



## **Scepanovic of Ideal Props.: Selected as Women of Influence**

June 23, 2015 - Spotlights

Name: Aleksandra Scepanovic

Title: Managing Director

Company Name: Ideal Properties Group

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What year did you start your career in commercial real estate: 2005

Real Estate Associations/Organizations: REBNY

What recent project or transaction are you most proud of?

I expanded the firm by over 50 team members, and founded two new divisions within the company - the interior staging and the property management arm.

What recent honor, achievement or recognition has meant the most to you and why?

Ideal Properties Group was named the fifth largest real estate firm in Brooklyn by The Real Deal in August 2014. We are the only firm that is based in Brooklyn to have made it to the top five as we have monumentally increased our rankings in the past few years.

I was selected by the New York Business as one of the organization's Women of Influence honorees in December 2014.

I was selected in 2014 to speak at the Inc. GROWCO Conference, which took place in April 2015, alongside with Jessica Alba and the founder of Airbnb (among others).

When you launched your own business what were some of the initial challenges and how did you overcome them?

The real estate market everywhere around us was collapsing in the wake - and then the aftermath - of the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy. We saw the softening market as our opportunity to launch and grow an alternative to the corporate real estate brokerages' approach to Brooklyn. Money was tight, the confidence in the market evaporating - and all we had was our enthusiasm and absolute belief in Brooklyn.

What has been your experience with having a mentor or being a mentor yourself?

I have never had the privilege of having a mentor, and possibly precisely due to that fact, I am very passionate about mentoring other women in the field of real estate. Real estate is typically viewed as a difficult industry to be a part of, especially for us "fairer" sex. Given my own background, I know that women not only have to be extra tough and resilient to thrive in a professional field - I also know that we can excel far further than our male counterparts, especially in dire circumstances. In this vein, I have made it my mission to personally help develop the careers of other women in the industry, including Ideal's very own director of sales.

Above all, I love helping our team members, as well as mentors we have now put in place to mentor others, realize the need to be passionate about their career paths - be that in real estate or any other industry. Those who know me tend to see my demeanor as jovial, making it difficult to

recognize the challenges I may have had to find the strength within -

to step up to. At any rate, my advice and business sense are unyielding, and as a founder of a company where I now serve as managing director, I still make time to help others embark on an exciting and rewarding career path. I am also always an advocate for the industry to create innovative ways to help others learn our business - and become one with our passion.

Please reflect on a recent achievement and/or milestone for your company:

Building a team of 150 (although Ideal Properties Group now numbers 200) was a remarkably challenging goal that made it possible for all of our back-end staff to put on our thinking caps and exercise our creative muscle. We all pitched in, crafting a platform, coming up with recruiting ideas, slogans, collateral.

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

My late father, who passed away when I was very young. To date, I have a profound respect for decisions he's made, and for the ways he approached challenges. Whenever I find myself at a crossroads, rather than leaping, I tend to first try to imagine the big picture. Then, I evaluate, re-evaluate, re-re-evaluate, and test-fit either choice... at all times trying to "look at things from above" in order to envision which one my father would find more appealing.

What is the first thing you do when you arrive in the office in the morning?

Predictably, I check in with my team.

What time management strategies do you find to be the most effective for you?

My rudimentary time management strategy is based on a very crude version of "I'll sleep when I'm dead" approach. On a more serious note, the highlights of my multi-tasking are the ever so rare moments when I manage to seamlessly weave together the needs of my three-year-old (daughter) with the needs of my eight-year-old (company).

What is the best advice you have received and who was it from?

My late grandfather, an economist by vocation, and a serial polyglot by conviction: "You'll never understand another person if you can't speak their language. Learn the language."

List 3 women that you would like to have drinks / dinner with and where would you go?

My (also late) grandma (Andre's Caf  on the UES to bring back memories of her native Hungary); Milunka Savic (an obscure Serbian favorite - who from my perspective just happens to be from Serbia, but more importantly, and despite all the recent wars, also happens to be the most-decorated female combatant in the history of warfare) - not sure where exactly we would go for drinks, but I'd surely love to hear about her version of what women can and cannot do. My third choice would probably be Alice Coachman (first female African American athlete to win the Olympic gold) - I've always had a soft spot for strong women who defy expectations... and sometimes logic. Unfortunately, Ms. Coachman has also recently passed, leaving my three choices an exercise in futility. But I guess my wishful thinking reveals the type of a female role model I've always gravitated toward...

6. What is your favorite quote?

"Opportunities multiply as they are seized." Sun Tzu, The Art of War

7. What did you want to be when you grew up?

An archaeologist.