

Commercial brokers need to be advisors as well

By Grady Oxford For the Sun-News
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In one of the most profound changes affecting the commercial real estate industry, today's brokerage professionals have seen their roles undergo a dramatic transformation. This trend has been in the making for several years, but has really taken shape during the current market cycle. As corporations have had to refocus their business strategy to cope with the changing market, successful brokers have adapted to their clients' needs by adhering to a more consultative approach to their real estate business.

The new realities of today's highly-competitive marketplace mandate that brokers become experts on a myriad of issues including approvals, architecture, construction, planning, development, financing and marketing. The old model of showing space and hoping for a fit is long past.

An emphasis on continued training and education within the real estate profession must be maintained in order to advise clients on all areas of importance in the real estate process.

One of the biggest changes that has emerged in our industry is the accessibility of information. All brokers and most tenants now have easy access to rental rates, availabilities and new development projects. With market information no longer being a major competitive edge, brokers have had to refocus their efforts by approaching the business with a consultative perspective.

Here are just a few of the ways the new breed of brokerage professionals are leading the industry's service revolution:

Strategic planning

Before an effective real estate solution can be devised, a broker must understand his or her client's business plan, what the growth objectives are, where labor is coming from and how they can compete more effectively.

Understand the client's business

Brokers must advise clients on what the real estate trends are in their industry and how they can maintain a competitive edge.

Creative solutions

Whether a company is downsizing or upsizing, a broker must create a real estate solution that meets each client's unique needs. They need to know what financing options are available, what incentives are being offered and what the right terms should be are all factors considered by the effective

broker.

More options

One of the most interesting trends today is the integration of office and industrial development into a high tech flex/office space. This option has proven to be an effective solution for a great many companies.

Effective negotiating

Once all of these factors are considered, the broker can do what they do best: negotiate a successful, customized real estate transaction.

These changes affecting our industry are the most positive ones I have seen in quite some time. In challenging times as well as boom times, the new breed of brokerage professional is more capable of being a value-added, trusted advisor to a client by taking a consultative approach to the business.

Brokers need to prove their value to their clients by focusing more on strategy and less on selling.

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