GENERAL MANAGER - DAVID L. LAWRENCE CONVENTION CENTER

Oak View Group (OVG) | Pittsburgh, PA



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David L. Lawrence Convention Center

The Design and Discipline of Sustainability

Located in Downtown Pittsburgh, the LEED® PLATINUM Certified David L. Lawrence Convention Center effectively blends unparalleled space, functionality, and flexibility to offer event producers, exhibitors, and visitors a location for an extraordinary event experience.

The David L. Lawrence Convention Center is the largest LEED® Platinum Certified convention center in the world. We have continued to achieve the high standards for LEED® with subsequent re-certifications, and have maintained the LEED® Platinum Certified status.

What began as a vision by a group of determined government officials, corporate and non-profit foundation leaders in 1990 became a reality in September 2003 with the official dedication ceremony of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. The opening of the 1.5 million square foot building was so anxiously anticipated by the convention and exposition industry that the building hosted many large trade shows while still under construction. Take a virtual tour here.

Building Overview
Land Size: 7.9 acres
Building Size: 1.5 million square feet
Total Exhibit Space: 313,400 square feet
Column-Free Exhibit Space: 236,900 square feet
Number of Meeting Rooms: 53 (51 meeting rooms; two 250-seat lecture halls)
Total Meeting Room Space: 77,952 square feet
Loading Docks: 37

Outdoor Space:

- Riverfront Plaza: 1,300 ft of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail featuring over 2,000 trees, shrubs, grasses, and perennials.
- Green Roof, South Terrace: 20,000 sqft of living roof located on the third floor, cityside, featuring over 7,000 perennials, grasses, and sedum.
- North Terrace: 60,000 sqft of open outdoor space located on the fourth floor, riverside, featuring herb and vegetable gardens, a monarch waystation, edible plants, medicinal plants, and pollinator plants.

POSITION SUMMARY

The General Manager of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center is responsible for the overall management, promotion, and operation of the facility, including sales/booking, marketing, event management/operations, finance, purchasing, human resources, food and beverage, box office, capital project planning, advertising, security, production, maintenance, and related operations by performing the following duties personally or through subordinates. The General Manager is also responsible for shaping the overall culture, direction, coordination, and performance of the team and facility and is accountable for the development of policies, procedures, and programs for achieving the goals set by the Sports & Exposition Authority (SEA) and OVG. The position reports directly to the Senior Vice President of Convention Centers.

This role pays an annual salary of $240,000 - $260,000 plus bonus potential. Benefits for Full-Time Roles: Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance, 401(k) Savings Plan, 401(k) matching, and Paid Time Off (vacation days, sick days, and 11 holidays).

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maintains active contact with the Client/Contract Administrator. Monitors OVG's compliance with all provisions of the management contract.
- Aggressively promotes the use of the facility to maximize its utilization.
- Responsible for maximizing the number of events and revenue opportunities at the facilities and will work in unison with SEA, Visit Pittsburgh, local hotels, Food and Beverage provider, meeting planners, promoters, and community stakeholders to maximize the amount of business that occurs annually at the facility.
- Negotiates lease agreements as determined necessary and in the best interests of the facilities.
- Negotiates contracts and agreements with event organizers, meeting planners, promoters, and agents for all managed spaces.
- Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with Client/Contract Administrator, tenants, government departments and agencies, entertainment/convention industry, community and civic organizations to encourage continual and regular use of the facility.
- Coordinates facility involvement with Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Pittsburgh), as well as other appropriate destination marketing agencies.
- Assures the coordination, implementation, and administration of specific plans and programs prescribed by corporate directives, to include: matters of training and development; quality assurance; energy efficiency; safety/emergency procedures; sustainability maximization; crowd control and crisis management procedures; or other areas if needed.
- Develops and implements facility goals in accordance with the management contract, the client's objectives, corporate policy, and good business practice.
- Prepares and maintains required and necessary reports/records for the Client/Contract Administrator (SEA) and corporate office.
- Plans, organizes, coordinates, and directs all activities and personnel engaged in maintaining and operating the facilities.
- Coordinates the development of the annual operating plan, which includes goals, strategies, activity schedules, capital planning, staffing, and forecasts for revenue, expenses, and attendance.
- Conducts weekly staff meetings for sales, events, operations, and leadership.
- Provides for control of day-to-day operations; assuring the coordination of plans, programs, and events; conducts post-event operational financial and customer service reviews and analysis.
- Provides final approval of all contracts and agreements with suppliers, promoters, and tenants for necessary events, activities, and services at the facilities.
- Provides or coordinates timely and effective responses to directives and requests received from internal and external organizations, agencies, departments, and individuals; assures and maintains the integrity of the facility, client, and OVG in all forms of communication and personal conduct.
- Oversees and advises Human Resources on any necessary revisions/modification to the staffing plans, including number and types of employees, essential functions, salaries, and benefits.
- Assures the administration of personnel and the operation of the facilities are conducted in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.
- Evaluates facility practices and recommends improvements to better reflect the needs of the Client and the facilities, and/or to improve the efficiency and safety of operation, in compliance with OVG policies and procedures.
- Responsible for recruiting, training, supervising, and evaluating administrative and supervisory staff.
- Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with clients, tenants, employees, subcontractors, facility partners, union representatives, and the general public.

QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES

- A dynamic leader with visionary abilities.
- An extremely strong collaborator and relationship builder with a proven history of success with clients, stakeholders, and managed teams.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills and organizational ability.
- Ability to work with and maintain highly confidential information is required.
- Ability to work nights, weekends, and holidays as required by event schedule.
- Ability to work simultaneously with a wide variety of vested interest groups and to foster a collaborative environment.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the principles and practices used in the successful management of meeting and live event facilities.
- Knowledge of Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, and be internet proficient.
- Ability to anticipate problems and implement immediate corrective action.
- Ability to perform effectively under significant pressure typically associated with meeting the demands and timetables of the positions, events, and clients' requests.
- Considerable knowledge of facility safety regulations and other federal, state, or local laws and regulations.
- Strong understanding of "best-in-class" customer service for the meeting, convention, and entertainment industry and what it takes to achieve it.
- Strong knowledge of budgeting, capital project planning, sales/marketing, event management, facility operating standards, building maintenance, custodial, personnel, and venue security.
- Excellent supervisory skills. Ability to deal effectively with human resource and personnel problems; to deal constructively with conflict; to motivate, provide counsel, and execute applicable solutions.
- Ability to manage facilities of the same size and type.
- Education and Experience: Bachelor's Degree (BA) from a four-year accredited college or university with major coursework in business or public administration or related fields.
- Senior leadership experience at a convention center. Ideally five or more years of progressive experience as a convention center GM in a first- or second-tier destination, as an AGM at a major convention center, or as a GM at a major convention hotel.
- Experience in contract negotiations, capital planning, event and concert settlements, event management, procurement, venue security, and supervising personnel.
- Experience in labor relations and union contracts.

IDEAL BACKGROUND

- A demonstrated record of driving revenue and economic impact. This includes direct involvement in sales strategy, client development, calendar management, and closing citywide and in-house business.
- Close partnership with a CVB or DMO. A history of working closely with a convention and visitors bureau or destination marketing organization, along with an understanding of how the convention center, the DMO, and hotel partners work together to win business in a competitive market.
- Effective work with a governing client. Experience with a governing authority, board, or public-sector owner, along with a solid understanding of management contract environments.
- Proven culture building. A track record of building engaged, high-performing team cultures, with strong staff and client relationships at previous venues.
- Operating experience in large, complex facilities. This includes budgeting, capital project planning, procurement, venue security, and building operations.
- Labor relations experience. Experience with labor relations, union contracts, and trade partners.
- Contract negotiation experience. Experience negotiating contracts with event organizers, meeting planners, promoters, and vendors, as well as handling event settlements.
- Active industry involvement. Engagement in the meetings, conventions, and live events industry, with relationships among planners and industry organizations.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Hands-on, people-first GM. A visible, engaged presence across the building who is as comfortable on the show floor or in the engineering shop as in the boardroom.
- Relationship-driven leader. Builds trust quickly and broadly across staff, as well as with the SEA, Visit Pittsburgh, clients, meeting planners, community leaders, and civic stakeholders.
- Servant leader and culture builder. Genuinely enjoys the people side of leadership. Supports the team's success, gives credit freely, and understands that a strong culture drives strong service.
- Commercially minded. Treats revenue as the fuel that powers the building. Takes an active role in sales strategy, client development, and closing business, partnering closely with the sales team and Visit Pittsburgh without micromanaging.
- Calm and composed under pressure. Brings a steady, positive presence to tight timelines, last-minute changes, and demanding clients, and keeps the team focused and confident.
- Politically and civically savvy. Comfortable working within a public-authority client structure. Builds credibility with board members, elected officials, and the many communities across the Pittsburgh region.
- Fast learner. Quickly absorbs financials, forecasts, capital plans, and booking pace to make informed decisions and contribute meaningfully early on.
- Collaborative and respectful of what works. Respects the strength of an established team and its proven processes. Earns trust first and builds on that foundation rather than making change for its own sake.
- Charismatic and energetic. Brings genuine enthusiasm for the role, the team, and the city, and serves as a confident, approachable face of the building in the community and across the industry.

TOP PRIORITIES (first 6 months)

- Build relationships at every level. Establish trusted relationships with the SEA, Visit Pittsburgh, existing clients, local stakeholders, and community leaders. Internally, do the same with directors, managers, frontline staff, trade and union partners, subcontractors, and partners.
- Get to know the building and its people. Learn how the building and its people operate and become an integral part of the team. Build on the strengths of an established, high-performing organization.
- Get up to speed on the business. Gain a thorough understanding of the budget, forecasts, capital plan, booking pace, and sales pipeline so that the GM can contribute to decisions with confidence.
- Drive sales with Visit Pittsburgh and the team. Partner immediately with the Director of Sales and Visit Pittsburgh to help attract, sell, and close new business. This includes engaging directly with prospective planners and at industry events.
- Strengthen the existing client base. Deepen relationships with current clients and reinforce why Pittsburgh remains a top destination in a competitive regional market.
- Execute the capital plan. Work with the team to carry out the approved annual capital plan and help guide key year-one initiatives, including the evaluation of enhanced year-round event space.
- Establish a strong presence in the community. Become a recognized, accessible leader in the community, building visibility with local organizations and civic partners.



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

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