



Executive of the Month: Jurick of Premier Commercial Real Estate: A resource to owners, tenants and buyers

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The New York Real Estate Journal recently sat down with Jeff Jurick, director at Premier Commercial Real Estate, for a question and answer session.

Q. What motivated you to make a professional career change and enter the field of real estate?

A. While building our family business, Fala Direct Marketing, we made the decision to invest in real estate that would house our growing business. During the 80s and 90s, we made investments in our business and real estate which created long-term value. I managed our real estate portfolio as part of our day-to-day business, gaining insight into what matters most to other real estate investors. Since selling our businesses in 2005, I've continued to consult in both marketing, while managing our holdings in Melville, NY. During 2008 and 2009, I oversaw the renovation of 80,000 s/f for a new tenant in one of our properties. I enjoyed the experience and it prompted me to consider learning more about real estate and pursuing it as a career.

Q. As the president & CEO of one of the nation's largest direct mail companies, what types of properties were you managing?

A. Our properties included commercial and industrial space ranging from 10,000 to 150,000 s/f. I worked with the towns that provided favorable incentives for labor programs, as well as sales tax savings on our yearly capital investments in technology and equipment, which were well in the high seven figure range. Suffolk County assisted us with training programs and incentives for hiring and training. At our peak, we had 700 employees. Competition for skilled labor was fierce, so our property selections were based on where we could access the best labor pool.

Q. How does your experience as a president & CEO of a large national organization benefit your real estate clients?

A. My experience leading a multi-office, national organization exposed me to many of their needs. From site identification, production planning, process flow, office and warehouse layouts, to working with the municipalities and utilities, I was intimately involved in the same issues and responsibilities many corporate real estate officers and C-level executives face. One of the most rewarding and highly visible projects I worked on was the partnership between our company, New York State and the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) in the development of the largest solar system on Long Island - a 1.1 megawatt system which is still up and running on two of our sites today and which saves over 200,000 kWh per site. We saw the clean energy and ability to produce 25% of our own power as a win-win for everyone, and agreed to participate in the program which was funded by our company and the New York State Energy Department under then Governor Pataki's administration.

Q. Do you believe your former experience gives you a competitive advantage?

A. There's no doubt that, with 35 years of experience, overseeing four operating business units, I gained extensive knowledge and insight into manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, quality

initiatives and much more, allowing me to quickly understand their operations and facility requirements. On the real estate side, I also benefited from building good relationships with other property owners, developers, brokers, as well as a broader network of professionals, all of whom have helped me to continue to succeed in real estate. I learned that surrounding yourself by the right team members is the key to success. I am confident that I have done that here at Premier and through my many relationships.

Q. You were courted by several real estate firms. What made you join Premier?

A. I've worked with managing principal Jason Miller since 2005 on projects for our properties. We often talked about starting a new firm some day. Miller, who I believe is one of the best hunters for properties and tenants, introduced me to managing principal Jeff Schwartzberg. When I met Schwartzberg, it was like meeting a "Pro's Pro." He listens, asks the right questions and helps me to develop the best course of action for our clients' needs. He has taught me how to best quickly assess a client's needs. Since joining the firm in November, a day hasn't gone by where I haven't learned something new.

Q. What's one of the best lessons you've learned?

A. I've been fortunate to have worked with some of the area's top brokers on several real estate transactions. They taught me a lot; most importantly, ask the right questions, listen well, plant a new seed every day and have patience.

Q. Since joining Premier, what have been some of the highlights?

A. Among the highlights was securing my first exclusive representation, which came through a friend. Dealing with friends could put more pressure on you, but I turned that into energy to find the right tenants for this particular site. A few months after signing the exclusive agreement, I placed my first leasing tenant of over 17,000 s/f to a long term deal. That was my major highlight to date and I hope many more to follow.

Q. Are you focusing on any particular types of properties and/or target markets?

A. My primary focus has been on industrial properties for sale or lease, medical project development, medical offices, and site location representation.

Q. You are known for being very active in the community. How are you leveraging your community involvement in your real estate career?

A. My wife, Lisa and I share our family's tradition and role in giving back to the community. Lisa works on projects for The Ronald McDonald House of Long Island and I am still very active as a Trustee for North Shore-LIJ Health System. It's been an honor and privilege to sit on the NSLIJ board and learn from one of the most talented businessmen in healthcare, Michael Dowling - which I apply in my real estate career, especially when serving physician groups. I am also still active in Children's Medical Fund of New York (CMF), for which I served as chairman from 1980 to 2003. Through CMF, I have a tremendous network of prominent business leaders. As a member of the Syracuse School of Management Advisory Board, I am able to remain on the leading-edge of new business trends and developments, which gives me additional insight into the needs of the marketplace.

Q. When you are not facilitating real estate deals, how do you spend your off time?

A. Golf has always been a passion of mine. But I really love spending time traveling with my family whenever we can all be together.