



Meet Rachel

What is your name?

Rachel Wingard

Where do you currently work and what is your position?

Valleyfair as the Account Executive of Youth Events

What are some of your daily tasks at work?

I develop and manage Valleyfair's student, youth, and special interest market. During the season I'm mainly executing group events and youth programs at the park while in the winter I'm busy identifying new account opportunities and planning programs for the next season.

What do you love most/enjoy most about your job?

I'm lucky to work with a small but incredibly passionate team. Each and every person enjoys what they do and truly cares not only about the success of

their department but how that affects the other areas of the park and Valleyfair's overall success. When you have a fantastic support system in place within your work it's easy to love what you do.

Where else have you worked and what were your positions?

Walt Disney World Resort as an Attractions Hostess on Main Street USA; Universal Orlando Resort as a VIP Tour Guide

When did you graduate from NDSU & what degree(s) did you graduate with (especially for those who graduated before the program was Hospitality and Tourism Management)?

Spring 2015 with a bachelor's in hospitality and Tourism Management

What was your most rewarding class taken at NDSU through our program? Why did it make an impact?

I found the HTM courses offering real-world experiences most rewarding due to my style of learning and interests. For me, this was not only my field experience in a city that's run by tourism, but also a study tour in Los Angeles and a summer in Europe through the Business minor. Working in a global industry, I've found it vital to understand various cultures and work ethics and getting a small taste of these and expanding my worldview through these courses in the program has been incredibly impactful on my career.

What was your favorite part about attending NDSU and our program?

One of the first things that attracted me to NDSU was the size. It's easy to get lost in the shuffle at college but not at NDSU and definitely not with the HTM program. Each of the professors was there to ensure our success and wanted to see us flourish beyond just our college career.

Any advice for current students who want to succeed in our industry (especially those in your segment of the industry)?

It may sound cliché, but experience is key. I completed my field experience in a segment of the industry that piqued my interest just enough at the time, but I never saw myself making a career out of it. Six years later and I'm still working in theme parks. The hospitality industry is so expansive and diverse that developing a specialized skillset within a segment of the industry has been incredibly valuable to building my career. I never would've had my many rewarding career opportunities if it hadn't been for my internship.

If a student or fellow alumni would like to connect with you, what is your preferred method?

Direct mail on LinkedIn