



## **Executive of the Month: Spengler, chief lending officer of Investors Bank: Making rapid, significant and positive changes to the bank**

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Rapid, significant and positive change has occurred at Investors Bank since Richard Spengler, chief lending officer, joined the organization in September 2004. Spengler, charged with diversifying and growing Investors' commercial loan portfolio valued at \$400 million, guided the bank's entrance into the commercial real estate (CRE) and multifamily housing markets 10 years ago.

During Spengler's tenure, Investors also evolved from a local savings bank with \$5 billion in assets to a regional growth company with \$15.56 billion in assets.

Today, Investors' portfolio of CRE and multifamily housing loans is valued at \$7 billion. Besides growing the commercial financing portfolio, Spengler established the bank's CRE lending group by recruiting experienced senior loan officers, underwriters, and other key personnel. At first, the commercial lending operations were based at the bank's corporate headquarters in Short Hills, N.J. Overtime the bank developed offices in midtown Manhattan, downtown Brooklyn, and Astoria, Queens as well as Spring Lake Heights and Robbinsville in New Jersey.

The bank increased the number of CRE/multifamily lending offices to serve its growing market that includes New Jersey, Long Island, and five boroughs of New York City, as well as Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. In 2013, under the leadership of Spengler, the Investors CRE lending group completed 695 commercial mortgage transactions that ranged in size from \$1 million to over \$50 million. The total value of these financing agreements was \$2.37 billion. During last year, the bank was consistently ranked among the "Top Ten" commercial mortgage lenders in terms of transactions completed on a monthly basis, according the CRE news media.

Besides recruiting senior loan officers and building an underwriting team, Spengler also strengthened the bank's risk and credit management function to transform the bank's commercial lending portfolio. Simultaneously, the bank enhanced its information technology infrastructure and added corporate banking as well as cash management capabilities.

In addition, Spengler focused on building relationships with potential CRE borrowers. Adding support, Investors' CEO Kevin Cummings and COO Domenick Cama regularly met with commercial real estate developers, building owners, real estate investors and firms in the multifamily housing industry. They continue to meet with these individuals and companies. The message is clear that the bank's commercial clients would have direct access to its CEO, COO and CLO. Leading commercial mortgage brokers also helped introduce Investors to prominent companies in the CRE and multifamily housing sectors.

Overtime, Investors has established relationships with leading CRE firms in the N.Y. and N.J. metro market. Lending relationships, for example, have been completed with such well known firms as Related Real Estate, Hartz Mountain, Roseland Properties (now a unit of Mack-Cali Realty Corp.),

and Kushner Companies.

Kushner Companies CEO Jared Kushner, said, "We just like Investors' straight-forward approach to completing financing transactions with us, and we value positive relationship that has developed between our organization and the bank's senior management."

Now, with bank's acquisition of Roma Bank, Investors has expand its CRE lending activities into the southern New Jersey and Philadelphia markets. To manage and build this new area, Spengler selected senior vice president Timothy Touhey, the former CEO of the New Jersey Home Builders Association. Working together, they recently completed a \$124.5 million financing transaction involving five properties owned by the family company that was founded by brothers Robert and William Healey in 1982.

While closing this transaction in southern New Jersey, Spengler spearheaded the bank's New York office to complete an \$11.85 million refinancing agreement with a multifamily housing property in the Hudson Valley. The CRE lending group also provided \$12.25 million in financing to the owners of a retail shopping center in Stony Brook, Long Island.

According to Spengler, the distance between suburban Philadelphia and eastern Long Island clearly shows how the bank continues to broaden its geographic market.

#### Investor Bank's "4Cs"

In addition to developing expertise in commercial mortgage financing, a key part of Investors success is linked to the bank's corporate culture. The core values that shape the bank's approach to customer service and client relationships are based on Investors' "4Cs," which are character, commitment, community, and cooperation. Spengler said, "Our values sum up how we respond to our clients' needs and guide us in anticipating how to best serve the CRE/multifamily housing sectors."

At a recent meeting of the bank's senior executives, CEO Cummings explained how Investors has the potential to double in size (going from \$15 billion in assets to over \$30 billion in assets) in next few years. Commercial real estate and multifamily lending will be key drivers in that growth, and Spengler knows that the journey ahead will require even more additions to his lending group to stay ahead of the bank's growth.