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Barry Saywitz – President, The Saywitz Company



The Saywitz Company is one of the largest privately-held commercial real estate brokerage firms in Southern California. The firm exclusively represents tenants, companies, and users of commercial real estate on an international, national, and local basis. Headquartered in Newport Beach, California, the company has been in business for more than 40 years and continues to be one of the leaders in tenant representation in Southern California.

Mr. Saywitz has more than 30 years of experience in the real estate industry. He began his career in the late 1980's with Grubb & Ellis, and then with Howard Ecker & Co. in Orange County, CA. In 1994, he purchased the outstanding stock of the company and changed the name to The Saywitz Company. Mr. Saywitz oversees all of the management and ownership responsibilities for the company. He is also involved with strategic negotiations of selected top transactions throughout North America. He has written numerous articles on the real estate industry in top publications such as *Commercial Property Executive*, *Globest.com*, *Western Real Estate Business*, *Multifamily Executive*, and *Multi-Housing News*.

How did the concept for The Saywitz Company come about?

In 1992, I became a partner at Howard Ecker and Company in California and in 1994, I purchased the west coast operations and changed the name to The Saywitz Company. The feeling of owning my own company and being able to be my own boss provided me an excellent opportunity to be able to implement my entrepreneurial skills and control my own destiny. While this presented challenges and risks, owning my own business

was absolutely the correct decision for my career and afforded me many opportunities that I would not have had otherwise.

How was the first year in business?

The first year was a period of experiments and growing pains. Finding my own way, surrounding myself with people that I felt comfortable with, and learning how to type and use the computer were all new challenges for me to address. However, once I was convinced that I possessed the tools and passion to succeed, I was confident I would ultimately be successful.

What was your marketing strategy?

The Saywitz Company has a unique niche in commercial real estate in that it only represents tenants and users of commercial real estate. In a normal commercial real estate brokerage firm, each individual broker is asked to basically be its own company by digging up business and clients, working on the transactions, completing the transactions, and then starting all over again. I developed a marketing strategy which allowed for the people within my organization to utilize their best skillsets. Therefore, I hired business development specialists and trained them to be able to dig up new business and then surrounded myself with real estate broker technicians to transact the business, and also with administrative personnel to provide support. Therefore, creating a pyramid whereby everyone's skills are maximized. This differs even today from the normal platform of a typical commercial real estate brokerage firm.

How fast did the company grow during the first few years?

It grew from myself and two other individuals to a staff of 45 today.

How do you define success?

Success is in the eye of the beholder. While certainly monetary rewards, honors, accolades, and praise from your peers and counterparts are all measures of success and accomplishment for me, I define my own success by my own personal goals and accomplishments whether that be on a daily, weekly, monthly, or global basis. Once you achieve business success, then it becomes an issue of balancing time, personal life, personal, and business goals. This is a constant work in progress, thus, we set annual goals for the company, each of the departments, and myself as an individual.

What is the key to success?

Hard work and perseverance, and surrounding yourself with people that can help you execute a solid game plan.

What is the greatest lesson you have learned?

I am not sure that there is a single greatest lesson that I have learned as I have learned many through my years of experience. I think one of the greatest lessons in becoming a successful negotiator and accomplishing the goal of completing transactions and business dealings is to achieve a win-win on both sides of the equation. Information is the single-most important factor in any negotiation and making sure that you are fully-

prepared and informed to ensure a successful transaction is one of the greatest lessons that I have learned.

What are some quotes that you live by?

“I’d agree with you but then we both would be wrong.”

“It’s better than a poke in the eye.”

“Treat people as you would like to be treated.”

What are some of your favorite books?

I enjoy motivational, sales, and success books, as well as anything by Mark Twain.

Tell me about one of the toughest days you’ve had as an entrepreneur.

In 2010, during the height of the recession, I was forced, as a result of underhanded dealings, by one of my lenders to contact five of the largest banks in the country and notify them that I was being forced into a position to default on more than 50 commercial real estate loans in order to attempt to negotiate a global modification of most of my real estate portfolio. I had never missed a payment on anything in my entire life and had no intention of putting myself in a situation such as this. I was forced to do so with the advice of legal counsel. This was one of my most difficult days. The six months ensuing that day consumed me with the goal of restructuring all of these real estate loans, which fortunately, I was able to do successfully with no lender losing any money as a result of it.

When faced with adversity what pushes you to keep moving forward?

Unfortunately, in my line of work, whether it is adversity through difficult negotiations, difficult people, difficult transactions, or overall drama, these things occur on a daily basis. The goal is to address the fires one at a time and to try and solve whatever issues or adversities at hand, one step at a time. Not all fires can be put out in a day, but my drive for success and refusal to fail seems to drive me through those adverse situations.

What advice would you give to young entrepreneurs?

There is no better advice than hard work and perseverance will ultimately pay off at the end. I would tell young entrepreneurs to make sure that they surround themselves with people and advisors who can give them advice before they make mistakes and to make sure that they are making sound business decisions. One of my biggest regrets is that I really had no mentor for many of the situations that I had faced which forces you to deal with making decisions and living with the consequences on your own. So in short, I would say work hard, be smart and prepared, and receive good advice.