

Alicia Garland

Orlando, Florida



[Cakes Beyond The Realm](#)

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Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Alicia Garland:

After 16 years working as a Case Worker for Seniors First, an Orlando based non-profit social service organization for seniors, Alicia Garland, Founder of Cakes Beyond The Realm, decided it was time to follow her true passion. Garland shared the story behind her journey and described her unique business and how it's shaking things up in the wedding, anniversary and birthday industries.

“The real catalyst for the business goes back to when I got married in 2014,” Garland said. “Even though I’ve been making cakes for 30 years, the prospect of making a cake for over 200 people was a bit daunting. That’s when I came up with the idea to make a faux cake. In doing so, I discovered that my true passion is decorating, not baking. It was also a lot less expensive and a lot more fun.”

Cakes Beyond The Realm was officially incorporated in May 2015. Garland spent the next five years building out her new business, while maintaining a full-time job. She described her major challenges as educating people about faux cakes and the many advantages about them.

“Most people don’t understand how much cheaper and easier a faux cake is,” she said. “At my wedding, people didn’t even realize they weren’t eating the cake that was in front of them. It’s become more and more popular, but there’s still an educational component to work on.”

In 2018, Garland left her full-time job to focus exclusively on her new business.

“I loved what I was doing, but God gives you a gift for a reason,” she said. “I wanted to use that gift. I talked to my husband about it and he was very supportive, so I took a leap of faith.”

Garland describes her business and the faux cakes she creates as artificial works of art for use at weddings, anniversaries, birthday parties, baby shows and other special events. The materials used include, string beading, Swarovski crystals, metal wires, lighting, Styrofoam, wood dowels, fondant icing, hand made paste flowers, icing gel colors, air brushing and more.

“My faux cakes have the exact aroma and look of baked cakes because of the fondant icing,” Garland said. “They also include an opening for the simulation of the cake cutting ceremony. The cost is substantially less –

an average of 40% or more – than traditional baked cakes, thus saving the customer money for other needs. Customers are not walking away from an investment or wasting uneaten cake. They're even able to recoup some or all of their investment by selling their cake on social media if they wish."

The majority of Garland's growth has come from other satisfied customers. She's active on Facebook and recently added Instagram and LinkedIn to her social media outreach efforts. She's also going to add video tutorials showing people the faux cake making process and giving them more insight into the advantages of faux cakes.

For Garland, who loves bringing joy to her customers by creating custom keepsake faux cakes, her future goals include expanding into new markets and building new connections with referral partners, such as wedding planners. When the pandemic comes to an end, she has plans to do presentations at various social organizations like sororities, fraternities and churches. She's also considering investing in indoor billboard digital advertising.

What advice does Garland have for aspiring entrepreneurs? "Perfect your craft/specialty," she said. "Always seek to learn more, and have confidence in yourself. And most importantly, trust God and have faith enough to JUMP!"

Garland also recommends the book, *The 10X Rule: The Only Difference Between Success and Failure* by Grant Cardone, for all entrepreneurs.

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