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Total Food Service

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A RISING FEMALE HOSPITALITY LEADER: KASSIDY ANGELO, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF GIOIA HOSPITALITY GROUP



Joyce Appelman is the SCOOP News Editor and Senior Contributing Writer for Total Food Service and previously the National Communications Director for C-CAP, Careers through Culinary Arts Program. An industry leader supporting education and scholarships, she has been instrumental in opening career opportunities for many young people in the foodservice industry. Email her at joyceappelman@gmail.com

Kassidy Angelo shares her incredible journey from starting her career as a financial analyst at J.P. Morgan Private Bank to making a bold pivot into hospitality leadership, where she is now driving one of the fastest-rising steakhouse brands in Florida. She answers questions about her hospitality leadership, partnering with her father to help build and operate Gioia Hospitality Group, the company behind Daniel's, A Florida Steakhouse, the joy she finds in her daily routine, and how she turns obstacles into valuable opportunities. In less than a year, the Fort Lauderdale location earned Michelin Guide recommendation. The momentum continued with the launch of Daniel's Miami, which in just four months was named the No. 9 Steakhouse in North America and the top-ranked steakhouse in Florida by The World's Best Steak Restaurants.

Kassidy now oversees day-to-day

operations across the group. Her story highlights next-generation female leadership, strategic risk-taking, and measurable early success in a traditionally male-dominated segment of the industry.

Share your background with our readers.

I began my career in finance at J.P. Morgan, where I built a strong foundation in strategy, analytics, and operational discipline. Growing up around hospitality, I always understood the emotional power of restaurants. At 24, I left finance and began my career in hospitality, merging those two worlds and bringing financial structure into an industry driven by experience and connection.

What inspired you to leave finance for hospitality leadership?

Working in finance right out of school gave me a strong career founda-

tion and sharpened my business instincts. It was important to me that I worked for someone else before joining my dad, as it taught me how to take constructive criticism, recognize my shortcomings, and develop confidence outside of my family's influence. But having grown up in hospitality, I found it far more fulfilling. Restaurants create moments, celebrations, and memories, and I saw an opportunity to apply structured growth strategies to a people-first industry.

What was your recipe for scaling a restaurant concept to national recognition in under a year?

We focused on understanding why guests connected with the brand and never took that for granted. We doubled down on personal touches, elevated sourcing, and ensured consistency. As visibility grew, we scaled infrastructure without losing intimacy. Growth refined the experience;

it didn't change it.

What's it like working with your father in a multigenerational family business?

Working alongside my dad is one of the most meaningful parts of my career. Before I left J.P. Morgan, we had a long conversation about how we would build a strong professional relationship while maintaining the personal closeness we've always shared. He built the business through instinct and relationships; I bring structure and modernization, and together we challenge each other with mutual respect.

One of the greatest benefits is the quality time we spend working toward shared goals. He understands my day-to-day and is always in my corner as both a mentor and partner. The name Gioia Hospitality comes from Gioia del Colle, the town in Italy where my grandfather is from, and that foundation keeps us grounded. Even on challenging days, the focus remains on family and our shared joy for hospitality.

What defines The Gioia Hospitality Group?

Family defines us—not just in ownership, but in philosophy. Our approach is rooted in European-style hospitality, where dining is an experience and guests are treated as relationships. We balance warmth and service with disciplined execution, building



Kassidy Angelo

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vapor, it dissipates after a few moments, giving the cocktail a grand entrance and evoking warm, sunny days for the customer.

The members-only Dr. Stravinsky Parfumerie in Barcelona takes it one step further. There, you don't just order a cocktail; you also select from different aroma options to pair with the cocktail. This can totally transform the tasting experience and allow customers to personalize their drinks. There, you can amplify a daiquiri with lime aroma, or contrast it with a floral aroma. These aromas don't just add to the sensory experience—they let you customize a cocktail without needing to stock expensive, perishable garnishes.

Similar to how a wine changes flavor as it breathes and warms in the glass, a cocktail can be a dynamic journey. A guest could start their drink with one aromatic vapor, and halfway through, introduce a completely different atomizer to shift the flavor profile of the drink.

Atomizers are the easiest, most ac-

cessible bars which drink with small negro barte tamar come It rec the b cube, Co vor Bl with "Whe said, hit of show Wh vanill scree addir than backe tails e

TREND TALK

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scalable brands without losing heart.

What matters most when building your team?

We look for people who believe in what we're building. Hospitality is the ultimate team sport—every role matters. Skills can be developed, but energy and attitude are foundational. When expectations are high and the environment is supportive, excellence follows.

Which technology is critical to your business?

Toast is central to our operation, connecting sales, labor, and inventory in real time. Reservation platforms help us manage guest flow and build relationships, while scheduling apps streamline staffing. For our wine program, BinWise ensures precision inventory and margin protection. Strong systems behind the scenes allow service to shine.

Are you using AI?

Yes, thoughtfully. Hospitality is

a human business, and technology will never replace that. We use AI to strengthen administrative and analytical functions, allowing our teams to focus on what truly matters: the guest experience.

How does training differ between seasoned professionals and Gen Z?

The standards don't change—great service and accountability are universal. What changes is the approach. Gen Z naturally leans into technology to optimize performance, while seasoned professionals bring instinct and depth of experience. The strongest teams blend innovation with timeless hospitality.

Is Daniel's involved in philanthropy?

Giving back to our local community is important to us. We support charities and initiatives that directly impact the neighborhoods where we operate. Hospitality extends beyond our dining rooms—it's about contributing to the community that supports us.

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