



Executive of the Month: James Kinsey brings a unique perspective to Avison Young's Tri-State Investment Sales Group

June 05, 2018 - Front Section

Manhattan, NY The New York Real Estate Journal sat down with James Kinsey of Avison Young for a question and answer session.

Q: Tell us about what you do.

A: I'm a principal with the Tri-State Investment Sales Group for Avison Young in the firm's New York Metro Area location. I just joined the company in March and was brought on to help manage our overall investment sales service lines which includes asset disposition, asset recapitalization, market research and financial analysis among others. I work alongside James Nelson, head of the Tri-State Investment Sales in building our brand, expanding our footprint in the market and assisting in staff recruitment as we grow our team. I look at my role here at Avison Young as almost a kind of chief of staff that handles much of the "nuts and bolts" work for our rapidly expanding division and ensuring our investment sales platform is running smoothly.

420 Fifth Avenue - Manhattan, NY

Q: How did you get your start in real estate?

A: Interestingly enough, I was raised in a real estate family but did not plan to go into the real estate business. I actually studied music composition in college and planned to go into the music industry. I eventually decided to go into the real estate profession. In 2002, I partnered with my now late father and another partner to form Kinsey Capital Associates, LLC, a commercial real estate brokerage company in New York City. After stints with a couple other real estate firms, I formed Kinsey Capital in 2012 as a New York based boutique off-market investment sales firm that eventually expanded to London.

177 Franklin - Manhattan, NY

Q: What made you want to join Avison Young?

A: Joining Avison Young was the right fit for me at this point in my career. The firm shares my belief in integrating and working with the right people. Avison Young strongly encourages collaboration with other company professionals as well as always putting the client's needs first. These are organizational traits you don't always see with other firms in our business. They are also a principal-led organization, another factor that made this an attractive opportunity for me. Looking at it from their vantage point, I think my well-rounded commercial real estate experience made me an appealing choice to help manage this burgeoning investment sales team. I bring a unique perspective to this position, including the ability to see things from an owner's viewpoint having been an owner myself.

But what ultimately helped make this an easy decision for me was the opportunity to work with James Nelson. James and I have known each other for many years and I have great respect for him, his industry knowledge and most importantly his exceptional ability to lead and grow an investment sales team.

Q: What do you feel is the most exciting part of your new role at Avison Young?

A: The opportunity to take the already well-respected and established Avison Young brand to new heights and grow Tri-State Investment Sales by creating a unique and unparalleled platform in this market is what made me want to make this move in the first place. It's also what drives me every day—it's exciting to be able to create an entire new blueprint for our department that includes designing innovative ways to do business, fine tuning our operational processes, and creating best-in-class marketing pieces for clients. I truly believe in what we're doing here and feel as though we're creating a cutting-edge platform that will make us an investment sales market leader for years to come.

21-23 Catherine Street - Manhattan, NY

Q: What are the biggest challenges you face on a day to day basis?

A: My biggest challenge is there's never enough hours in the day! On the deal side, nothing is surprising to me anymore. I have also been doing this long enough to know that unforeseen issues always arise during the transaction process.

The high volume of resumés we continue to get is a great indicator of how many professionals are interested in joining our team. Our original goal was to have a full team in place within a year, but incredibly enough, we actually doubled the size of our staff only a month after I joined. But we also

want to make sure we fit the person with the position that suits them best. For instance, we are structuring our team by asset class, so we now have office investment specialists, retail sales specialists, etc. For the long-term success of our team, the best analogy I can think of is we're like a crew team—we all need to be rowing in the same direction to ensure success.

Q: How are you helping to mentor these younger members of your team?

A: Our philosophy is that it's not just about investment sales and closing deals—as clichéd as it may sound, it truly is about being strategic. We teach our young professionals the fundamentals of our business, how to anticipate issues before they happen and how to determine what's in the best interest of the client. Sometimes the right answer is now may not be the right time to buy or sell. We're trying to instill in the younger members of our team that you need to maintain a “client first” approach—commercial real estate is a relationship-based business and doing what's best for the client in the short-term will always pay off in the long-term.

Q: What trends are you seeing these days in investment sales?

A: 2017 was a declining year for investment sales but I'm pleased to say that 2018 is looking much better. Overall sales volume is picking up and velocity should strengthen throughout the year.

Q: What do you do enjoy doing in your spare time?

A: Of course, I most enjoy spending time with my family when not at work, but I'm also a big believer in supporting creative arts. A friend of mine runs an arts initiative called The Bushwick Collective and I've been doing my part to support it. The Bushwick Collective is an open-air gallery in Brooklyn that allows young artists to showcase their work through original building wall murals hand-painted by local artists. This initiative has been very well received by the community and has even become a major tourist attraction. It also benefits both the creator as well as the property owner as these murals increase interest and exposure in both the building as well as the artist who designed it. It's a great cause and I'm thrilled to support it.