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2018 Ones to Watch: Michael Lee, Partner at HKS Capital Partners, LLC

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Name: Michael Lee

Title: Partner

Company: HKS Capital Partners, LLC

Address: 38 West 21st Street, New York, NY 10011

Year that you entered your current field? June 13th 2011 7:00 AM

Who or what do you attribute to your success?

I owe all of my success to all of those who believed in me from day one, particularly my three partners who have been amazing to work with the last seven years. I don't think I know more than one or two people my age (28) who have stuck with one company that long, which is a testament to how well we work together. We ask each other and ourselves endlessly: Can you do more business? I'll stay out of your way. Do you need help?

What are your professional goals for 2018?

My goal is to be as flexible and creative as possible. Right now there is a fortune of liquidity in the market—lenders and principles. Although everyone says deals are too expensive we are still extremely busy. Business is booming from refinancing, construction takeout, ground up construction (condo and rental), underlying co-ops, 1031 exchanges, and bridge loans for troubled properties. My goal is to capture as much non-acquisition market as possible, and prepare for the ultimate shift back into acquisitions when that day comes.

How do you contribute to the future of your industry?

I have a soft spot for new blood since I started from zero in 2011. I try and give useful, candid advice to youngsters that reach out to me, even if debt brokerage isn't for them. It's refreshing when someone gives you their perspective without the sugar, so I try and do the same. I've met for coffee at 7:30 AM, and done conference calls on the weekend. If I only helped one individual find their path, it was worth it. Either way, I'll never hang up on someone who cold calls me.

How do you manage the work/life balance?

I'm a true believer in work hard play hard. The key is to work hard first. If you want a life before you have business, you won't have either. To be successful in the debt brokerage business, I believe you need to work a 12 hour day or "half day". After a few years the constant ups and downs of brokerage can take their toll so I started training Brazilian Jiu Jitsu 5 years ago. I also visit my family's organic vegetable farm regularly to decompress. Fresh vegetables and family are great healers.

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