supports foodservice and retail programs focused on key vegetable commodities such as leafy greens and green onions. Throughout her career, Carmen has built a strong reputation for strategic negotiations, market analytics, and customer development, consistently helping strengthen long-term partnerships across the supply chain.



Carmen's career began in entry-level sales support and transportation coordination roles in the Salinas Valley, where she quickly developed hands-on experience managing customer accounts and learning the operational side of the produce business. Early in her career, she stepped into major account responsibilities unexpectedly, an experience that accelerated her growth and shaped her confidence in sales and client management. Over time, she advanced into roles with increasing responsibility, including commodity management and business development, working with companies such as Growers Express, Organic Girl, and Green Life Farms before joining Coastline Family Farms.

Throughout her professional journey, Carmen has combined technical industry knowledge with

strong relationship-building skills, working closely with growers, customers, and internal teams across North America and Mexico. Her experience spans pricing strategy, supply chain coordination, and customer service excellence in highly variable agricultural markets. She is also recognized for her resilience, bilingual communication skills, and commitment to mentorship, often supporting newer professionals in developing confidence and capability within the produce industry.

A Foundation Built on Family, Hard Work, and Character

Much of who Carmen is today is because of her father, Jose Placencia. For several years, he was a single father raising Carmen and her brother before he remarried and built a beautiful family with her late stepmother, together raising five more children.

Throughout every stage of his life, Carmen's father led by example. He worked incredibly hard, often putting in long hours, yet he never failed to be there for his family when they needed him. Growing up on their family farms in Mexico, everyone was expected to contribute. From a young age, Carmen and her family learned the value of hard work, responsibility, and helping support the household. Because of that, she has never been afraid of work. Her father taught her that through his actions every single day.

As the oldest daughter, people often tell Carmen that she is her father in a woman's body. He was successful in everything he pursued, but what impressed her most was his constant desire to learn and improve. He was always curious, always growing, and always looking for ways to do things better.

More importantly, he taught Carmen that success means very little if someone is not a good person. He was hardworking, humble, generous, and deeply respected by those around him. His character left a lasting impression on her, and many of the values she carries today come directly from him.

Carmen truly admires her father and considers him one of the greatest influences in her life. More than anything, he taught her that integrity, kindness, and treating people well are just as important as working hard. Those lessons have stayed with her throughout her life, and she will always be grateful for his example.

Mentorship That Shaped a Career

Carmen owes much of her professional growth to the guidance, trust, and mentorship of a few remarkable people who believed in her long before she fully believed in herself.

One of the most influential has been her current boss, Tami Gutierrez. Tami gave Carmen her very first interview in the produce industry and advocated strongly for hiring her, despite her lack of experience at the time. She saw something beyond Carmen's resume—her attitude, determination, and work ethic. Although they did not work together for long during that first opportunity, Tami stayed in touch over the years, consistently reminding Carmen that she

wanted her on her team and that she believed in her potential.

About eight years ago, Carmen finally had the opportunity to work for Tami, and it truly felt like the right fit. With more than 40 years of industry experience, Tami has been an incredible source of knowledge and support. Whenever Carmen faced a challenge, a difficult decision, or a new contract opportunity, Tami always seemed to have the insight and experience to guide her. Carmen absorbed as much as she could from her, and she continues to learn from her today. Over the years, their relationship has grown beyond that of boss and employee—they have built a genuine friendship that Carmen deeply values.

Another person who has had a tremendous impact on Carmen's career is Tony Ojeda. They currently work together again, but their professional relationship began years ago when Carmen was a salesperson at OrganicGirl/NewStar.

Early in her career, Carmen was much more reserved and often nervous in meetings or when approaching new opportunities. Tony saw that and took her under his wing. He constantly encouraged her to step outside her comfort zone, coaching her on everything from customer outreach and follow-up strategies to building confidence in her own abilities.

Tony has a unique ability to connect people, opportunities, and industry knowledge. With years of experience in produce, he helped Carmen understand how companies are connected, who the key players are, and how relationships drive success in the business. As fellow bilingual professionals, they worked closely together developing business in Mexico, and their partnership proved to be incredibly successful. Even today, they continue to collaborate, and Carmen still benefits from his encouragement, knowledge, and unwavering support.

Looking back, Carmen realizes that her success has never been a solo journey. It has been shaped by mentors who invested their time, shared their wisdom, challenged her to grow, and believed in her every step of the way. For that, she will always be grateful.

Encouraging the Next Generation of Women in Sales

If Carmen could offer one piece of advice to young people entering sales, especially young women, it would be to believe in their abilities and not let fear stop them from pursuing opportunities.

When Carmen started in sales, there were far fewer women in the industry than there are today. It was not always easy, and there were certainly challenges that came with being a woman in a traditionally male-dominated business. Those experiences taught her resilience, confidence, and the importance of finding her voice.

One of Carmen's personal goals is to help the next generation succeed faster than her generation did. She would love to mentor and train young professionals, sharing the lessons she has learned throughout her career so they do not have to learn everything the hard way. While

this advice applies to everyone, she is especially passionate about encouraging more women to pursue careers in sales, build strong customer relationships, and become leaders within the industry.

She wants to see more women confidently sitting at the table, closing business, earning customers' trust, and achieving the success they deserve. The industry can be demanding, but it is also incredibly rewarding for those willing to work hard and keep learning.

Beyond technical knowledge, Carmen believes it is important to pass along emotional support, confidence, and practical guidance. Success is not just about understanding products, contracts, or markets—it is also about learning how to navigate challenges, build resilience, and continue growing professionally even when things do not go as planned.

The mentors who invested in Carmen helped shape her career, and she hopes to do the same for others. If she can help even a few young professionals gain confidence, avoid some of the mistakes she made, and reach their goals sooner, that would be one of the most meaningful accomplishments of her career.

Building Success Through Genuine Relationships

One of the biggest challenges in sales—and honestly, in any industry—is simply learning how to connect with people.

Success is not just about products, pricing, or contracts. It is about building genuine relationships and taking care of those relationships over time. People remember how they are made to feel, and those connections often follow them throughout their careers. In many cases, the relationships people build today can become customers, business partners, mentors, or lifelong friends tomorrow.

When Carmen was younger, she was naturally shy and often nervous about approaching new people. She would overthink conversations and wonder whether she had anything valuable to say. Over time, she learned that the most important thing is simply to start the conversation. Talk to people. Listen to their stories. Get to know them as individuals before worrying about selling anything.

Her advice to anyone entering sales is to expand their circle and never be afraid to introduce themselves. Ask questions, be curious, and focus on building authentic connections. The best relationships often begin with ordinary conversations that have nothing to do with business at all.

The larger the network becomes, the more opportunities people create for themselves. Not only does it help them grow their customer base and become more successful salespeople, but it also allows them to build meaningful relationships that can last a lifetime.

At the end of the day, people do business with people they know, trust, and enjoy working with. Learning how to build those relationships has been one of the most valuable lessons of Carmen's career.

Finding New Perspectives Through Travel and Connection

For many years, Carmen's primary focus was building a stable life for her family while growing her career in the agriculture industry. As a young mother raising two children, much of her energy was dedicated to creating opportunities for them and establishing a successful professional path for herself.

Now that her children are adults and pursuing their own lives, Carmen has entered a new chapter—one that has allowed her to embrace one of her greatest passions: travel. Her career has given her opportunities to visit new places, meet people from different backgrounds, and experience cultures she may never have encountered otherwise. Those experiences have broadened her perspective and reinforced the importance of staying curious and open-minded.

What Carmen values most is the opportunity to learn from others. Whether she is meeting a customer, attending an industry event, or visiting a new country, she is always interested in understanding how people live, work, and build relationships. She believes there is something to learn from every person and every culture.

In many ways, travel, business, and personal growth are all connected. Expanding horizons also expands networks, understanding of the world, and appreciation for different perspectives. One of the things Carmen loves most about the produce industry is that it provides a common connection with people everywhere. No matter where someone goes, everyone eats. Food brings people together, and produce creates opportunities for meaningful conversations and relationships across cultures and communities.

At this stage of her life, the connections Carmen makes and the relationships she builds are among the things she values most. Those relationships enrich both her personal life and her career, and they continue to remind her that success is ultimately about people, not just business.

Learn More about Carmen Placencia:

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

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