



2020 Ones to Watch: Yaakov Zar, Lev Capital

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Name: Yaakov Zar

Company: Lev

Title: Founder & CEO

Education: Boston University

How do you contribute to your community or your profession?

My wife and I help run Chabad House Bowery. It's a center and Jewish community for students and young professionals living in downtown Manhattan. Our space is on the Bowery. We're proud to be involved with such wonderful people and have the opportunity to support them in their personal lives, careers and spiritual journeys, wherever they stand, in a world filled with so much craziness.

What led you to your current profession?

When my wife and I were living in Boston, we decided to buy our first apartment. We went through the process to get a loan and were approved. A week before closing, our lender told me that our building had been rejected by FHA 7 years prior and we couldn't be approved for our first-time homebuyer loan. I was so upset that I went and got a mortgage broker license, just to understand how the process works. A couple of years later, I decided to start a company to fix commercial real estate finance instead of residential.

Which project, deal, or transaction was the "game-changer" in the advancement of your career?

In my last business, Dispatch, I had the opportunity to meet the business and technology leaders for dozens of extremely complex and massively profitable businesses. Through discussing with these leaders what it takes to implement business-changing tools, I realized that most technology advancement in businesses is not due to technical challenges, but business process, culture and politics. It also became clear to me that if you build a business with technology and innovation in its DNA, you will have a much greater chance at shifting the entire industry's processes (and get a head-start doing it!).

What do you like most about your job?

I love helping our clients get the right loan for their property. I love serving as a non-biased advisor on financing options for our clients. My real favorite is helping our client figure out a really simple solution to their financing situation, when they realize they don't even need a new loan or us for this

deal!

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