



## Wenke of Taconic; Be curious and ask questions

May 28, 2013 - Spotlights

Name: Colleen J. Wenke

Title: Vice President

Company: Taconic Investment Partners

Years with company: 12 Years

Years in field: 2 years - After graduating from college in 2001 I started as a temp at Taconic, after which I continued working for them full-time and slowly advanced upwards

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Real Estate Associations/Affiliations:

New York Building Congress, NAIOP-NYC, New York Private Equity Network, Professional Women in Construction, and the Young Real Estate Professionals of New York. Served on the Advisory Board of the Development Program at the NYU Schack Institute of Real Estate.

QUESTIONS:

How do you and/or your firm use social media?

While Taconic is not heavily involved with social media platforms and does not utilize Facebook, Twitter, etc., we do understand the importance of technology. As a company that takes pride in being at the forefront of emerging trends, we work to find appropriate technological and digital collaborations. Most recently, we worked with Floored, a proprietary 3D scanning technology company at 619 West 54th Street to allow prospective tenants to simulate office plans at the building.

What is the most daring thing you've done for your career? How did it turn out for you?

As a woman in a predominantly male field, I believe that my candor, emphasis on quality, and relying on my instincts has taken me far in my career. Being honest and providing my opinion - whether it was something they did/did not want to hear - was definitely daring when a majority of the time I was likely the only female sitting in the room and collaborating with the team. Having a voice garnered the attention and respect I deserve and set me apart from the rest. My core competencies are in building, so it comes with the territory of working with construction workers, financial professionals, etc., who are mostly male. It was important for me to earn their respect and know that I was not to be messed around with.

Which project, deal or transaction was the "game changer" in the advancement of your career?

401 West 14th Street - widely known as the "Apple Building" - similar to how I always provide my honest opinions, I wanted the project and wanted to be the lead on this - I was ready to get my hands dirty on the front lines and ready to play. That said, I literally went up to co-CEO Paul Pariser and asked to be the project manager. I got it and I oversaw everything - soup to nuts - and this

included marketing, construction, etc. I am very proud of the product and never is there a day that I regret asking for what I wanted, even though it was challenging at times.

What is the BEST advice you have ever received?

Don't always think you have the answers, instead be curious and ask questions. Take advantage of those situations where you might feel intimidated since you're sitting in a room with incredibly smart individuals and do not be afraid/embarrassed to ask questions and learn from them.

What is your favorite tip for balanced living?

You're not going to be perfect at everything, so with that said, remember to celebrate milestones and successes - both on the personal and professional sides of your life. Take a step back sometimes and re-calibrate your own expectations - be happy with what you do have and what you have accomplished.

Where would you like to be in 10 years?

I do not want to sound cliché, but to be quite frank, I really like to be doing what I am doing in real estate development. Obviously I would like to be working on larger projects and advance within the company, however I can honestly say that in 10 years from now I still hope to be in the development industry. I like playing a role in changing the landscape of New York City - it is challenging and ever changing.

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