

CHIEF SALES OFFICER

Explore St. Louis | St. Louis, MO





St. Louis

Your Next Great Memory Starts Here

Urban explorer, outdoor adventurer, aficionado of family fun – no matter your travel persona, you'll find plenty to see and do in St. Louis. Explore iconic attractions, discover unique shops, and experience luxurious spas. Take a tour of museums and historic sites, attend performances at state-of-the-art venues, cheer on our sports teams, and delight your taste buds at award-winning restaurants, coffee shops, breweries, wineries, and distilleries.

St. Louis is brimming with free attractions and boasts an arts-and-culture scene that's second to none. Plus, fans of fresh air will be surprised and delighted by our flourishing public parks, miles of trails and exhilarating waterways. Sprinkle in a bit of our secret sauce – the warmth and hospitality of the residents – and you'll discover that St. Louis dishes up undeniably epic travel experiences. Don't take our word for it, though. See for yourself.

[Arts & Culture](#) [Entertainment & Nightlife](#) [Outdoors](#) [Shopping](#) [Sports](#) [Tours](#) [Wellness & Spas](#)

Dine & Drink

Welcome to the next great food city!

As the region's food-and-beverage scene continues to grow, innovate, diversify, and delight, there's talk of St. Louis becoming a tastemaker in the culinary world. We're fortunate to have a plethora of excellent restaurants, coffee shops, and confectioners alongside award-winning breweries, distilleries, and wineries throughout our neighborhoods.

On [South Grand Boulevard](#) alone, you can dine on Turkish kebabs, Ethiopian injera, Italian arancini, Indian curry, Cantonese steamed buns, all-beef hot dogs, plant-based pizza, and vegan tacos, just to name a few delicious bites. Wash it all down with craft beers, French wines, gin cocktails, and spicy margaritas. A scrumptious assortment of Bosnian and Vietnamese restaurants also dots the culinary landscape, and new establishments continue to push boundaries and define local flavor.

While we highly recommend dining and drinking at creative, contemporary spots, it would be remiss of us not to encourage you to taste our [emblematic eats](#), as well. From toasted ravioli to St. Louis-style pizza to gooey butter cake, every iconic dish comes with its own history, tradition, and irresistible flavor. Whatever you're craving, St. Louis has it. Let's dig in!

Stay

There are more than 46,000 welcoming rooms throughout the metro area, making it easy to find a hotel or bed-and-breakfast that conveniently fits into any itinerary.

Believe it or not, the St. Louis region also has campgrounds – plus flourishing public parks, miles of trails, and exhilarating waterways – for the outdoor adventurers among us.



About Explore St. Louis and the America's Center Complex

Explore St. Louis is the official destination marketing and sales organization for the region and manages the America's Center Convention Complex, which includes:

- Cervantes Convention Center
- The Dome at America's Center (67,000-seat stadium)
- The Ferrara Theatre
- St. Louis Executive Conference Center

Explore St. Louis operates on a \$45 million annual budget, with \$23 million dedicated to destination marketing and \$9 million allocated to group sales efforts.

St. Louis is your gateway to meeting success! With more than 574,000 square feet of exhibit space and 2.2 million square feet of total convention space, the complex is one of the Midwest's premier venues. St. Louis also offers 46,000 hotel rooms across the city and county, with 22,000 rooms supporting the region's tourism tax base and 8,000 rooms located within one mile of the convention center—providing a compelling infrastructure for citywide and in-house group events.

St. Louis offers a convenient, central location for meetings of all sizes. St. Louis Lambert International Airport provides non-stop service to more than 70 destinations with more than 500 daily arrivals and departures, making getting here easy. Once on the ground, the MetroLink light rail system connects the airport to Downtown St. Louis with stops at the convention center and near many hotels and attractions.





POSITION SUMMARY

Explore St. Louis is seeking a bold, strategic, and results-oriented Chief Sales Officer (CSO) to lead the destination's group sales strategy and execution. This role offers a unique opportunity to shape the future of a dynamic and growing city by building strong partnerships, driving innovation, and mentoring a high-performance team.

Reporting to the Chief Commercial Officer, the CSO is responsible for selling both the America's Center Convention Complex and hotel-based in-house business—including meetings, conventions, sports, and other group events. The ideal candidate will bring strong leadership, strategic acumen, and a proven track record of stakeholder engagement and team development.

Position Scope and Team Leadership:

The CSO oversees a 13–14 person team across sales and contracts/scheduling, including a Director of Sales.

This role requires a hands-on leadership approach—working closely with team members, offering one-on-one coaching, and providing visible leadership across internal teams and external partners. The CSO also plays a prominent role in maintaining productive relationships with local hotel Directors of Sales and other community stakeholders.

The team is responsible for producing 650,000 group room nights in FY25, building on a performance of 560,000 room nights in FY24.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Destination Sales Leadership

- Develop and implement an integrated sales strategy for meetings, conventions, sports, and group events booked at the America's Center and directly into hotels.
- Lead business development efforts that align with market trends, compression windows, and stakeholder needs.
- Serve as an external voice for St. Louis group business, representing the destination to national planners, associations, and event producers.

Strategic and Operational Oversight

- Advise the Chief Commercial Officer and leadership team on business trends, competitive positioning, and emerging opportunities.
- Use insights, analytics, and CRM tools to drive pipeline management, sales performance, and ROI.
- Ensure optimal utilization of systems, including Simpleview CRM, Symphony, MINT+, and VenueOps.

Stakeholder Engagement and Community Relations

- Build strong working relationships with hotel Directors of Sales and local hospitality partners to align goals and create collaborative selling opportunities.
- Represent Explore St. Louis at trade shows, client events, and industry boards.

Team and Culture Development

- Mentor and manage a diverse sales and services team; build deep 1:1 relationships with direct reports to support growth and performance.
- Foster a team culture centered on shared accountability, pride, and motivation.
- Promote professional development and sales excellence at every level.

QUALIFICATIONS

- A bachelor's degree is preferred.
- Minimum of 12-15 years in group sales, with at least 6 years in a senior leadership role within a DMO, convention center, or hotel sales environment.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Visionary Leadership: Leads with clarity, purpose, and adaptability in a changing environment.
- Action Oriented: Moves decisively from strategy to execution.
- Industry Expertise: Brings deep knowledge of the meetings, conventions, and hospitality sales landscape.
- Strategic Acumen: Balances long-term vision with near-term objectives and team alignment.
- Customer Focused: Builds long-term client relationships and drives destination value.
- Drives Engagement: Cultivates team performance while actively maintaining strong relationships with local stakeholders - particularly hotel Director of Sales.
- Collaborative Mindset: Unites diverse internal and external teams around shared goals.
- Effective Communicator: Communicates across all levels with influence and clarity.
- Builds Effective Teams: Has proven success leading teams with multiple direct reports; builds strong 1:1 relationships and invests in leadership development.
- Results Driven: Ties team effort to metrics and destination-wide impact.
- Ensures Accountability: Holds self and others to high standards of performance and follow-through.

TOP PRIORITIES (first 6 months)

- Optimize sales deployment and team accountability, ensuring structure and activity align with revenue and room night goals.
- Refine strategic prospecting by focusing on business that complements St. Louis's strengths and need periods.
- Take a hands-on role in high-value business development efforts and coach team members through key sales activities.
- Evaluate and enhance the use of technology systems (Simpleview, Symphony, MINT+, VenueOps) to improve insights and performance.
- Build a productive and energized team culture centered on pride, purpose, and measurable success.
- Strengthen local stakeholder engagement—especially with hotel sales leaders—through trust-building, communication, and alignment.



Mark Gnatovic

President of Retained Search
SearchWide Global
info@searchwideglobal.com
Direct: 817.789.9879

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.