



2018 Women In Real Estate, Professional Services: Beth Zafonte, Akerman LLP

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Name: Beth Zafonte

Title: Director of Economic Development Services

Company Name: Akerman LLP

Real estate association / organization affiliation(s): WX/New York Women Executives in Real Estate, Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW Network), Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY)

What are some of your biggest accomplishments in the last 12 months?

I am very proud of my service this past year to WX/New York Women Executives in Real Estate as vice president and to be stepping into my newly elected role as president this September. WX's mission is to promote the advancement of women in real estate, enhance the public perception of the role of women within the industry and promote the highest standards of professionalism, ethics and integrity in the field. These goals are accomplished through mentoring, scholarship awards, educational programming, philanthropic and networking activities. While I am passionate about my engagement with clients and my work in securing economic development incentives on their behalf, the volunteer work that I do with WX and the camaraderie I have found is remarkably additive. I strongly encourage long term engagement and service in leadership positions in industry organizations such as WX, CREW and ULI to name a few. Whether you call it "paying it forward" or "giving back" it is a win-win for everyone involved.

What blogs, resources, podcasts or influencers have helped you?

One can drown in all of the information available online so this is a great question geared toward sharing "vetted" sites. These are a couple of resources that I find very helpful that are applicable to my area of expertise in economic development. I follow "City & State New York," a morning and evening email newsletter covering New York politics and policy, New York City Economic Development Corp.'s monthly newsletter NYCvision as well as the NYCEDC blog.

How important is it for women to create a personal brand?

A personal brand is important for anyone, not just women. However, women tend to receive more

mixed messages about how to conduct themselves, dress, and navigate business. The key is to block out all the superficial noise and focus on substance. Showing up each day with the best version of you that you can bring to the table is a key to success.

How many messages are in your inbox right now and how do you manage email?

This is where a type A personality is a blessing. Although someone once told me that if you complete the list (empty the inbox) the game is over. The intention is not to complete it all, but to keep adding to it. If emails keep rolling in because of new business referrals, a successful pitch to a new client or a happy client that wants to expand their work with me and my firm, that's all very welcome. I look at it as a positive not a negative thing. My daily Metro-North commute into the city is a saving grace for helping me manage my emails.

What do you do like to do for fun?

I enjoy cooking and baking for friends and family. It is truly the means for my most creative and artistic expression.

In one word, describe yourself:

Resolute

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