



Coaching: The “Triple Crown” of commercial real estate brokerage - by Rod Santomassimo

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As it turns out American Pharoah was not a once in a generation horse after all. Justify captured the Triple Crown only three years later. The Triple Crown is a series of three races—the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness and the Belmont Stakes—over a short number of weeks. The first Triple Crown winner, Sir Barton, won in 1919 and over the last 100 years only 12 other horses were able to attain the feat.

So, what is the “Triple Crown” in commercial real estate? Certainly, if we look over a longer term, let’s say one’s career, the elements of a commercial real estate triple crown would consist of perhaps a “Rookie of the Year” recognition, maybe a “40 under 40,” certainly some “Top Producer” awards, or a few of the select REBNY awards, and ultimately a recognition of being a legend in the business.

Based on these parameters how many commercial real estate Triple Crown winners do you know? While the older generation professionals may think of Edward Gordon or Stephen Siegel, mid-career professionals may consider Bob Knakal or CBRE’s Darcy Stacom. Newer folks may think of Meridian’s Morris Betesh or CBRE’s Evan Fiddle.

What do all these Triple Crown winning horses have in common? Certainly, good genes, but also great teams, trainers, riders, and jockeys. They work hard, train hard and are prepared for doing their best when the stakes are the biggest and the lights are the brightest.

Now think about the folks listed above as potential commercial real estate triple crown winners. What do they have in common? They work hard, they have dedicated teams which they leverage, and they win many more opportunities, relative to their competition. Ultimately each continues to focus on fundamentals and have enough experience, well certainly in the cases of Siegel, Knakal and Starcom, to rise to the occasion.

I am reminded of a saying from a Navy seal—“You don’t rise to the occasion, you fall to your highest level of preparation.”

How prepared are you to win your next prospect call, or listing presentation? How prepared are you to represent a tenant, manage a building or find financing for your ideal owner?

There is good news for you. While race horses peak at 3 and 4 years old, triple crown winners in

commercial real estate only get better with experience. Now that's one claim I can easily Justify.

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