

2017 Vendor Of The Year

Nicole Steen

Director of Operations, Classic Installs

"Nicole is an exceptional project manager. Her recent achieved success is a testimony to the fact that every milestone can be achieved with continuous hard work and unwavering determination. She truly excels in everything she undertakes and is an asset to the company." – Kristyn Stimach, Logistics Coordinator at Classic Installs

Nicole Steen, a tireless facility professional, was named this year's Vendor of the Year.

She has served on multiple committees, including Females in Facilities and the Vendor Voice Committee, attends every annual conference, participates online, is a regular volunteer for RFMA Gives and never misses a Member Meet-Up event. Steen is always ready to step up and contribute when needed.

Steen loves her job, her clients and being part of the RFMA community. "Work is a passion," she said. "It's not a grind. I have fun because the days and the projects are never the same. We have to be creative and come up with new ideas and solutions to make clients happy. I take pride in how our clients respond to our service."

"I have been working with Classic Installs for many years and on many projects," said Frank Inoa, Senior Director of Engineering at Arby's. "Nicole is an integral reason for that. She not only understands the scopes of work, but also the impact each project has on our operations and our brand. This understanding makes her invaluable to her organization."

She loves that RFMA brings vendors and restaurateurs together to form a team that strives to share and find new and creative solutions.

"I've never been part of anything like RFMA," she said. "I'm not there to just sell to people; I'm there to be part of the community and to make long-term friends. Other associations don't have the same community spirit."

Steen excels in building relationships. She treats her clients as friends, and like friends, there's nothing she wouldn't do for them.

She's available 24/7, even when she's on vacation.

"Everything is done at night, so if something goes wrong or a client has a question, I'm the one who calls the client late at night," she said. "I try to respond as quick as humanly possible. If a client wants a report by next week, I try to get it to them by the next day. And if something goes wrong, we make it right. It doesn't matter what it costs to correct it because integrity and the relationship are more important."

"I have never known anyone more passionate about connecting with people and applying that passion to providing clients the utmost in customer service and issue resolution," said Kathy Hilderbrand, Office Manager at Classic Installs. "Her hard work and dedication make her the perfect candidate for being awarded Vendor of the Year."

At this year's awards ceremony, she was not expecting her name to be called for Vendor of the Year. She was stunned.

"It wasn't something I was actively trying to earn," she said. "I didn't consider myself to be at that level. It was very rewarding to be honored for my commitment to RFMA. People have noticed that I am trying to be an active member of the community, and that means a lot to me."

"I have worked with Nicole for 10 years and have seen firsthand the dedication and commitment she puts in to everything she does," said Christy Lindsey, Purchasing Agent at Classic Installs. "She is a tenacious go-getter and truly deserves the recognition she has received. I am very proud of Nicole. You could not have given this award to a worthier person."

The response from friends and family has been great.

"Everyone was very happy for me and no one was surprised," she said. "Many people have said, 'You really deserve it.'"