



Newmark Knight Frank honors four brilliant female real estate professionals

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As Newmark Knight Frank's business solutions manager, Nancy Bear describes her job simply as "knowledge management, or how we collect, leverage and share information as a company." She refers to a quote by Jack Welch, "The competitive advantage of a company is its ability to transform knowledge into action." The quote, framed above her desk, is the crux of her mission at Newmark Knight Frank.

Bear literally created a position and filled a role that had not existed at the firm prior to her arrival. Before coming to the firm's N.Y. headquarters, Bear was at its Chicago office, managing all business operations for the region. After proving herself as an extremely competent manager, her peers nominated her to be the key point person for national operations personnel.

What drives Bear's responsibilities across business functions is the need for business and operational efficiencies that enable Newmark Knight Frank to work at its very fast pace. "It's imperative that I understand the goals of each department and how they work to meet corporate objectives."

Since coming to N.Y., Bear has designed a custom billing system, assimilated business processes between all the firm's offices and created process standards throughout the nation. This includes how the firm collects and searches for transaction comparables, calculates commissions, creates invoices, generates financial statements, evaluates and tracks revenue and expenses and pays brokers.

"Working with very talented people and teaming with our leadership to improve the way we do business is the most rewarding part of my work." As the commercial real estate industry continues to become more client-centric, with users requiring new comprehensive services, managing director Kristi Farley fills a critical position at Newmark Knight Frank. As Farley describes it, "I analyze what the client's business issues are and bring all of Newmark Knight Frank's resources to bear in order to provide the best possible solution for the client."

Acting as a single point of contact for clients for the firm's global consulting division, Farley specializes in workplace strategies, but is involved in all aspects of client relations, program management, project and design management, consultant coordination and integrated process improvement.

With a background in interior architecture, interior design and fine arts, Farley began her career at an interior design firm in L.A. After realizing that her passion lay in the long-term strategic planning of workplace strategies, Farley moved to N.Y. and began working directly within the real estate market. "I knew that the best place to get results and have the most influence was to work directly with real estate brokers."

Now at Newmark Knight Frank, which has developed a wide array of consulting services with its

core team in Atlanta, Farley was recruited to be the liaison between the Atlanta team and Newmark Knight Frank's brokers throughout the globe. Farley's experience includes strategic analysis of workspace and a benchmarking study for Hoguet Newman Regal, strategic management for Verizon, and strategic analysis and studies for both Microsoft and PricewaterhouseCoopers. Newmark Knight Frank senior managing director Elizabeth Houley was exposed to real estate while working with Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager at The Executive Hotel, which eventually became Morgans Hotel. Intrigued by the real estate aspects of the duo's new projects like The Royalton and The Palladium, Houley eventually got her real estate license in 1986, and joined Newmark.

In 1988 she was tapped by The Galbreath Co. to lease Swiss Bank Tower, a/k/a 623 Fifth Ave. "My first important assignment was a quintessential learning experience-taking a building from groundbreaking to 100% leased in a horrible leasing market."

That experience proved handy when, during her 1997-2002 tenure with Jones Lang LaSalle, she was asked to help run the firm's Downtown office immediately following 9/11.

"I'd always worked Midtown, but suddenly I had to master a new market that was basically a war zone," Houley says. During that tragic time, "Displaced tenants were literally walking in off the street, needing help in simply keeping their businesses running."

Houley rejoined Newmark in 2002, where she continues to represent high-profile real estate owners and tenants, including Paramount Group, Takenaka and IPG.

Houley has some advice for those planning to enter the real estate business.

"Plan on an initial 3-to-5-year learning curve to gain proficiency in all aspects of real estate and dealmaking-the least of which is simply finding space," said Houley. "You also need to trust your gut instincts; and get involved in organizations like REBNY and YMWREA to keep on top of our ever-changing industry." Recently promoted to senior managing director of Newmark Knight Frank's Capital Group, Jennifer Schwartzman joined the company in 1999. Her first assignment was as a project manager for Verizon, managing acquisitions, dispositions and renewals in the New York region.

It's a relationship that has continued, with Schwartzman still providing advisory services to the telecommunications giant. "It's a great experience," she said, "Because Verizon has a diverse range of real estate assets-and needs-in virtually every neighborhood in the New York metropolitan region."

Schwartzman's most satisfying work involves marketing development/redevelopment opportunities. "It is very rewarding to see projects come to fruition," she said. Examples of these projects include conversion of a 100,000 s/f former printing facility on West 25th St. in Chelsea into condominiums; and a similar re-do of a 508,000 s/f former Verizon administrative building, "into a residential condominium with a beautiful art deco facade and great views of Brooklyn and Manhattan."

Schwartzman, a holder of MBA, master of Public Affairs, and juris doctor degrees, credits Newmark Knight Frank president James Kuhn and Capital Group principal David Noonan as being instrumental in her success.

"They have both been great mentors," she says. "Jimmy's ability to focus on the most important aspects of a deal is one of the reasons he is such a valuable advisor to his clients. And there have been countless times I have seen David in action and thought how pleased the client must be for hiring him-because there is no one who could have done a better job."