

22 Pieces of Advice Every Property Professional Should Know



There's a saying that behind every great building is a great property professional—which is why we turned to property professionals like you to share their advice for commercial real estate's emerging professionals. We have gathered some of our favorite responses on these pages. A few common themes popped up: make connections, never stop learning and, of course, get involved in BOMA. That's advice everyone in the industry, from newcomers to seasoned veterans, can take to heart. Responses have been lightly edited for clarity and length.

“What’s one piece of advice you would give to someone just starting out in the commercial real estate industry?”

Build strong relationships with peers and vendors. These people will be great resources for you—and great resources for future opportunities. Don't burn bridges—you never know where or when you might meet again.

—Terri Walther, Senior Property Manager, Parmenter, Lake Mary, Florida

Don't be afraid to ask questions and follow-up questions.

Not just job-related, but also career-related, from more seasoned peers.

—Sarabeth Stahl, RPA, Senior Property Manager, Cushman & Wakefield, Kansas City, Missouri

Three pieces of advice: Find a mentor, either within your organization or at your BOMA local association. Attend BOMA's *Foundations of Real Estate Management* course. Learn about mechanical systems from your building engineer.

—Robin Juron, Senior Property Manager, Bergman Real Estate Group, Iselin, New Jersey

Master the fundamentals, especially accounting. Understand the numbers and spend a lot of time with tenants, contractors and especially engineers. Master the three legs of the stool: financial, tenant relations and operations.

—Bob Quast, Vice President, Lincoln Property Company, Chicago

The day—and life—of a property management professional rarely goes according to plan. **Maintain your resource circle**, stay flexible and never stop learning.

—Luci Smith, RPA, FMA, General Manager, CBRE, Orlando, Florida

Join BOMA—it's the best way to network, get access to professional development opportunities and get oriented to the business.

—Paul Cohen, Administrator, Omaha-Douglas Public Building Commission, Omaha, Nebraska

Listen and learn. Don't apologize for your voice—know that you deserve a seat at the table.

—Angela Gomez Mettler, Vice President, The REMM Group, Tustin, California

As a young property manager, I was overwhelmed by the many demands of the profession, until a crisis struck and I had to choose the number one issue to address, and suddenly, it was clear: **Take care of the people.** Bricks and mortar can be replaced, but people cannot.

—Caroline Kruger, CPM, RPA, LEED Green Associate, Regional Property Manager, Boston Properties, Washington, D.C.



Network! Your personal and professional time should remain flexible to accommodate building your brand. Making and maintaining these connections will take a lot of time and effort, but it will be fruitful as you advance in your career.

—Cynthia Brown, Real Estate Manager, CBRE, Indianapolis

Spend some time reading the form lease for your property, with a focus on both economic and maintenance or service obligations.

—Leo Divinsky, Asset Manager, Worthe Real Estate Group, Burbank, California

Listen before you react! Always get all the facts and details, especially when it comes to building emergencies.

—Suzanne Galarneau, CPM, Property Manager, John Hancock, Orlando, Florida

As you begin to get involved in property operations, **leave your desk to go and look firsthand at the project or repair,** making sure you understand what needs to be done and why.

—Jeannette Vahle, CPM, RPA, Managing Director, Cushman & Wakefield, Kansas City, Missouri

Wear a smile—good day, bad day, any day, give the perception that things are great. Your tenants, peers and superiors will be enthralled by your positive energy.

—Jonathan “JJ” Jones, Senior Property Manager, Holt Lunsford Commercial, Dallas

Look at the big picture and understand how your building fits into the real estate industry within your market or region. Read local business papers and keep an eye on the activity and what your tenants are up to.

—Jennifer L. Aiple, Executive Director, BOMA/Bufalo, Buffalo, New York

Reach out to your fellow BOMA members and vendors to help you through new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

—Keri Taylor, Strategic Market Leader-CRE, Trane, Indianapolis

Find a great mentor and meet often to exchange ideas.

—Anne Marie Guèvremont, RPA, Director of Property Management, GWL Realty Advisors, Montreal

Spend time with building engineers and brokers, and learn what they do. Get your RPA. Continuously ask for more responsibilities.

—Warren Mead, RPA, Director of Asset Services, Cushman & Wakefield, Oakland, California

Travel. If you haven't, make it part of your professional development to see what else people in commercial real estate are doing. And, travel to BOMA conferences. The best way to contribute

new ideas is to know what else is out there.

—Sheldon Oppermann, Executive Vice President, Compass Properties, Milwaukee

I would strongly encourage a new professional to take advantage of **BOMA education and networking.** This will allow you to develop a powerful resource to move forward.

—Judy Simon, CPM, Associate Vice President, Cushman & Wakefield, Cleveland

Be true to your passions, find a good mentor and always conduct yourself with integrity.

—David Mastro, Director, Cushman & Wakefield, Sacramento, California

Join a BOMA committee and make a difference by working hard and driving results.

—Ray Mackey, BOMA Fellow, CCIM, CPM, RPA, COO, Peloton Commercial Real Estate, Dallas

Get involved and find your passion. The more you are invested, the bigger the reward.

—Stacy Nishioka, RPA, Senior Director of Portfolio Operations, Irvine Company, Irvine, California