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Hunt Q&A: Harnessing the brokerage community

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Q: I have vacant space available in an office building that I want to lease out. What is the best way to work with brokers? Should I be hiring an exclusive agent?

A: While no one broker makes a substantial percentage of the real estate deals on Long Island, the brokerage community, as a whole, is responsible for nearly all commercial sale and leasing activity. So, any successful marketing plan must be designed to harness the power of hundreds of experienced and knowledgeable sales people who can introduce your property to potential buyers or tenants.

There are many reasons to appoint an exclusive broker to market your property, but chief among them is your exclusive agent's ability to reach out to the entire brokerage community. Whether you "go at it alone" or appoint an exclusive agent, here are the six most important elements of leasing or selling your property efficiently and quickly through the power of the brokerage community:

1. A complete "Fact Package" should be available to brokers at any time on a website. A "Fact Package" can take the form of a brochure, but it should include as a minimum: Complete specifications of the property, a floor plan, a site plan if applicable, photographs, and a map.
2. Your marketing materials should be sent by mail or email to the entire brokerage community. On LI there are 100 commercial real estate brokerage houses, each with a roster of agents. Your exclusive agent should have a database of the houses, and a separate list of all their agents, and their email addresses. Your property also needs to be available on commercial real estate database websites.
3. Look for a way to stand out. A typical brokerage house on LI has over 2,000 listings of available properties and your property can easily be overlooked. Your materials should be complete and compelling.
4. You must have an open house for the brokerage community. Do not expect that potential buyers or tenants will attend. The sole purpose of the open house is to have as many brokers as possible walk through your space. No broker, no matter what his background and experience, can sell

property effectively from a paper or computer screen listing.

5. Be flexible when it comes to inspection appointments. In a perfect world, an agent would schedule all his appointments with a week's notice. In reality, it may have taken him a week to get a prospect to agree to meet with him an hour later. If the agent wants to control the showing let him; he does it for a living.

6. After consulting with your exclusive agent, come up with an attractive and fair compensation schedule for the brokers. A broker has a right to know when and how he is going to be paid. The broker is always going to drive a deal to a landlord or seller who compensates him fairly. There are some important differences between industrial and office compensation, so check with your Agent to make sure you are equal to, or preferably, better than your competition.

You can always tell which landlords have a great relationship with the brokerage community: They are usually rented! Make sure your property is sold or leased quickly by tapping the strength of the brokerage community in the same way.

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