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## Lowry of Levin Management discusses ICSC benefits

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Real Estate Associations/Affiliations: International Council of Shopping Centers

What are you hoping to accomplish by attending the show and what is different this year?

Levin Management always has exhibited at the ICSC New York National Conference. We find it to be among the most important shows for us each year because of its location right in the heart of our geographic area. Although this is a national show, we benefit from its many regional characteristics. For example, some of the people and companies we will connect with at this show do not necessarily attend larger global conventions such as ICSC RECon.

The show represents a great opportunity to meet face-to-face with new business contacts while reinforcing our existing business relationships. With thousands of industry professionals in attendance, it's a great chance to make deals, network and leverage Levin Management's position within the industry.

In the current economic climate what kinds of deals are out there and who is the typical buyer?  
Consumer?

From an acquisitions perspective, note sales still tend to dominate that side of the business and continue to be very active. With the compression of cap rates and a greater availability of financing, we certainly are seeing more shopping center properties coming to market. More owners are now willing to put their centers on the market for sale and "test the waters."

How did your company withstand the recession and what changes have you made to grow and succeed during the recovery of the retail market?

Undoubtedly, the recession has affected everyone in the real estate industry. At Levin, we fared better than most companies primarily because of our geographic coverage area. The Northeast, where most of our portfolio is located, remains a relatively strong market that did not have the same degree of vacancies that other parts of the country experienced. There's a strong demand for space here because supply still is relatively limited. We didn't see major dips in our occupancy rates, even during recessionary times. Many "mom-and-pop" stores did not start expanding until fairly recently. While national and regional tenants slowed their pace, many have resumed adding stores to their

portfolios or are downsizing oversized stores. All signs indicate that the current retail environment will continue gaining momentum.

How does your company use social media? Has social media been a beneficial tool in generating more business?

Technology and social media are improving the way real estate is marketed and transacted. I am a big fan of LinkedIn and to date have more than 3,000 contacts. LinkedIn represents an excellent opportunity for networking and developing new business contacts. It's been a great tool for canvassing new professional relationships. As a company, Levin also has a very active Facebook page and Twitter account.

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