



Executive of the Month: Former Manhattan DOB commissioner Rebholz joins forces with Rizzo-Brookbridge to bring unparalleled new service to building owners, developers and tenants

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Martin Rebholz

Manhattan, NY One of the New York skyline's least known success stories is the precise and demanding work of building code compliance professionals. It's their diligence and expertise that takes the value of a project from \$0 to millions even billions of dollars. Without them — a project never comes out of the ground.

Rizzo-Brookbridge team developing a solution for a client expansion.

Shown (from left) are: Evan Bray, managing director; Kellie Johnson, managing director; Martin Rebholz, executive director; and Jinny Kim, senior director.

Building code compliance leader and innovator Rizzo-Brookbridge — whose expertise has helped firms like Facebook, Apple and Google open their Manhattan headquarters, and helped usher

dreams into reality for NYC owner/developers such as SL Green, ESREIT, L&L Holding, Tishman Speyer and Paramount — has just added a unique new dimension of expertise to its team; one that also fills a timely gap in the marketplace.

Now on board at Rizzo-Brookbridge is former Manhattan Borough Department of Buildings (DOB) commissioner Martin Rebholz and his 30-plus years of DOB and NYC School Construction Authority expertise. As an executive director, Marty brings our clients “unmatched experience and perspective,” said Rizzo-Brookbridge CEO, Stephen Rizzo. “Marty was always the go-to expert at DOB. He understood the owner and the tenant’s mindset. He appreciated their design and financial positions,” Rizzo continues. “He was and is a problem-solver whose work stands behind seminal NYC programs, such as DOB NOW, the new building codes and approvals for much of our city’s newly-expanded skyline.”

360 Degrees of DOB Insight

Marty is bringing his public sector insight to his work every day so seamlessly that chairman Charles Rizzo says the team feels, “It’s like Marty was always part of the company.”

Martin Rebholz receiving the DOB Commissioner’s Award for Excellence (2017). Shown (from left) are: Rick Chandler, former commissioner of Buildings, Center; Martin Rebholz, then serving as Manhattan Borough commissioner of Buildings; and Thomas Fariello, former first deputy commissioner of Buildings.

Martin Rebholz receiving the Magdi Masaad, PE Award for Distinguished Public Service - For exemplary leadership and dedication to the NYC Department of Buildings and the city of New York in May 31, 2022.

Shown are Kazimir Vilenchik, first deputy commissioner of Buildings and Martin Rebholz.

Right now, he's laser-focused on helping "our clients effectively navigate the DOB's challenging processes, and that includes achieving compliance and expediting their occupancy goals with predictability and confidence." Equally as important, he states, is ensuring they benefit from his multi-decade knowledge of the city's construction laws. "My career was, and is, dedicated to creating the context for safe, efficient construction."

While at DOB, Marty's multiple responsibilities encompassed the DOB's administration of plan review, development inspections, issuing Certificates of Occupancy and ensuring "those processes were faithfully adapted, pursuant to code, for on-line/real-time computerization." He considers one of his greatest achievements to be eliminating needless and excessive steps within those processes.

Throughout his career, Marty has been recognized for the results he's achieved for the city and the real estate/building industries. Most recently, the NYC Zoning Advisory Council honored Marty for his "outstanding and diligent leadership of the zoning and planning community," and he's been twice honored by the DOB, once with its Commissioner's Award for Excellence in Service and in May 2022, with the Magdi Masaad Award for Distinguished Public Service. A graduate of Pratt Institute with a Bachelor of Architecture degree, Marty is a New York State Registered Architect, and has also operated his own private practice.

Living the Ownership Mindset

Bringing Marty's talent to Rizzo-Brookbridge and the private CRE side of the table is in complete alignment with the firm's "ownership" of the ownership/tenant perspective. "We live the owner/tenant point of view when shepherding a project through to compliance, when time is always on the meter and days cost thousands," said Rizzo. "To deliver the best results possible, we took the extra step to save clients time and money by re-creating the DOB process within our firm, and ensuring we had professionals covering every twist and turn," he continues. "With Marty on board we're taking our service to the highest level yet. The more effective our service, the more quickly a project gets on line, and the faster the new development benefits the NYC economy," Rizzo said. "Marty's already making a difference."

Now operating from its brand-new Manhattan headquarters, Rizzo-Brookbridge was formed in January 2022 by combining the power of The Rizzo Group and Brookbridge, creating a team of 100 professionals with collective project experience totaling hundreds of millions of s/f, over the past 50 years. Among its most prominent work to help owner/developers grow the economy are such successes as 1) the highly successful repositioning of the ESREIT into a class A portfolio, led by the transformation of its nearly 100-year-old flagship — the Empire State Building — into a global

sustainability leader; 2) L&L Holding Inc.'s visionary development of 452 Park, the Avenue's first new, from-the-ground office tower to be completed in more than 50 years, and 3) the multi-decade rise of SL Green Realty as NYC's largest commercial landlord.

Innovating to Better the NYC Economy

And the innovations keep going strong. Rizzo-Brookbridge is now rolling out "Codey"™, NYC's first software program to give owners and managers real-time data/updates on all aspects of their buildings' compliance status. Drawing on data from the DOB, FDNY and other compliance-related agencies, Codey™ offers three, new-to-the-market advantages: 1) its range of metrics is NYC's most comprehensive, 2) it is the first compliance software to provide both live updates and status trackers, and 3) features the industry's easiest-to-navigate dashboard.

For Marty, the innovations, the work, the team and the opportunities to serve NYC have formed a "vibrant and totally honest community, with integrity as a centerpiece of this practice." A practice in which he is proud to play a part.

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