

# CHIEF SALES OFFICER

Experience Columbus | Columbus, OH







## Experience Columbus

Welcome to the 14th largest city in the nation! Columbus is the largest city in Ohio and one of the fastest-growing cities in the Midwest, and we're known for being collaborative, progressive and innovative. Columbus has been named a Top 10 Best Big City in the U.S., One of the Best Food Cities in the U.S. and One of the Friendliest Cities in the U.S. by Condé Nast Traveler's 2024 Readers' Choice Awards.

In Columbus, you'll find a thriving arts and entertainment scene, vibrant neighborhoods packed with nightlife, local businesses and shops, nationally recognized restaurants and distilleries, three professional sports teams, the Ohio State Buckeyes, over 20 Metro Parks and more.

[Events](#) [Explore Columbus](#) [Hotels](#) [Neighborhoods](#) [Restaurants](#) [Things to Do](#)

### Neighborhoods & Districts

Vibrant and diverse, Columbus is home to a blend of unique neighborhoods and communities that are known for being open, welcoming, smart and entrepreneurial. No matter your preferred daily pace, your interests or your lifestyle, there's a neighborhood for everyone in Columbus.

[Downtown](#) [Arena District](#) [Short North Arts District](#) [Grandview Franklinton](#) [Easton](#) [Near East Side](#)  
[German Village & Brewery District](#) [Ohio State Campus & Clintonville](#) [Dublin & Bridge Park](#) [Polaris](#)

### About Experience Columbus

Experience Columbus is the destination marketing organization for the Columbus region, dedicated to growing visitor spending and enhancing the visitor experience. Annually, visitors make 51.2 million trips to Greater Columbus for conventions, trade shows, sporting events and leisure visits, spending \$8.2 billion and supporting more than 82,500 jobs—one in every 13 jobs in Franklin County.

### Greater Columbus Convention Center (GCCC)

Located in a safe, walkable district with hundreds of one-of-a-kind dining, shopping and entertainment options surrounding it, the award-winning Greater Columbus Convention Center offers spacious rooms, interactive artwork, local cuisine and exceptional guest services. Named one of the best convention centers in the U.S. by the Wall Street Journal, the GCCC is only 10 minutes from John Glenn International Airport and has connections to the 1000-room Hilton Columbus Downtown and Hyatt Regency Columbus.

**1.8 MILLION  
SQ. FT. TOTAL**

**373,000 SQ.  
FT. OF  
CONTIGUOUS  
EXHIBIT SPACE**

**10,000 SQ. FT.  
OF OUTDOOR  
EVENT SPACE**

**74 MEETING  
ROOMS**

**3 BALLROOMS**



## POSITION SUMMARY

The Chief Sales Officer (CSO) will provide visionary leadership for Experience Columbus. This role requires a hands-on approach—working closely with the department executive and all sales team members, offering one-on-one coaching, and providing visible leadership across both internal teams and external partners. The CSO will play a prominent role in maintaining productive relationships with local hotel GMs and other community stakeholders.

Reporting directly to the President & CEO, the CSO will oversee 15 team members, including the VP of Sales Operations, Director of Sales Operations, five Regional Sales Directors, four Sales Directors/Mid-Market Managers, and four sales support team members. The CSO is responsible for producing 408,000 room nights in FY25, building on a performance of 374,373 room nights in FY24, which exceeded the FY24 goal of 348,000.

This position requires 20% local travel within Columbus for off-site meetings and events, and 30% travel outside Columbus.

## ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Strategic Leadership**

- Drive the overall sales strategy for meetings, convention and group events at the Convention Center and directly into hotels, in partnership with the Greater Columbus Convention Center goals to maximize room nights and direct visitor spend.
- Lead business development efforts that align with market trends, compression windows and stakeholder needs.
- Collaborate with the executive leadership team to advance the organizational mission, long-term objectives, and cultural values.

### **Sales Strategy Development and Operation Oversight**

- Develop and execute comprehensive sales strategies to attract citywide conventions, meetings, and exhibitions.
- Research and identify new business opportunities in existing and future markets, driving revenue and attendance growth.
- Use market insights, data analytics, and CRM tools to drive pipeline management, sales performance, and ROI, and ensure optimal utilization of existing systems, including Simpliview CRM, Symphony, and MINT+.
- Overall accountability for sales operating budget, analyzes ROI, and ensures efficient resource allocation for optimal results.

### **Stakeholder Engagement, Community Relations & Destination Representation**

- Build Strong working relationships with hotel GMs, Directors of Sales, and local hospitality partners to align goals and create collaborative selling opportunities.
- Represent Experience Columbus at client events, trade shows, local community and industry boards, and industry forums—presenting the destination as the premier location for meetings and conventions.
- Serve as external voice for Columbus group business, representing the destination to national planners, association and event producers.

### **Team Leadership**

- Inspire and guide a high-performing sales team to exceed goals, deliver exceptional results and align with the organizational and community culture values.
- Set, measure, and achieve team-wide goals while fostering collaboration with cross-functional teams, including marketing, destination services, and sports.

## PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

### Experience & Education

- Bachelor's Degree is preferred.
- Proven experience leading a large, complex sales team, preferably in hotels, a destination marketing organization, or a related convention industry.
- 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.
- Demonstrate ability to represent a brand, company, or destination, ideally within the hospitality or destination marketing sectors.

### Skills & Competencies

- Highly proficient in using Microsoft Office products (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook).
- Preferred certification: Industry certification such as CMP, CEM, CDME.
- The organization requires all employees to obtain and maintain the Experience Columbus Insider (ECI) accreditation.
- Possession of a current US passport for international travel.

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Leadership: leads with clarity, purpose, and adaptability in a changing environment and commitment to the organization as a TEAM.
- Action Oriented: moves decisively from strategy to execution.
- Industry Expertise: brings deep knowledge of the meetings, conventions, and hotel sales landscape.
- Strategic Acumen: balance long-term vision with near-term objectives and team alignment.
- Customer Focuses: build long-term client relations and drive destination value.
- Drives Engagement: Cultivates team performance while actively maintaining strong relationships with local stakeholders, particularly the hotel Directors of Sales and General Managers.
- Collaborative Mindset: unites diverse internal and external teams around shared goals; Commitment to valuing differences among individuals and fostering an inclusive environment across departments.
- Effective Communicator: Communicate clearly and effectively in verbal, written, and presentation formats with employees, customers, stakeholders across all levels, and diverse audiences.
- Builds Effective Teams; has proven success leading teams with multiple direct reports, builds strong 1:1 relationships, and invests in leadership development.
- Results-oriented: motivated to exceed expectations and ties team efforts to metrics and destination-wide impact.
- Ensures Accountability: holds self and others to high standards of performance, ethics, and follow-through.
- Passionate about the product (Columbus).
- Confidentiality and Discretion, with the ability to gain trust and respect from all members of the organization, ensure privacy and security of information, and adhere to all information, privacy, and security policies, procedures, standards, and guidelines.

## TOP PRIORITIES

- Optimize citywide sales strategies to drive room nights and direct visitor spend.
- 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+ FuturePace) to improve insights and performance.





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

**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.**