

10 PIECES OF ADVICE FROM TOP CRE PROS

By Saadia Sheikh, SIOR

In my 10 years of being an advisor in commercial real estate, I've found that one of the keys to success—particularly for a young professional—has been to follow advice from the best of the best in the industry. The following are 10 pieces of advice I was fortunate enough to learn from the pros that have helped me along the way:

1. Meet With Top Pros in your Market

Reach out to the experienced professionals in your market and request a short meeting, but make it convenient for them. Your goal would be to ask questions and receive advice that will help you take it to the next level.

2. Have an Industry Mentor

Find a true mentor in the industry that is willing to listen, give advice, and take the time to help you navigate your career in the industry. Pick someone who has been in the industry for a long time or has been successful regardless of tenure. Choose someone outside of your firm but that you both have the same profession. SIOR offers a variety of chances for up-and-coming industry professionals to connect with more experienced brokers. New Member Associates are automatically enrolled in the mentorship and guidance program in which they're partnered with a current SIOR who is available to meet with them and guide them through the process of becoming an SIOR designee. New SIOR members are also invited to attend a New Member event at the Spring

and Fall World Conferences where they meet with an Ambassador to provide much of the same level of mentorship and guidance. These opportunities offer the chance to get questions answered on a personal basis and I highly recommend anyone interested in becoming an SIOR member to plan on getting involved.

3. Aim For The Target

Set goals, decided what you are targeting, and aim with a plan. You can get lost in the industry trying to be a salesperson, using industry jargon, and following others. Come up with your own game plan and execute.

4. Join the Right Firm for You

Make sure you take the time to evaluate the different firms in your market, what they offer, and what they are really good at. Many firms are full service, but in reality there are the top firms that are good at specific services. Decide on what vertical you want to focus on and find the firms that specialize in it. Take your time and meet with the best firms, and make a decision from there.

5. Technology is a Necessity

Embrace and keep up the ever-changing industry technology. Be able to utilize current technology that will help you do your job better and faster. Read about trends and how others are using technology in the industry—the SIOR Pulse blog¹ and *SIOR Report* magazines are great places to start. Your firm may

have specific software that you are to use, but it's never a bad idea to keep an eye on new technology in the market that you can pay for and use. Stay ahead and as efficient as possible using technology.

6. Focus

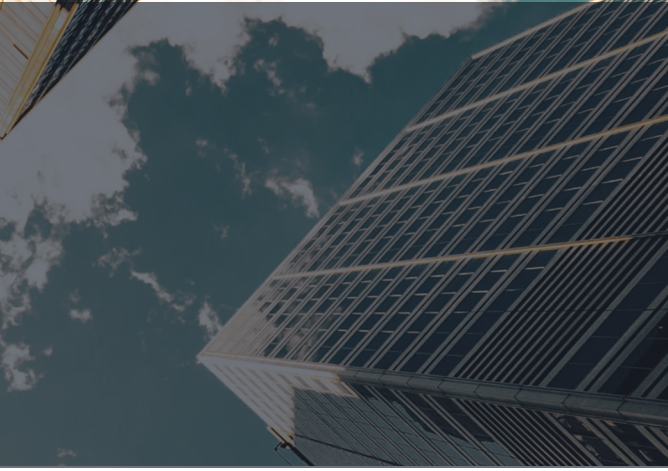
Stay focused on a specific vertical in the industry. It may change over time, but start with focusing on one area to grow your career in. This could be brokerage versus capital markets or office versus industrial. Once you get laser focused, all of your actions will only be towards that one goal, or one vertical. This will help you fast track your success.

7. It's Never Crowded on the Extra Mile

Going above and beyond is just a statement—your actions should reflect your goal for industry success. This could be getting to the office first, staying late, or finding ways to work more efficiently. Going the extra mile could be doing many things, find out what pushes you and allows you to do more, every day. You can get tips from other successful industry leaders, but ultimately only you will know what those actions are.

8. Play the Long Game

The commercial real estate industry is exciting, fun, and very cyclical. Whether it's your first year or 10th year, stay in the game. Know that you are in it for the long haul of growing your expertise. The more hours, days, months, and years you put in, the better you will become—and



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success will follow. You can't read it in a book, figure it out, and gain success; you have to experience and service clients to gain expertise. Keep your head down and become the expert.

9. All News is Important News

Industry news is great, but in order to connect to clients and prospects, you need to know what is going on in the world—nationally, locally, and in different sectors. This could be business, sports, and many more. The more you know about what's going on around you, the more you will be able to connect and relate to whoever you are talking to. Stay up-to-date on the news, read the paper, subscribe to different outlets, and diversify the information you are receiving.

10. Continuing Education

Knowledge is power. Constantly get better by reading and learning at all times. This could be industry related, business related, in-person or online university programs, certificate programs, or advanced skills courses that will add to your skillset. There are many industry organizations offering education opportunities like this. Check out SIOR's Education section for some great resources, like webinars, Broker Bootcamps, and more. ♥

1. blog.sior.com

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