



Andrea Solomon of Diversified Capital, "Tell it like it is and keep your promises"

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Andrea Solomon is the vice president, leasing for the Federal Trust Building at 24 Commerce Street in Newark, a Diversified Capital property. After three years managing smaller properties for the company she was assigned to be the on-site property and lease manager for this historic building in September of 2006. And, she has turned the building around.

"When I first started at 24 Commerce, the tenants were skeptical to say the least. But Diversified sent me there to be a pro-active, hands-on property manager," said Solomon. "And that is exactly what I am. I'm visible. I make the rounds of the building and talk to the tenants regularly, and not just about building issues. I make it my business to understand what's going on with their companies and offer assistance when I can."

Solomon's genuine interest in people is a significant factor in her success. Recently, for example, she worked with a prospective tenant who started out thinking he needed about 2,000 s/f for a school. The more they talked about his plans, the more certain Solomon became that he was underestimating his needs. She worked with him to help him visualize the optimum space and design classrooms. He ended up taking a 6,500 s/f space. He's happy with the set up, and she's delighted to have him in the building.

"When I was growing up, my family owned a business," Solomon explains. "Over the dinner table I learned one of the most important lessons in life—and, in business: If you're a straight shooter who tells it like it is and keep your promises, people respect you and will work with you even if you can't always give them the answer they want. It's a principle I live by and one I've tried to instill in my two sons."

Like most working moms, Solomon has to strike a balance between work and family life. But her approach is a little different—she integrates the two. As she explains, "I've always made it a point to bring my children to work and to share my work life with them. We talk things over and try to apply skills that work in one areato similar situations in the other setting. So, we may take some ideas that are effective at work (or, school) and apply them at home and vice versa. Getting your family involved and letting them see what you do at work helps to make the balancing act much easier and can be a great learning experience for your children."

Solomon's ability to take lessons from one walk of life and apply them to another has served her well throughout her career, as has her ability to build strong, lasting relationships. Early in her career she worked for a bank that specialized in financing agricultural property. When they offered low-interest mortgages for employees, she decided to take the plunge and bought her first condo. That experience peaked her interest in real estate and eventually led her to get her real estate license.

Like most new agents, she started out in the residential real estate market. Although she didn't stay long in that market, she did forge a relationship with a husband and wife team who started out as

mentors and remain part of her networking circle to this day. Solomon is constantly networking, "My best connections have been made through local chamber of commerce organizations that I have joined and networking at business/social functions. People that you meet may not be in need of your business at that moment, but they don't forget a good conversation and your business card if there's a need for your services in the future."

Solomon took a 10-year detour into the cosmetics industry before returning to real estate in 2003 when she joined Diversified Capital. As different as these two industries may appear, Solomon sees common elements of success in both arenas—"know your product and develop your people skills. "The best advice I can offer anyone starting out in any business is to learn all you can about your chosen field and focus on serving your clients' needs. There's no trick to success. If you know what you're talking about and you genuinely try to help people get what they need, you will succeed."

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