# TRACY WHELPLEY

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## REGIONAL IMPACT | MARKETPLACE ENGAGEMENT | COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Strategic community and economic development leader with a track record of building initiatives that connect businesses, community organizations and regional institutions with new opportunities. Career spans small-business engagement, economic development, business attraction and integrated marketing, with particular expertise in building programs from the ground up, convening diverse public- and private-sector stakeholders, and translating complex opportunities into practical resources, partnerships and lasting regional value.

### CORE EXPERTISE

Small Business & Marketplace Engagement • Community Outreach • Stakeholder Partnerships
Program Development • Economic Development • Training & Capacity Building • Research & Assessment
Cross-Functional Leadership

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### KC2026 FIFA World Cup 26™ Host Committee
***Director of Regional Impact | Kansas City Metro | January 2025 - October 2026***

Recruited to develop regional strategies that expanded opportunities for businesses and communities to participate in and benefit from Kansas City's role as a host city for the FIFA World Cup 2026™.

- Developed and led three signature regional initiatives spanning small- business readiness, community engagement and business attraction, designed to expand participation in the World Cup and build longer-term regional capacity.
- Built and directed KC Game Plan, a regional small-business readiness and capacity-building initiative that connected entrepreneurs with practical resources, training, readiness tools and potential procurement opportunities while mobilizing chambers, business support organizations and community partners to extend outreach across the region.
- Established the Community Events & Activation Network, building relationships with municipalities, community organizations and destination partners across the bistate region to share resources, strengthen local capacity, surface needs and expand community participation.
- Led the KC•House initiative from conception through execution, convening business, civic and international leaders through strategic programming and partnerships designed to build relationships and advance regional economic opportunities.
- Built and maintained partnerships across chambers, economic development organizations, municipal and county governments, business-support organizations and community institutions, aligning stakeholders around shared objectives and expanding participation in regional initiatives.
- Designed and led post-program research, stakeholder feedback and impact assessment efforts to evaluate business and community outcomes, identify lessons learned and inform recommendations for future regional initiatives.

**GREATER ST. LOUIS, INC.**
***Senior Vice President, Business Attraction | St. Louis, Missouri | 2022 – 2024***

Led business attraction and strategic industry initiatives for the St. Louis metropolitan region, marketing the region to corporate executives, investors and site selection consultants to attract new business investment and job creation.

- Served as a strategic leader in advancing GeoFutures, a 10-year regional initiative to establish and build awareness of St. Louis as a global center for geospatial technology and innovation.
- Convened leaders across industry, government, academia, entrepreneurship and community organizations to advance regional priorities encompassing talent, innovation, entrepreneurship, equitable development and global positioning.
- Played a key role in the development, launch and promotion of major regional initiatives including the GeoFutures Coalition, Taylor Geospatial Institute, Taylor Geospatial Engine, Gateway Global Geospatial Intelligence Workforce & Apprenticeship Center and UMSL Geospatial Collaborative.
- Served as lead strategist and director for STLMade, a multiyear initiative created to develop and promote an authentic regional narrative supporting St. Louis business and talent attraction.
- Directed quantitative and qualitative behavioral research to identify community archetypes, shared values and experiences and translate those insights into a regional positioning and activation strategy.
- Engaged hundreds of grassroots, business, civic and institutional stakeholders through research, workshops and ongoing outreach to build alignment, participation and ownership around a shared regional strategy.
- Managed a $4 million annual budget and cross-functional team spanning creative, public relations, media, digital, events and freelance partners.
- Built STLMade to 41% regional awareness, more than 156,000 social followers and more than half a billion impressions, establishing it as a widely adopted platform for showcasing the region's identity, people and strengths.

**CANNONBALL ADVERTISING**
***Director of Strategy & Business Development | St. Louis Metro | 2017 – 2022***

Led strategic planning and business development for an integrated advertising agency, developing research-informed brand and growth strategies, cultivating new business opportunities and advising clients on complex marketing and communications challenges.

**BAYER ADVANCED LAWN & GARDEN**
***Brand Manager | 2015 – 2017***

Managed brand strategy and marketing initiatives for a national consumer products portfolio, coordinating cross-functional teams and agency partners to drive brand performance and market growth.

**ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Founder & Principal, Bloom Agency, a boutique marketing consultancy established to serve Bayer Crop Science; earlier leadership roles in integrated marketing, brand strategy, business development and client management with Cannonball Advertising, Momentum Worldwide, Maritz and Eastman Kodak.

## EDUCATION

**University of Missouri – Kansas City**
Master of Business Administration, Marketing

**University of Missouri – Columbia**
Bachelor of Journalism, Advertising