

TRAILBLAZERS

REAL ESTATE | CONSTRUCTION LAW



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What was the genesis of the path that has made you a trailblazer?

Early in my career, it became evident that success as a real estate attorney, and in the real estate world in general, was not based solely on a keen understanding of the business and relevant legal issues, but on relationships, and the trust and bonds that form from them.

This approach was reinforced when I moved in-house with a global investment firm and later shifted to asset management with responsibility for a national real estate portfolio. Establishing trust and personal connections with fellow industry professionals were the linchpins of deal-making and executing strategic plans. Upon returning to private practice, I became determined to deploy the dynamic elements of relationship and trust building in an effort to grow my firm's standing within the real estate industry and enhance our real estate practice along the way.

Thus, the CSG Real Estate Roundtable was born. Roundtable attendees are principals and senior executives from the broad real estate spectrum of owners, managers, lenders and equity investors, as well as key stakeholders in the public sector. The Roundtable is not a legal seminar – rather, it is an invitation-only gathering of industry leaders to discuss the market, deals, and governmental issues impacting real estate. Holding the Roundtable behind closed doors, with no press, promotes a candid dialogue of market intelligence, deals, and firsthand experiences away from the glare and trappings of typical events which often temper the quality and quantity of information exchange.

What sort of change has resulted from the concept?

The CSG Real Estate Roundtable has fostered new relationships, reinforced existing ones, and helped develop a level of camaraderie and trust difficult to duplicate through conventional means. The result is a relationship incubator that has led to connections, ventures and transactions. In the process, it has established our real estate team as a thought leader and facilitator of discussion concerning private and public sector issues impacting the real estate community locally, regionally, and nationally.

What bearing will this have on the future?

The CSG Real Estate Roundtable has already put its stamp on our attendees' view of the role of real estate attorneys and their value, not only as creative practitioners who understand the underlying real estate business but also as navigators and connectors within the myriad private and public sector galaxies comprising the real estate universe. We are often called upon to make introductions to other Roundtable attendees and suggest potential equity and debt providers and joint venture partners. The first-hand sharing of deal experiences and resulting relationships have shined a light on the potential role of the real estate attorney far beyond the narrow focus of pure legal practitioner and document author.

How have you and your team blazed trails over the course of the pandemic year?

Beyond the Roundtable sessions, I am proud to have helped spearhead the formation of CSG's COVID-19 Crisis Management Task Force to provide critical information to clients and the business community on the rapidly evolving legal, regulatory, and commercial implications of the virus. CSG was among the first law firms in the region to assemble and sustain such an initiative, and I am gratified to have been part of its extraordinary leadership team.

As a firm, CSG has blazed a trail during the pandemic year by standing out as not having a single layoff, staff furlough or pay reduction. Within our Real Estate Group specifically, we continue to foster the twin dynamics of relationships and trust among our clients and friends. That has served us well and, while some of our peers cut back, our real estate team increased by 20% with the addition of six new attorneys. Along the way, our expansion plans proceeded full speed ahead as we increased our New York office space by over 50% and are in the process of pursuing further expansion in New Jersey and beyond. We are so very proud of our plan to continue blazing trails for the benefit of our clients and all members of our CSG family.

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