

# LEIA E. SANDERS

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MANAGEMENT | LEADERSHIP | PROGRAM/PROJECT MANAGEMENT | PLANNING | FINANCE,  
FUNDING | BUDGETING | COMMUNICATIONS | MARKETING

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR TOURISM ORGANIZATION

*Poised to contribute exceptional energy, leadership, and problem-solving skills, along with unique drive for excellence, in a position that propels organizational effectiveness and goal attainment.*

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### PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

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- Versatile, highly adaptable professional and key problem-solver with proven track record as executive director for nonprofits and reputation for setting high expectations, promotes individual/organizational goal attainment, and applies expertise to key aspects of executing organizational mission.

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### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**Executive Director**, Orlando Chamber of Commerce, Orlando, FL, 2003 to present

- Serve as executive of one of the largest business organizations in Orange County, leading a staff of 20 and activities of 100+ volunteers and 1,000+ members while overseeing dynamic, highly complex entity that handles economic development, business marketing, tourism promotion, community awareness, and business advocacy for City of Orlando.
- Established trademark for City of Orlando; ensured mark was protected by United States Patent and Trademark Office after learning it had fallen into public domain; educated city on importance of protected mark.
- Negotiated trademark-licensing agreement with city worth estimated annual income of up to \$200,000 for Chamber, as well as revenue for the city.
- Developed alternative income sources through partnerships and contracts, thus relieving Chamber's burden of solely depending on membership dues for revenue; negotiate all leases and contracts to Chamber's financial benefit.
- Secured \$1.5 million in annual funding for Conference and Visitors Bureau advertising campaigns.
- Negotiated and secured Orlando as one of eight national sites for Disney Illumination Series.
- Developed funding source for newly formed Chamber-High School on-site mentoring program.
- Created professional team environment within office while developing highly motivated team members.
- Developed core values and new mission statement reflecting direction of management, volunteers, and staff.
- Led campaign to secure commercial property owners' support for \$20-million renovation of downtown business and entertainment district.
- Oversee generation of \$100,000 net revenue annually from Orlando magazine publications.
- Cultivate strong relationships with city, volunteers, and key constituents.
- Developed "re-branding" initiative to convey effective message to target market; built cohesive strategy among all city marketing entities; develop branding strategies and marketing/public-relations campaigns.
- Revitalized events and programs to reflect new organizational image; infused programming with latest technology and hottest speakers.
- Administer \$2 million in contracts with City of Orlando to operate Visitors Bureau and Economic Development Programs.
- Function as spokesperson for business community on economic, tourism, and other business-related issues.
- Create and monitor organization structure, operating systems, and purchasing and performance standards.
- Oversee membership; prepare annual operating budget; advise Board Chairman and Executive Committee on policy issues.

**President/CEO**, Pensacola Chamber of Commerce, Pensacola, FL, 2001 to 2003

**Director of Membership**, Pensacola Chamber of Commerce, Pensacola, FL, 1999 to 2001

- Developed, organized and evaluated all business assistance and fundraising programs/projects for nonprofit organization serving 900 Pensacola member businesses.
- Directed all areas of membership development, including recruitment strategies, retention, marketing materials, programs, benefits, and events.
- Troubleshot and repaired financials that were in disarray following rapid turnover of three executive directors in three years; developed new financial-reporting procedure; established financial policies and procedures manual; decreased operating expenses by renegotiating existing contracts and reorganization of job duties/positions; introduced Special Events Director position to increase revenue flow from events; prepared annual operating and capital-improvement budgets, long-range forecasts, monthly/annual budget reports and annual business plans.
- Produced employee handbook, policies and procedures; wrote and edited monthly newsletter.
- Facilitated reorganization of Visitors Bureau and Chamber of Commerce; oversaw development of separate Conference and Visitors Bureau to address Pensacola tourism-industry needs.
- Managed Visitors and Information Center that served more than 40,000 visitors annually.
- Developed Council of Pensacola Business Associations to effectively and cohesively market region.
- Produced first Pensacola Goes Salsa event to benefit Chamber and other community nonprofits.
- Developed strong relationship with city and other neighboring Chambers; assisted small neighboring Chambers in developing programs.
- Created environment in which staff could grow and develop as experts in their specific areas; trained and managed 200+ volunteers.
- Developed community outreach for other nonprofits through special events and educational-program partnerships.

**Marketing Manager**, Hueneme Hotel, Waikiki, HI, 1996 to 1999

- Acted as liaison among hotel, top-level military officials, and visiting dignitaries.
- Developed marketing collateral material for hotel, restaurants, and nightclub; reviewed and assisted in designing advertising materials; handled public-relations and media campaigns, including effective campaign during 400-room addition and 66-acre property expansion.
- Represented hotel at local and national tradeshow.
- Coordinated Bud Light Pro Beach Volleyball Tournament, Jose Cuervo Volleyball Tournament, hotel luaus, and other large events.
- Developed special familiarization programs for naval carrier and ship personnel.

**Assistant General Manager**, Welcome Hotel, Waikiki, 1995 to 1996

- Coordinated planning and implementation of specific guest promotional activities.
- Hired, trained, and evaluated all guest-service employees and managed guest-service departments.
- Developed successful guest-relations campaign and program for airline crews.
- Communicated with guests on account maintenance, safety, security, and service.
- Developed standard operating procedures for service-related departments.

**Airline International Sales**, Pan Am Airlines, Dusseldorf, Germany, 1990 to 1995

- Functioned as liaison between international airline and American military community in Europe.
- Delivered presentations to American community on travel opportunities in Western and Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America.
- Coordinated tours, rail trips, and cruises for group travel.

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## EDUCATION

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**Graduate, Florida Institute for Organization Management**, University of Central Florida, Orlando FL, 2003

**Bachelor of Science in Theater**, Daytona Beach College, Daytona Beach, FL 1989

