

My Journey in Sales, Life Enrichment, and Cultural Development for Senior Living Continues



Gary M. Solomonson
Sales Coach * Storyteller * Author

1946 – 1964, I Joined the Baby Boomer Generation

I grew up in a small southwestern Minnesota farming community and my experiences in senior living began in grade school accompanying my parents who volunteered for the Salvation Army, visiting seniors in nursing homes, retirement homes and shut-ins in rural communities as we brought them gifts and other needed resources. My interests in sales began with a paper route and magazine sales in the 7th grade, continuing through my senior year.

1964 – 1967

- St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN and Tri-College studies at St. John's University, Collegeville, MN and College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, MN
- Bachelor of Arts degree with majors in Philosophy & Speech/Theatre Arts and a minor in German language and expanded studies in Psychology and Creative Writing
- Active 4 years in student government, sales, and volunteer activities at area rest homes
- President, Region 10 of College Unions International, bringing performing celebrities and national speakers to colleges and universities

1967-1971

- 4-Year Graduate Studies at Luther Theological Seminary
- Master of Divinity degree with a special emphasis in parish organizational development, ministries for seniors, and intergenerational educational and theatre programs
- Seminary chaplain with His Family Lutheran Church, visiting returning veterans
- Multi-family sales and marketing for Ted Glasrud Associates, St. Paul, MN
- Part-time architectural concept design for Hodne-Stageberg, Minneapolis, MN
- Created first intergenerational theatre at St. Michael's Lutheran, Roseville, MN

1972 – 1983

- Volunteer parish pastor at Roseville Lutheran & Grace Lutheran churches, St. Paul, MN
- Manager at Apartment Services Corporation, Edina, Brooklyn Park and Roseville, MN
- Solomonson Sales Training and Market Research, Minneapolis, MN
- Co-owner, Maxfield Solomonson Market Research
- Star Tribune writer/columnist featuring multi-family development

1984-1994

- National Director of Sales & Marketing, Sage Company (The Goodman Group) Mpls, MN
- Leadership Team – sales & marketing for 75 residential and healthcare communities in 10 states
- Developed Chalice of Repose Hospice - St. Patrick's Hospital & senior facilities Missoula, MT
- Led the development of the 100-acre senior living campus, The Palms of Largo, Largo, FL

- Led the design and development of Phase I Children’s Center at Sabal Palms – the first skilled care for children in Florida and a Pre-school and day care for children at The Palms of Largo
- Began supporting local nonprofits in fundraising on behalf of the Sage Company
- Created first intergenerational theatres in Montana and Florida

1995-2002

- Launched Solomonson Research and Sales Training for senior living
- Moved to Deadwood, SD to develop my art studio and continue consulting with Sage
- Developed a national practice working with senior living communities and management companies in FL, TX, CA, AZ, OR, SD, PA, VA, NM, ID, KY and Manitoba, Canada
- Became a partner in Focus Groups West, conducting roundtable research groups
- Sales and marketing opening of The Hermitage at Cedarfield, a CCRC in Richmond, VA
- Participated in the redesign of Dow Rummel Village’s CCRC campus in Sioux Falls, SD
- Consulted with Virginia United Methodist Homes, now Pinnacle, for five years
- Consulted with the sales and marketing team at University Village, Tampa, FL
- Created intergenerational theatre production at The Willows in Pennsylvania, PA

2003-2012

- The Goodman Group, Vice President of Sales, Marketing and New Build Development
- Expanded the company’s focus on expansion strategies in the US and the UK
- Provided leadership for the UK team and led design work with UK architectural firms
- Developed new facilities for residents living with dementia
- Created support groups for dementia caregivers, families, and community staff
- Supported creation of intergenerational theatres at Palms of Largo

2013-2016

- Launched The Red Bottom Boat LLC for sales training and nonprofit fundraising
- Grand Living Senior Living/Ryan Companies design development in SD, IA, & FL and creating signature programs for dementia care, life enrichment, sales, and employee recruitment
- Became a dementia caregiver for a former colleague
- Board chair for community theatre and developed Sontory Singer/Storytellers in Minnesota

2017 – 2021

- Rejoined The Goodman Group, again! 😊 Manager of Mergers and Acquisitions
- Participated in reviewing potential markets for development in IA, FL, MT, and MN
- Continued the dementia caregiving and began developing dementia support groups
- Developed script for “The 2nd Butterfly” for client intergenerational theatres

2022 – Present

- Developed > Virtual, a virtual coaching practice for senior living sales & cultural development
- Continued coaching for nonprofit fundraising teams as The Red Bottom Boat 2.0
- Continuing developing concepts and scripts for intergenerational theatre

Available Upon Request

- Current & Past Boards, Community Service, and Leadership Participation
- Summary of Writing, Publications, and Speaking
- Professional Affiliations
- References