



Q & A with some of the Women from CIREB: Roberta Bastow

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Name: Roberta Bastow

Title: Vice President

Company/firm: First Niagara Bank

Years with company/firm: 1 1/2

Years in field: 23

Years in real estate industry: 6

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Responsibilities include: Creatively structure mortgage and commercial loans for business expansion, investment or refinance, counsel clients on ways to improve cash flow and reduce expenses, proactive general banking concierge.

Real estate organizations / affiliations: CIREB, Women's Council of Realtors and Mortgage Bankers

Professionally, where were you ten years ago and where are you now?

Senior vice president and market leader - managing a wealth management client team at Fleet Bank (now Bank of America) I also managed and grew my own individual trust, investment and private banking client portfolio and provided senior level client contact for the team. Now I am a relationship manager in business banking with First Niagara, helping business owners and real estate investors stay in business and grow their business through encouragement, support and a unique entrepreneurial understanding of their business.

What single event professional or personal has most significantly impacted your career?

Creating, running and selling my own business for 6 years - it's made me very humble, appreciative and more respectful of my hard working entrepreneurial clients

What was the best decision that you made in the last year?

To participate in CIREB-it's been a great networking tool for me as well as keeping me up to date on what and who's going on in local commercial real estate development and sales

What award or recognition has been the most meaningful to you and why?

The "Best Coffee Shop" awards I won when I owned my coffehouse. It was most meaningful because it was mine from start to finish.

How do you stay ahead of the curve?

Attend professional events and seminars, read real estate reports and appraisals, network with other real estate professionals, listen to my clients

Who has been the strongest influence on your career and why?

Tom Granath. He was a branch manager at Chemical Bank in NYC when I was an account officer in his branch on the Upper East Side. He taught me how to lend (what's not in the books or classroom) and gave me the encouragement and support I needed to propel my career.

What impact has social networking had on your success?

I'm a big fan and supporter of Linked In. It has helped me get introduced to others, and vice versa.

What advice would you give to a woman just starting a career in your field?

Just do it!

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