

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Visit Orlando | Orlando, FL





Orlando

Unbelievably Real

Visit Orlando is The Official Tourism Association® for Orlando, the most visited destination in the United States, the Theme Park Capital of the World, and the No. 1 meeting destination in the country. A not-for-profit trade association that brands, markets, and sells the Orlando destination globally, we represent more than 1,600 member companies comprising every segment of Central Florida's tourism community. Visit Orlando connects consumers and business groups with all facets of Orlando's travel community, whether for a vacation or a meeting. Home to ten of the world's top theme parks — as well as refreshing water parks, activities to connect with nature, vibrant neighborhoods, a dynamic dining scene with MICHELIN Guide restaurants, and a robust calendar of entertainment and sports events — Orlando is a diverse, welcoming and inclusive community for all travelers. Find more information at [VisitOrlando.com](https://www.visitorlando.com) or [OrlandoMeeting.com](https://www.orlandomeeting.com).

WHO WE ARE

Our Vision

To be the most visited, welcoming, and inclusive travel destination in the world.

Our Mission

Inspire, promote, and grow global travel to Orlando for economic and community benefit.

Core Values

We Innovate: We are free to be curious and to create what we imagine. We go beyond delivering what works; we deliver what's next.

We Trust: We are stewards of the resources and experience entrusted to us. We show up for each other and our community. Trust is our currency.

We Welcome: We are diverse by nature and inclusive by choice. Everyone belongs here.

We Serve: We are dedicated to serving our community and each other. Service is our superpower.

We "Orlando": We create moments that matter and have a blast doing it! Fun has no height restrictions.

THINGS TO DO

Home to seven of the world's top theme parks, Orlando is the country's No. 1 favorite family vacation destination and Theme Park Capital of the World®. Visitors create cherished memories with friends and family by immersing in the open-air adventures and lands of legendary theme parks from Disney, Universal, and SeaWorld; relaxing at world-class water parks; soaring on outdoor thrill rides; exploring activities in nature; and dining al fresco at award-winning restaurants. With 450 hotels, Orlando offers a wide range of lodging choices, from wide-open expansive resorts to uniquely themed boutique hotels, many with elaborate pools featuring waterfalls, lagoons, water parks, and even lazy rivers. Home to the most recognized travel brands in the world, Orlando's theme parks, attractions, hotels, and other businesses have developed comprehensive safety measures and worked closely with medical experts to create safe travel experiences.

[Theme Parks](#) - In Orlando, visitors, both young and young at heart, can immerse themselves in open-air adventures at the world's top theme parks.

[Other Attractions](#) - In the heart of Orlando's tourism districts, the International Drive Entertainment District, aka I-Drive, is anchored by ICON Park, Pointe Orlando, and many standalone attractions.

[Neighborhoods](#) - Beyond the theme parks and attractions, Orlando's neighborhoods and nearby cities offer endless adventures with dining, nightlife, arts & culture, outdoor recreation, shopping, and other surprises that locals love.

[Dining](#) - Dining in Orlando is all about sizzle that makes you go "ooh." It's presentation that gets eyes popping. And flavors that take you all the way around the world and back home again. Between Michelin guide honorees, celebrity chefs and local legends, global cuisines, lots of farm-to-table goodness, menus for every budget, and expansive dining and nightlife districts, every meal has the potential to become your new favorite dish.

[Arts & Culture](#) - The arts come alive in Orlando, and often in ways that must be witnessed to be believed. From the best of Broadway and ballet to thought-provoking collections and traveling exhibits, Orlando offers a captivating blend of traditional, contemporary, and even never-before-seen artistry and culture, including many that are exclusive to the destination.

[Shopping](#) - Orlando is a shopper's paradise like no other. The sort of place where the world's most coveted brands compete for attention in wondrous settings that are more than park than retail center.

[Outdoor & Ecotourism](#) - Ecotourism has never been more popular, and here in the heart of Florida, a state named for flowers and sunshine, Orlando's natural beauty serves as the perfect counterbalance to the signature theme park fun. Ecotours, natural springs, birding, nature trails, fishing, kayaking, airboat rides, and lots of thrills are some of the many options for exploring the destination's great outdoors.

[Events](#) - There is always something happening in Orlando, including theme park celebrations, live sports, festivals, concerts, cultural happenings, outdoor festivities, consumer trade shows, and even virtual experiences.

[Nightlife & Entertainment](#) - Live music, high-energy dance clubs, sleek lounges, side-splitting comedy, and other options are all part of Orlando's brilliant nightlife.

VISIT ORLANDO MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

Consistently ranked as Cvent's No. 1 meeting destination in the country, Orlando makes it easy to imagine the possibilities and create unforgettable events for groups of all sizes. With low-cost accessibility, extraordinary meeting spaces and one-of-a-kind attendee experiences, Orlando is a destination like no other. From an award-winning convention center to more than 150 [meeting hotels](#), business professionals will find something to fit every meeting size and budget every time they meet in Orlando.

With 7 million total sq. ft., including over 2 million sq. ft. of exhibit space, the [Orange County Convention Center](#) provides approximately \$3 billion in economic impact to Central Florida annually. Orlando is capable of hosting the largest events in the world such as the PGA Merchandising Show, the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), and MEGACON Orlando. Owned and operated by Orange County, the facility has also been [GBAC STAR accredited and reaccredited](#).

BUILDING A STRONG TOURISM INDUSTRY

However important our partnerships with community organizations are, Visit Orlando's primary focus is to ensure the health of our region's tourism industry. Through our marketing and advertising efforts, Visit Orlando engages with consumers and businesses to choose Orlando for their next vacation or meeting. Achieving our mission is directly linked to our ability to forge partnerships among local tourism businesses to implement destination marketing programs that will build a stronger tourism industry for all.

Board of Directors

We are led by an industry- and community-based [board of directors](#).

Executive Management Team

Our [executive management team](#) is continually recognized by its peers for excellence in destination marketing, sales, and member services.



POSITION SUMMARY

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Visit Orlando is a key member of the executive leadership team and is responsible for the oversight of the organization's internal operations. The COO will collaborate with the CEO to drive strategic initiatives, develop and implement annual business plans, and ensure operational excellence across departments. This role demands an entrepreneurial mindset, exceptional leadership, and the ability to foster collaboration and innovation to maintain Visit Orlando's position as a leader in the destination marketing industry. Reports to the CEO.

Visit Orlando has a budgeted headcount of 170 team members and a 2025 expense budget of \$115M, primarily funded through the Tourism Development Tax (Hotel Occupancy Tax).

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership and Execution

- Collaborate with the CEO and Executive Management Team (EMT) to define and execute strategic goals, ensuring alignment with Visit Orlando's mission and vision.
- Monitor organizational performance metrics and provide actionable insights to optimize outcomes.
- Act as a trusted advisor to the CEO, providing regular updates, recommendations, and solutions for operational challenges.
- Foster open communication across departments, ensuring all integral areas are included in discussions and decision-making processes.

Operational Oversight

- Lead and manage core operational areas: Finance, Information Technology, Human Resources, Research, Data and Digital Strategy, and Facilities.
- Establish a project management structure and implement automation to streamline processes, maximizing efficiency and consistency organization-wide.
- Oversee operational processes and systems to drive efficiency, mitigate risks, and ensure compliance with industry best practices and funding agreements.
- Serve as the primary liaison for facilities management, including lease negotiations, office space planning, renovations, and risk insurance coverage.

Financial Stewardship

- Partner with the Sr. VP of Finance & Business Affairs to develop and oversee financial strategies, budgets, long-term fiscal plans, and policies.
- Ensure the integrity of financial operations, presenting updates to the Board of Directors and other stakeholders as required.
- Act as a member of Visit Orlando's 401(k) internal committee, ensuring plan design and performance are best-in-class.

Technology and Data Strategy

- Develop and implement forward-thinking IT strategies to enhance operational efficiency and data security.
- Oversee data and digital strategy initiatives such as data management, privacy, SEM/SEO, and artificial intelligence.

Community Engagement and Compliance

- Serve as the lead for Visit Orlando's Destination Tourism Master Plan, collaborating with consultants, the board, county officials, and community stakeholders.
- Ensure compliance with funding agreements and organizational policies, maintaining Visit Orlando's reputation as a trusted partner in the destination marketing industry.
- Collaborate with the CEO on developing and executing private funding opportunities to diversify revenue streams.

TEAM LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

- Supervise senior leaders, including:
 - Senior Vice President of Finance & Business Affairs
 - Vice President of Human Resources
 - VP of Digital and Data Strategies (Data, Privacy, SEM/SEO, Key Metrics, Business Analysis (CMS, CRM, BA)
 - Senior Director of Information Technology
 - Senior Director of Research and Market Insights
 - Executive Assistant
- Foster a collaborative and inclusive workplace culture, promoting innovation, professional development, and team cohesion.
- Build trust and rapport with team members, acting as a mentor and coach.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree (MBA or advanced degree preferred).
- 10+ years of senior leadership experience, preferably within destination marketing, hospitality, travel, or related industries, with experience leading large teams and budgets.
- Demonstrated expertise in managing large-scale projects, driving organizational growth, and achieving measurable results.
- Strong financial acumen and experience in fiscal planning and oversight.
- Proven ability to develop and implement strategies.
- Exceptional relationship-building, communication, and leadership skills.
- Is collaborative and inclusive leadership style aligned with Visit Orlando's CORE VALUES.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Visionary Leader: Capable of strategic thinking and long-term planning.
- Exceptional Communicator: Articulates ideas effectively for diverse audiences.
- Emotionally Intelligent: Understands and manages their own emotions while effectively navigating interpersonal relationships with empathy and self-awareness.
- Decisive Problem Solver: Analyzes complex challenges and implements solutions efficiently.
- Change Agent: Champions innovation and adaptability within the organization.
- Collaborative: Builds consensus and fosters teamwork across departments.
- Detail-oriented: Manages multiple priorities with precision and focus.
- Culturally Competent: Promotes inclusivity and respects diverse perspectives.
- Tech-Savvy Innovator: Leverages technology to streamline operations and drive growth.
- Energetic and Passionate: Demonstrates enthusiasm for Visit Orlando's mission and the destination marketing industry.

SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES

- Office Relocation: Lead the transition to new office space, overseeing design, furnishing, and operational readiness for the October 2025 move.
- Destination Tourism Master Plan: Finalize and implement the plan, ensuring alignment with community and stakeholder goals.
- Strategic Plan Focus: Gain a comprehensive understanding of the Visit Orlando Strategic Plan and drive its implementation with a focus on deliverables.
- Audit Resolution and Future Financial Compliance: Lead efforts to address and rectify any concerns that may come from a recent audit by the Orange County Comptroller's Office. Ensure the team implements robust internal controls and fosters a culture of accountability to prevent future discrepancies.
- Onboarding and Trust-Building: Establish strong relationships with team members and foster alignment across departments. Get to know and build trust and confidence with the community, industry leaders, the board, and political partners.
- Financial Acumen: Develop a deep understanding of the organization's financial structure and present updates to the Board as needed.
- Data Strategy Repositioning: Partner with the CEO to realign data management strategies under COO oversight, ensuring integration with IT, research, and financial functions.

*The above is intended to describe the general content of and requirements for the performance of this job. It is not to be construed as an exhaustive statement of duties, responsibilities or requirements and does not imply a contract.



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If interested in learning more about this great opportunity, please send your resume to our SearchWide Global Executive, Mark Gnatovic.

SearchWide Global is a full-service executive search firm primarily for companies in the travel, tourism and convention, and hotel and lodging industries. We specialize in C-Level, Director and Management level executive searches for companies ranging in size from Fortune 500 corporations to mid-sized public and private companies.