GUIDE TO STARTING A CAREER IN COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You have decided to enter into one of the most important and interesting career fields available today – Commercial Real Estate. But before you take this exciting and life-changing step, we would like to share some insights that will guide you into a rewarding, successful career in commercial real estate.

This Guide, will provide you with valuable insights and perspectives to help make the right choices for your career. Our goal is to ensure you have the proper tools to transition from the academic world to "the real world."

This guide will not guarantee you an interview or secure the perfect job or even help you pass your final exams. It will, however, help you begin to think about real estate career opportunities in a broader perspective. It will also challenge you to ask some important, but tough questions about yourself, your goals, your ambitions and your happiness. After all, Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness, it's the American Way.

We hope this booklet will assist you in finding your path to a successful, happy and prosperous career. But just as we reach out to help you, we ask you to reach out along the way to help others that can benefit from your time, talents, love and generosity. Thanks, and enjoy!

"Invest in real estate. God isn't making any more of it."
Will Rogers, Tony Soprano

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

One of the exciting things about commercial real estate is that it can be approached from so many different areas. You can use your skills to project and analyze cash flows for new developments; broker large transactions with institutional clients; or exercise your entrepreneurial spirit as a property owner developing new and exciting ventures.

Before graduation one of the first decisions you need to make is what area of commercial real estate you are interested in pursuing. We believe this is the perfect time for some self-evaluation and a personality analysis will assist in determining what area would be best suited to your profile. Tests are available via the Internet (www.myersbriggs.com, www.keirsey.com, www.2h.com).

Also, consider the following when making your decision:

- What do you thrive on? *Interaction with people, Analysis, Research, Closing deals, Managing people*.
- Ask your professors to rate your strengths and opportunities. *They might surprise you with their insight!*
- Apply for an Internship – *it's one of the best way to test-drive, before you buy.*
- Determine the form (base salary vs. bonus/commission) of compensation you desire and can afford. Do you require a salary or can you risk commission structure? The following table outlines the major Areas of Specialization and average compensation structures.

Area of Specialization	Compensation Type	Entry Level Position	Average 1st Year Compensation	Average 5th Year Compensation
Leasing (Brokerage)	Commission	Yes		
Appraisal	Salary	Yes		
Development	Salary	No		
Corporate	Salary	No		
Institutional	Salary	No		
Government	Salary	No		
Lending / Banking	Salary	Yes		
Market Research	Salary	Yes		
Property Management	Salary	Yes		
Accounting	Salary	Yes		
Analysts	Salary	Yes		
Mortgage Brokers	Commission	Yes		
Project Management	Salary	Yes		
Asset Management	Salary	No		

Once you determine your personality traits and compensation requirements, you can bridge those traits to the appropriate skill set needed for each Area of Specialization.

Brokerage and Leasing

Real estate agents that represent buyers, sellers, owners or tenants must be licensed by the states in which they work. Most states require a test before issuing a sales license, or for more advanced brokers, a license is based on experience and educational requirements.

Visit http://www.state.fl.us/dbpr/re/index.shtml or call 888.204.6289 for more information on testing in the State of Florida. Also, great study tools are available through www.bertrodgers.com.

Residential agents represent buyers or sellers in exchange for a fee, payable when a sale is completed. This productivity-based segment requires long and uncertain hours, often resulting in a high agent dropout rate.

Commercial brokerage requires people skills and a higher level of technical business knowledge. Most successful commercial agents need at least an undergraduate education and many have graduate degrees in business, enabling them to work with corporations, tenants, institutional buyers and sellers, domestic and foreign business entities and a host of sophisticated investment and business clientele. Most commercial agents specialize in specific property types such as industrial, office, retail, hotels, or apartments. Continued education is available through a variety of trade associations. Successful commercial agents can earn executive-level compensation. They must closely watch markets to anticipate economic trends affecting the real estate industry.

For more information on residential brokerage, see the National Association of Realtors, NAR.
For commercial brokerage, see CCIM.
For industrial property, see NAIOP.
For office and industrial, see SIOR.
For retail, see ICSC. And for Commercial Real Estate Women, see CREW.

Construction and Architecture

Your education and experience in commercial real estate can open opportunities in some areas of the industry you may not have considered. These being in the architecture and construction segments of the real estate development process.

To be an architect or contactor it requires special education, experience and licenses but there are areas within these disciplines where your specific education and experience can qualify you for. Many major architectural and contracting firms have internal business development/marketing departments. These positions generally do not require extensive knowledge of the industries at an entry level, although to prosper and advance within this profession, basic knowledge would need to be learned. Business development in these professions entails extensive involvement and participation in multiple industry related organizations, along with strong relationship building within the development and real estate industry. In many instances you will become the “face and voice” of your company and will be responsible for public relations, customer relations, advertising, and other administrative functions such as developing, preparing, and implementing the company’s business and marketing plans.

Organizations that can be helpful are: ICSC; ULI; NAIOP, AGC (Associate General Contractors) and AIA (American Institute of Architects). ICSC is developing education courses and testing for a new professional designation, CDP (Certified Development, Design and Construction Professional) which will become a standard of excellence within the retail design and construction segment of the industry and designation which you may want to pursue.

Appraisal and Consulting

Appraisers are paid to estimate the value of property after a systematic analysis of the prices of similar properties, or based on an analysis of discounted future returns. This valuation estimate requires market analysis and the subject property being appraised. Some appraisers work for a variety of clients on a fee basis; others are internal staff appraisers, producing value opinions for their employer. Most appraisers specialize in residential property, or specific types of commercial property. Federal laws require that any appraisal required when the government is involved directly or indirectly must be done by a state certified appraiser. Certification is at two levels, residential and general, and is based on a combination of tests and experience. Trade association designations, which require more experience and education than the state certification process, also are required by many clients, the highest of which is the MAI for Member of the Appraisal Institute.

The outlook for appraisers involved in specialized commercial appraisal and consulting, such as site analysis, buy versus lease decisions, property tax appeals, portfolio re-valuation, and investment analysis, is quite promising. Many commercial and consulting oriented appraisers work within larger consulting firms including accounting and market research firms. Technology is having a major impact on the commercial and residential sectors of the real estate industry.

For more information about appraisal and consulting, see the Appraisal Institute (www.appraisalinstitute.org), and Real Estate Counselors.

Corporate Real Estate

All major corporations must deal with real estate needs. Corporate real estate management involves maximizing the firm's value of resources devoted to space needs. Once simply viewed as a cost center, corporate real estate managers are now attempting to improve the efficiency of real estate usage by considering "just-in-time" office sharing and enhancing the productivity of the work environment. In addition, corporate real estate heads often deal with site analysis; buy versus lease decisions, acquisition and disposition, portfolio refinancing and sale-leaseback arrangements, property tax appeals and a host of facility management decisions.

For more information about corporate real estate, see the National Association of Corporate Real Estate Executive, NACORE.

Institutional Real Estate Investment

Most of today's large-scale real estate transactions ($10 million dollars and up) involve institutional investors. Among these are the Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), the larger life insurance companies and pension funds. These institutions may utilize commercial brokers in the local markets, but they rely on internal staff to review and analyze proposed investments. Often these institutions look for a real estate background, with an MBA degree, when staffing such positions. Institutional investors pay attention to industry niche market trends, tax law trends, regulatory trends, geographically based economic trends, demographic trends and global economic trends, in addition to micro-level real estate analysis.

The slogan "think globally act locally" can be applied to today's institutional investment firms because many of them also "act globally." Whether working with domestic or international trusts, strong analytical skills, the ability to manage portfolios and excellent communication skills are required.

For more information, see the National Institution of Real Estate Investment Trusts, NAREIT, and the National Association of Real Estate Investment Fiduciaries, NCREIF. Also see RECRA, the Real Estate Capital Resources Association.

Property Management

Property management involves maximizing net revenues or productivity of property based on managing rental flows, tenant retention, managing and contracting property operation. Property operation includes cleaning, maintenance and repairs, paying utilities, property insurance, property taxes and so on), reporting to owners and overseeing resident or on-site managers. Property managers are usually involved in leasing and facility management decisions. Those that manage several properties and are involved in acquisition, disposition, financing and portfolio management decisions are known as "asset managers." Most property managers start as on-site managers, working closely with tenants.

Consolidation is the general trend in the industry. Many property management firms are national or international in scope and are able to take over an entire institutional portfolio of various properties from different cities. Property managers' fees are often based on property rental flows, as well as the complexity of the property management work. For example, shopping center property managers may be involved in tenant merchant associations, joint promotions and advertising. It involves more time than a single tenant industrial property, where the primary management function is accounting-based control, reporting and monitoring.

For more information about property management, see Building Owners Managers Association, BOMA, and the Institute of Real Estate Management, IREM.

Mortgage and Construction Lending

Mortgage lenders specialize by size of loan and property types, like developers or commercial brokers. Primary lenders for residential single family include mortgage companies that resale loans in the secondary mortgage market, as well as commercial banks, savings institutions and credit unions. Banks and savings institutions usually pay employees on a salary basis, sometimes with a bonus. Mortgage companies rely more on productivity-based compensation. Loan officers must know about credit analysis, as well as appraisal, title, environmental concerns and a host of other government regulations. Multifamily mortgage lenders act much like commercial mortgage lenders with more emphasis on property analysis including market trends, tenant review, income and expense review as well as the value of the subject property being used as collateral. Commercial banks and savings institutions provide most of the smaller multifamily loans while life insurance companies, pension funds, Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT) and Securitized Mortgage Loans and pension funds provide larger scaled financing.

Non-residential mortgage loans involve commercial banks as well as life insurance companies and pension funds as typical suppliers of capital. Commercial mortgage lenders require more business education and analytical skills than do the residential lenders, often requiring graduate education. Mortgage brokers are often used to represent smaller life insurance companies and pension funds that cannot efficiently process their own loans. Mortgage brokers work on a commission basis paid after successfully placing mortgage loans that meet the needs of the borrower and lender.

Construction lending is the most complicated end of the financing spectrum involving all of the concerns of the permanent mortgage lender (credit, income, expenses, property value and environmental) as well as absorption risk, construction cost risks and delays, and other concerns. Thus, construction lenders are often hired from among the ranks of experienced mortgage lenders. Most construction lending is provided by commercial banks.

For more information about mortgage banking, see the Mortgage Bankers Association, MBA.

Development

Developers are among the most entrepreneurial of the real estate career paths. They acquire land and prepare it for development, or acquire the site, as well as oversee the construction process. Developers specialize in residential or commercial development, and within these they specialize by property size and type.

For more information about residential development, see the National Association of Home Builders, NAHB, as well as the Multi-Housing Council.

For more information about commercial development opportunities and trends see the Urban Land Institute, ULI, the National Association of Industrial and Office Parks, NAIOP, the International Development Research Council, IDRC, and the International Council of Shopping Centers, ICSC.

Government

Additional Resources:

- *Opportunities in Real Estate,* by Mariwyn Evans
- *Real Estate Careers: 25 Growing Opportunities*, By Carolyn Janik and Ruth Rejnis.
- *Your First Year in Real Estate: Making the Transition from Total Novice to Successful Professional,* by Dirk Zeller

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Now that you've decided what your Area of Specialization will be, it's time to narrow down your choices on where you would like to live and why.

Use the following guidelines to assist you in making your location decision:

- Bigger Markets generally equal more opportunity and more compensation (top 20 DMAs listed below); so consider that the cost of living is usually higher. Utilize website tools such as www.homefair.com; www.cityrating.com to compare cost of living variations.

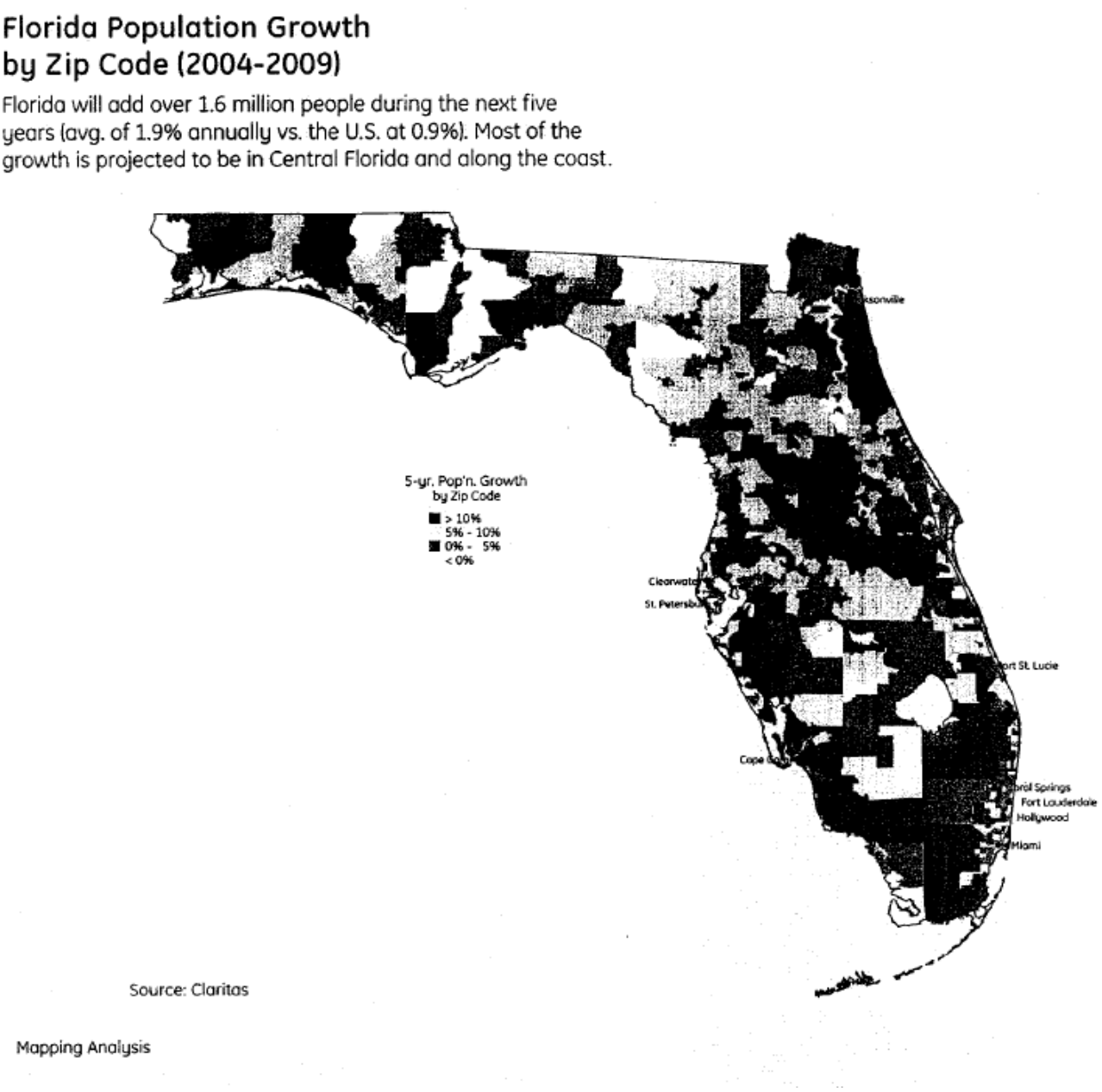
  Market size is determined by a DMA (Designated Market Area) analysis, projected population growth and maturity/density of market: (see chart on page 13).

Top 20 Designated Market Areas

(Source: www.nielsenmedia.com)

RANK	Designated Market Area (DMA)	TV Homes	% of US
1	New York	7,355,710	6.712
2	Los Angeles	5,431,140	4.956
3	Chicago	3,417,330	3.118
4	Philadelphia	2,919,410	2.664
5	Boston (Manchester)	2,391,840	2.183
6	San Francisco-Oak-San Jose	2,359,870	2.153
7	Dallas-Ft. Worth	2,292,760	2.092
8	Washington, DC (Hagrstwn)	2,241,610	2.045
9	Atlanta	2,059,450	1.879
10	Detroit	1,943,930	1.774
11	Houston	1,902,810	1.736
12	Seattle-Tacoma	1,690,640	1.543
13	Tampa-St. Pete (Sarasota)	1,671,040	1.525
14	Minneapolis-St. Paul	1,665,540	1.520
15	Phoenix (Prescott), AZ	1,596,950	1.457
16	Cleveland-Akron (Canton)	1,556,670	1.420
17	Miami-Ft. Lauderdale	1,496,810	1.366
18	Denver	1,401,760	1.279
19	Sacramnto-Stktn-Modesto	1,315,030	1.200
20	Orlando-Daytona Bch-Melbrn	1,303,150	1.189

Percent Change in Population – 2004-2009 *(Source: www.census.gov)*



- Local market knowledge is very important, particularly in brokerage, development and appraisal. If these areas are of interest, you may choose to stay close to home for your entry-level position.
- Corporate and Institutional are less dependent on local market knowledge.
- Consider your immediate family and/or future family plans? Long distance relationships can be stressful and expensive.
- Consider you appetite for travel? Corporate and Institutional generally require significant travel. Fun in the beginning, but tough in the end. Relocation is almost always necessary to be considered for promotion.

<u>Additional Resources:</u>

- *Places Rated Almanac*, by David Savageau

NETWORKING

Did you know that the majority of job opportunities don't make it into your local newspaper or job search website? How do people know about these secret openings? That's right—networking!

The list below offers tips to provide you with some important and proven networking skills, so when that perfect job opportunity comes along, you'll be miles ahead of the pack!

1. Make a list of everyone you know in real estate. This is the beginning of your career database. Set up informational meetings with these people, talk to them, and get their insight. You can also benefit from networking with people who are not in your area of specialization. If you are seeking a job in development, relationships with contractors and architects can be good leads.

2. Stay in close touch with your professors. Unlike other majors, real estate professors can have a direct impact on where you get a job. Many graduates stay in touch with professors for recruitment purposes – as the employer!

3. Be a good listener - Ask good questions, listen to the answers, and follow up with another good question. Most people are terrible at this. Always have a pen and paper when you meet with someone in an office and take notes. If you are at a social function, always ask for a business card. Make notes to yourself after you are done talking and send a follow up e-mail.

4. Purchase business cards with your complete contact information, including email (be sure to change your college e-mail address to a serious one – no more BeerDude or UFstud). Hand them out during meetings, conferences, etc.

5. Join a Professional Organization / Attend Conferences:
   - UF Real Estate Conference – continue to attend the conference (especially after graduation) with a plan and some goals in mind. For example, your goal may be to meet or get the names of ten potential employers. Contact your list to set up a 10 minute meeting during the conference and PREPARE for the meeting. Research each bio looking for common areas of interest. After the conference, send a thank you note highlighting at least one key topic from your meeting. But, don't focus on these select individuals exclusively. Make it a point to meet at least 10 others in the room and secure their business cards for future communication.
   - Chamber of Commerce: Join your local Chamber of Commerce and sign-up for it's Leadership Program. Most Chambers offer a "Leadership" program, which introduces participants to their local community and business leaders. Visit the National Chamber of Commerce site (www.uschamber.com) to locate your local office.
   - ICSC – International Council of Shopping Centers (www.icsc.org). The International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) is a global trade association of the shopping center industry with 44,000 members in the U.S., Canada and more than 70 other countries.
   - NAIOP – National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (www.naiop.org). NAIOP is a national association with more than 11,000+ members that represent the interests of developers and owners of industrial, office and related commercial real estate throughout North America.
   - SIOR – Society of Industrial and Office Real Estate Specialists (www.sior.com). The Society of Industrial and Office REALTORS® is a leading professional commercial and industrial real estate association. The 'SIOR Network' includes more than 2,800 members in 480 cities in 20 countries on six continents. The Society has certified almost 2,300 of its members with the prestigious SIOR designation, a professional symbol of the highest level of knowledge, production, and ethics in the real estate industry.
   - CCIM – Certified Commercial Investment Member (www.ccim.com). A (CCIM) is a recognized expert in the disciplines of commercial and investment real estate. Only 6 percent of the estimated 125,000 commercial real
   - State practitioners nationwide hold the CCIM designation. The CCIM membership network mirrors the increasingly changing nature of the industry and includes brokers, leasing professionals, investment counselors, asset

managers, appraisers, corporate real estate executives, property managers, developers, institutional investors, commercial lenders, attorneys, bankers and other allied professionals.

- IREM – Institute of Real Estate Management (www.irem.org). The Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM®) is a source for education, resources and information for real estate management professionals. With 82 U.S. chapters, seven international chapters, and several other partnerships around the globe, IREM is an international organization that serves as an advocate on issues affecting the real estate management industry.
- BOMA – Building Owners & Managers Association (www.boma.org). BOMA's professional advocacy staff defends real estate interests before a wide array of policy setting bodies, including the United States Congress, federal agencies, code development bodies, and standards organizations. BOMA defends issues ranging from property rights to indoor air quality, and from tax reform to electric utility deregulation.
- ULI – Urban Land Institute is a non profit research and education organization that is supported by its members. ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among dedicated local, national, and international industry leaders and policy makers.

The DO's and DONT's of Networking:

DO:

- *Have a plan before you arrive*
- *Smile and dress appropriately*
- *Look for a person standing/sitting alone*
- *Give more than just your name*
- *Use their name frequently in the conversation*
- *Allow others to join the conversation*
- *Follow Up*

DON'T:

- *Interrupt*
- *Avoid Eye Contact*
- *Break away into a small group*
- *Forget their name*
- *Give your business card immediately*
- *Get stuck with a self-centered ego-maniac*
- *Forget those who you want to remember*

The Art of Small Talk:

DO Discuss:

- Topics you know about and that you find interesting
- Relate these interests to those you're speaking with

"Tell Me About . . ."

"Did you find that interesting?"

"How did you get involved in.."

"I" statement, then question.

Don't Discuss:

- Politics
- Sex
- Religion
- Controversial News

Source: Fred Pryor Seminars, "The Art of Working With People" 2004.

Additional Resources:

- *Networking with the Affluent*, Dr. Thomas Stanley ©1993
- *How to Win Friends & Influence People,* Dale Carnegie ©1936
- *Masters of Networking*, Ivan R. Misner ©2000

THE JOB SEARCH

Networking will certainly help your chances of landing your dream job, but you may also have to pound the pavement to find your first position in Commercial Real Estate. The list below offers some tools to help you maximize your search:

1. Utilize Internet job search sites – www.monster.com, www.flipdog.com, www.careerbuilder.com, www.hotjobs.com, www.jobweb.com - and keep searching - you never know what you'll find.

2. Search Company websites – if you're interested in working for a specific company, search their website for job postings and human resource contacts.

3. Read trade journals - Every area of real estate has a trade journal. Get a copy and read it cover to cover. It should give you some ideas on what companies to approach. Some even have job listings in them. The following is a short list of some recommended publications:

    a. Shopping Centers Today. www.icsc.org.
    b. Florida Real Estate Journal. www.FREJ.net. 800-274-2812. (24 issues, $110)
    c. CPN – Commercial Property News. www.submag.com/sub/cx
    d. The Dealmakers (Reporting the Nation's Weekly News on Retailing and Retail Real Estate) 609-587-6200 (52 issues, $274)
    e. Florida Investor. www.floridainvestor.com. 407-805-8820. (12 issues, $19.95)
    f. Chain Store Age. www.chainstoreage.com. 813-627-6707 (12 issues, $53)
    g. Retail Traffic (Where real estate, retail and development meet). www.retailtrafficmag.com. 212-462-3598
    h. Retail Construction Magazine. www.retailconstructionmag.com.
    i. Professional Retail Store Maintenance. 404-832-8262 (1 year subscription, $59)
    j. National Real Estate Investor. www.nreionline.com.
    k. QSR Magazine (Quick Service Restaurant). www.qsrmagazine.com. 800-662-4834 (12 issues, $30)
    l. American Demographics. www.demographics.com. 1-800-529-7502 (10 issues, $50.00)
    m. Southeast Real Estate Business www.southeastrealestatebusiness.com (12 issues, $69)
    n. Institutional Real Estate Newsline
    o. Building Operating Management
    p. Restaurant Business
    q. Florida Restaurateur

4. Utilize the Professional Trade Organizations listed in the Networking section. They all have job search/placement capabilities.

Additional Resources:

- *The 5 Patterns of Extraordinary Careers: The Guide for Achieving Success and Satisfaction,* by James M. Citrin, Richard Smith

DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR FUTURE

The International Council of Shopping Centers student membership is a great membership to join. It gives you the opportunity to help network and launch a career in real estate.

Members include shopping center owners, developers, managers, marketing specialists, investors, next generation members, lenders, retailers and other professionals as well as academics and public officials. The principle aim of ICSC is to advance the development of the shopping center industry and to establish the individual shopping center as a major institution in the community.

- It offers benefits while you are in school and throughout your entire career
- It helps members stay up-to-date on industry issues and trends
- It can strengthen your qualifications with industry-recognized designations
- It can give you numerous opportunities to assume leadership roles in ICSC and in the industry

To learn more about membership, please contact Sarah Ritchie at Sritchie@icsc.org or call 1-646-728-3490
Or for more details on all ICSC's programs and services visit www.icsc.org

International Council of Shopping Centers Student Membership application is:
http://www.icsc.org/srch/about/StudentMembership.pdf

DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR FUTURE

Urban Land Institute

BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO ULI MEMBERS

- Reduced registration fees for all ULI meetings, conferences, workshops, and District Council events, including the annual Fall Meeting, which is attended by more than 6,000 leaders in the land use profession. To see a list of upcoming meetings, visit conferences.uli.org.
- A complimentary subscription to ULI's membership magazine, *Urban Land*. Every issue is filled with in-depth market profiles, project case studies, financial options, and strategies. Special issues focus on industry trends in housing, entertainment, office and industrial, transportation, and planning. To see the latest issue online, go to urbanland.uli.org.
- Discounts of 20 to 60 percent on every ULI book purchase including Working Papers, Info Packets, Advisory Services Panel Reports, and ULI Videos. View the entire catalog online at bookstore.uli.org.
- Access to ULI's database of more than 23,000 members at www.uli.org. The database is searchable by city, state, occupation, District Council, or membership type.
- Local contact and interaction through discussions with your peers at the many local events conducted by ULI's 41 North American District Councils and ten European District Councils. ULI's District Council programs allow members to work with other stakeholders to develop and implement innovative solutions in critical areas such as smart growth, workforce housing, and urban revitalization. To see a list of programs in your community, visit districtcouncils.org.
- Personal access to ULI's information resources. The ULI Library and Information Center contains more than 10,000 books and periodicals, and offers electronic access to thousands more. Also, you can request a custom search; the first 15 minutes are free, with any additional time billed at a modest rate. The Institute compiles recent articles on more than 70 planning and real estate development topics and dozens of metropolitan areas. Access information on a variety of subjects anytime, anywhere at www.uli.org.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FOR FULL MEMBERS ONLY

The opportunity to serve on one of the Institute's more than 40 Product Councils or eight committees providing expertise on a variety of topics, including affordable housing, community development, commercial and retail development, public/private partnerships, multifamily housing, recreation development, and many others. For a complete list of Product Councils, visit www.uli.org.

The chance to attend ULI's members-only Spring Council Forum with more than 2,000 land use professionals.

ULI's Executive Directory, including contact information for all ULI Full Members worldwide, which is produced and sent out each fall.

ULI

THE INTERVIEW

Prepare. Research the company, the specific people you will be interviewing with and the top management of the company.

- Visit the company's website where you can review Annual Reports and recent press releases – they will give you both the financial pulse of the company and recent success stories. Also look for bios of the people you will be meeting with – you never know; they could be a UF grad as well!

- Secure some independent perspectives on your prospective employer. Hoover's Online (www.hoovers.com) for one, provides capsule descriptions, financial data and a list of competitors for thousands of large corporations.

- Search news sources to see what is being written about the potential employer and the industry. Visit websites for national publications to review news on major corporations; use hometown newspapers to learn about small businesses and how major corporations interact with their local communities. www.bizjournals.com is a great site that provides individual market information by industry.

- Anticipate your responses to the frequently asked interview questions:

    a. Tell me about yourself? *Be honest, be energetic, be thorough, and be brief.*
    b. What are your strengths and weaknesses? *They want to here how your strengths match the needs of their company. Turn your weaknesses into strengths by telling the interviewer how you are working to improve these weaknesses.*
    c. Where do you see yourself in five years? *Employers are looking for ambition; but you don't want to come off as a threat.*
    d. Why should we hire you? *State how you can help company growth, solve a problem or add to its strengths.*
    e. Why do you want to work here? *Convey your interests to key components of the job; tell them you like the company's size, creative business practices, position in the market, etc. BE ENTHUSIATIC!*

Dress professionally (and conservatively). The way you dress conveys an impression of who you are. A company may have a "business casual" philosophy, but not during your interview – dress the part of a serious, intelligent business professional. Go easy on the trendy; avoid displaying anything that may take attention away from your skills and qualifications. In the words of Sigourney Weaver from the 1988 movie Working Girl, "Dress shabbily and they'll remember the dress. Dress impeccably and they will remember the (woman) person."

Show up on time or a few minutes early. Do not show up more than 5 minutes early. Engage the receptionist in conversation– they are often asked their point of view on potential candidates. If you are not familiar with the exact location of your interview, conduct a dry run of your travel path and time.

Have approximate 5-10 prepared questions. Bring a leather portfolio containing a writing tablet (and extra copies of your resume) with your questions and ample space to record the answers. You may not have enough time for all your questions, so plan to ask the most important first. Be clear and concise with your questions. Some sample questions:

- What projects will I be involved with in the first few months?
- How does your company stand apart from its competition?
- How do you see the future of this industry?

Common mistake:

Employers expect that most college applicants do not have relevant job experience.
I interview college seniors a lot, and while it is nice they were the assistant manager to Taco World, it is not expected to prove to an employer that college jobs were important to the job they are applying for. Many students try to tell me what they learned by working at the mall; I am more interested in work ethic, enthusiasm, problem solving and analytical skills. Suggesting that students give an employer an example of a problem they encountered, and how they creatively solved it is a lot more impressive……..

- Robert Breslau
President of Retail
Stiles Retail Group

Listen well and take notes. Record not only the answers to your prepared questions, but take notes as the interviewer discusses the company and the position.

Be friendly, confident and polite. Show respect to everyone you meet, whether it's the boss, the receptionist or a prospective coworker.

Don't try to close the deal at that moment – remember you are interviewing them just like they are interviewing you. Never, ever ask about salary, vacation or other benefits during the interview. Doing so communicates that you are only interested in what you are going to get out of the job financially. Focus on the long-term growth potential of the position. The time to talk about money and other benefits is after the employer has offered you the job.

Follow-up with a thank you letter. Be sure to highlight key points that came up during your interview and how your skills would benefit the company. The follow-up letter (sent via e-mail and hand written note) should continue to sell your skills, not just offer a kind thank you.

Finally, no matter what job you take, send a note to all the people you met during the recruitment process and tell them where you ended up. They may become your clients!

Additional Resources:

- *Knock 'Em Dead 2004: Great Answers to over 200 Tough Interview Questions,* by Martin Yate
- *The Craft of Interviewing*, by John Brady

YOU FOUND A JOB. NOW WHAT?

Be a team player. Support you co-workers. All of them.

Be respectful. Respect everyone, especially the receptionist and custodial staff; treat them like you are speaking to the CEO - always.

Be coach-able. Have the ability to learn and learn fast.

Build your network and never stop. Start with co-workers, then clients, then and the industry - including the competition.

Continue to educate yourself. Get an MBA, CCIM, SIOR, MAI, or whatever matches your career development. Find mentors and match what they have.

Read – Try to read at least 1 book a year. Here are some good picks:

1. *Trammell Crow Master Builder*, by Robert Sobel
2. *Art of the Deal*, by Donald Trump
3. *You Can Negotiate Anything*, by Herb Cohen
4. *Made in America*, by Sam Walton
5. Book of Proverbs
6. *A Purpose Driven Life, by Rick Warren*
7. *Winning Through Intimidation*, by Robert Ringer
8. *Better Places, Better Lives,* by James Rouse

Maintain balance in your life. Exercise, travel, read, volunteer, build a family and pray.

Additional Resources:

- *The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at All Levels,* by Michael Watkins
- *Career Warfare: 10 Rules for Building a Successful Personal Brand and Fighting to Keep It,* by David D'Alessandro

What employers are looking for?

Maturity:

Since I have become a parent, I have done research on my job as a parent. The goal of parenting is maturity. What does that mean? Reb Bradley teaches that maturity is characterized by three elements: self-control, wisdom, and responsibility. Therefore, my job as a parent is to teach my girls those three things:

1) Self-control - not being ruled by passions, emotions, desires, wishes, or curiosity; freedom from having to do what one feels like doing; the ability to choose to do what is right; fosters selflessness necessary for love of others.

2) Wisdom - understanding; insight; ability to learn from experience; ability to make sound decisions; handling stressful problems with a level head; possible only when not ruled by passions (self-control)

3) Responsibility - accepting personal accountability for one's own actions, as well as faithful and conscientious work habits; such integrity and reliability are possible when not ruled by passions (self-controlled)

CAREER-ING

Careering…When you, or a friend, are considering a career change

In any given year I am involved with in-depth processing of 10-40 major career-change decisions. These questions have proven helpful over a number of years. By changing the *I* to you, these questions can also be effective questions to ask the candidates for any position you are trying to fill.

1. What do I see to be the major advantages of this career change? (Make an exhaustive list).
2. Why am I thinking of this change? What is the real motive hidden deep in my heart where no one sees?
3. What is the real price of loss that comes with this change? (Make a list). What frustrations do I have with my present work situation? (Make a list). What pressures may be eliminated if I talk with my current team leader? Is the tension at my present situation a temporary or a long-term problem?
4. Is the timing right for a move?
5. Where do I see myself in 5-10 years? What is my overall career path? Does this change represent a step in the "right" direction for my long-range plans? What would I most like my epitaph to read? How would this change affect the totality of my life work?
6. What do my 3-5 closest advisors think about the possible change?
7. How will the change affect the seven basic areas of my life:
   - My family/marriage relationship?
   - My financial situation?
   - My personal development?
   - My physical development?
   - My professional life?
   - My social life?
   - My spiritual development?
8. In what areas would I most like to grow personally and develop my full potential? Which opportunity offers me the most potential for growth in these areas?
9. What questions are lingering in my mind that should be answered before I make a final decision? What facts should I get before I make the final decision?
10. If….I could do anything I wanted, and I had all the time, money, staff, education I needed, and I knew for certain that I couldn't fail, what would I do?

A FEW "RULES OF THUMB" TO CONSIDER WHEN MAKING A CAREER CHANGE.

- Be careful of the environment you choose, for it will shape you
- Who you work with, in many cases, is as important as the company, the pay, or the work.
- Run to an opportunity, not away from a problem situation.
- Life is too short to work at something you don't enjoy, if you have a choice.
- Choose work that lets you "grow" personally and become your best self…even though it may be a bit less secure and pay a bit less.
- Look for/choose work that lets you maximize your strengths 85% of the time, and work on your growth areas of life 15% of the time.
- Every assignment you are given is preparing you. Learn each lesson as you go through an experience and write it down so you will remember it well.

~Bobb Biehl : *Asking to win.*

HOW TO MAKE MAJOR DECISIONS

By: Patrick Morley

Adapted from Devotions for Couples
(Zondervan Publishers)

During the course of a year most of us only make two or three truly major decisions. These might include whether or not to change jobs, which job to take, whether or not to move to another city or across town, how many children to have, which church to attend, what kind of personal ministry to undertake, what kind of car to buy (and do I really need a new one?), how to adjust lifestyle to a reduced income, and so on. Yet, these comprise some of the most important and difficult decisions we ever make.

Most of the major decisions we make in life are not dictated by Scripture. So what do we do?

A PERSPECTIVE

Here are some considerations to help make better decisions:

1. *Know that many major decisions do turn out wrong.* A man became restless after twenty one years with the same company. He could not isolate the source of his feelings, but decided he needed a change. Since that time he has bounced around from job to job, never keeping the same position more than three years.

   A couple decided to move to a "better" neighborhood. There was nothing wrong with their present neighborhood. In fact, they loved their neighbors, the location was convenient, crime was low, the mortgage payment was a pittance, and they couldn't really find anything wrong with their existing home. Their new house required much more upkeep than they had figured. The higher payments created a great deal of tension between them. Soon they began pointing fingers at each other, blaming one another for deciding to leave the old neighborhood.

   If you are not content with yourself where you are, you will not be content where you are going. It is an error to think that changing our circumstances alone will make us happy or content. Often we cling to some selfish ambition that is at odds with leading a surrendered life.

2. *Count the cost of making the wrong decision.* Perhaps the greatest lesson I've learned about making major decisions is the cost of making the wrong decision. When decisions turn out right, "I" am brilliant. When they turn out wrong, "you" really blew it! Think about this next statement: The greatest time waster in our lives is the time we spend undoing that which ought not to have been done in the first place. Do you agree.

   Usually we can recover if we make a bad choice. Sometimes, however, we can't. Never make a decision that bets the entire ranch on being right.

3. *Most decisions are obvious given enough information and time.* When do we make poor decisions? When we don't have our facts straight and when we are hasty. Keep collecting data. Write it down so you don't forget it. The mind by itself may blow one small fact all out of proportion. Writing it down puts things in perspective. Talk to wise counselors; get other people's perspective. Talk to experts who have skill better to operate from fact than feeling.

   Ours is an impatient world, a hasty world, an impulsive world. If my computer takes three seconds to sort 20,000,000 bytes of data instead of one second I get frustrated. Let's get real! It takes time to make a wise, major decision. The mind may know quickly what to do, but it takes time for our emotions to catch up. We have vested positions which only time can change. We must wait for that "gut feeling," which is our subconscious mind informing our conscious mind of the results of its thorough and complete analysis.

THE MEANS OF GUIDANCE

The major decisions we make will come most easily if we abide in Christ daily, begin each dawn in humble surrender to God, seek to please Him in all our ways, and live our lives out of the overflow of our personal relationship with Jesus. To assist us God has given means of guidance. Let's briefly explore each of seven different means God has given us to help discern His will.

1. The Bible. The single most important question to ask is, "Has God already spoken on this matter?" The Bible is chock full of commands (which are duty) and principles (which are wise). We don't have to wonder if not reporting $1,800 of incidental income to the IRS is God's will. We know it is. As the Bible says, "Do not go beyond what is written" (1 Corinthians 4:6). Obedience is the trademark of a biblical Christian. Talk over the Scriptures together.

2. Prayer. Jesus said, "Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete" (John 16:24). Over and over and over again we are invited to present our requests to God. Prayer is the currency of our personal relationship with Christ. Spend it liberally. Pray over major (why not all?) decisions.

3. The Holy Spirit. God lives in us in the person of the Holy Spirit. He is our counselor, convector, comforter, converter, and encourager. Consciously depend upon Him and He will both guide you and intercede for you. "The Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will" (Romans 8:27). The Holy Spirit is the one Who "clothes" us with power from on high. The Holy Spirit will never lead in contradiction to His written Word.

4. Conscience. In seeking God's will we must live by the pledge of a good conscience toward God and other people. "Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God" (1 John 3:21). Keep in mind that while a guilty conscience provides clear evidence you are not in God's will, a clear conscience may not guarantee you have correctly discerned God's will. Conscience is more effective as a red light than a green light. To go against conscience is neither wise nor safe.

5. Circumstances. Some people are born short, some tall. Some black, some white. Some in America, some in Argentina. Some to poor parents, some to rich. God's will is often revealed clearly by the circumstances in which we live. "He determines the times set for them and the exact places where they should live" (Acts 17: 26). If you want to purchase a house which will require a $100,000 mortgage and you can only qualify for $75,000, then circumstances have told you God's will.

6. Counsel. "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed" (Proverbs 15:22). Often we need nothing more than a good listener to help us crystallize our thoughts into coherent words. Other times, we need the advice of a trusted friend. Seek out each other's counsel.

7. Fasting. Fasting is a lost spiritual discipline in this age. Fasting slows down the physical functions so that the mind can be more in tune with Christ. Fasting demonstrates seriousness about your concern to the Lord.

Employ these constituted means for finding the will of God. Do them only occasionally and it will amount to nothing more than priming a rusty pump. Do them regularly and the will of God will gush forth like deep well springs.

THE PROCESS

Here is a useful, practical process for finding the will of God. Keep in mind this is not a process for getting our own way. We must be cautious that we truly want what God wants. Otherwise we will twist things to our own way. Each step builds on itself, and you may find the answer becomes obvious at any point along the way. If it doesn't make itself clear, keep moving through the steps until it does.

1. *Write down the decision exactly.* Nothing clarifies our thinking more quickly than paper and pencil. It's said that half the solution is knowing the problem. Precisely what is the decision? What are the choices?

2. *Next, write out a "purpose statement" which precisely explains why you are considering this decision.* It is helpful not only to know what you are trying to decide, but why. "Why" are you trying to decide "what" you are trying to decide? What is the context? Do you have to move? Is it a need or a want? Are you unhappy?

3. *Next, submit your "purpose statement" to a series of questions.* Here are some suggestions:
    - What are you trying to accomplish, and why?
    - What is your objective, or desired end result?
    - What are your expectations and why?
    - How does this decision fit in with your calling?
    - Are you considering this from a sense of calling or duty?
    - What would Jesus do if He were you? What is the "next" right step to take?

4. *If your answer still hasn't become obvious, list each option on a separate sheet of paper.* On the left side list the advantages of that option; on the right side list the disadvantages. As Louis Agazziz said, "A pencil is one of the best of eyes." Usually, one option will prove itself clearly desirable, or undesirable, at this point.

5. *At all times, employ the seven steps of guidance to discern God's will covered above.*

6. *If the answer still hasn't come, wait.* You can never predict what God is doing in your life. God is not a man that He would ever work for your harm. God is committed to working for your good. Commit to let God set the agenda. Never push God. If the answer isn't obvious, trust Him to make it clear in His timing. You can rush ahead if you must, but you do so at your own peril. Better to wait upon the Lord. Give Him the time He wants to work some things into and out of your character. And remember this: God is not the author of confusion. Satan, however, is. If you are still confused, wait. Peace is the umpire.

Let me encourage you to keep this article in a handy place. Review it when you seem to get stuck on a major decision.

Business leader, author, and speaker, Patrick Morley helps men to think more deeply about their lives, to be reconciled with Christ, and to be equipped for a larger impact on the world.

THINGS THAT WILL GET YOU HIRED

1. Customize your resume and cover letter: It might seem faster to blast off generic materials to dozens of employers, but this will cost you time in the long run. Tailor your resume and cover letter to each open position to clearly demonstrate how your experience fills the employers' requirements.
2. Diversity your search. If you have been responding to newspaper ads with no response, also post your resume online, search some job Web sites, talk to your friends and attend an industry trade show.
3. Don't go solo: Your friends, family and former co-workers each have a network of their own and a friend-of-a-friend might hold the perfect lead. Don't be shy: Reach out to your network and let your contacts know you're on the job market
4. Find a company where you fit in. Browse potential employers' Web sites and ask your friends about what it's like to work at their companies. Employers are looking for candidates who would be a good fit and thrive within the company culture.
5. Don't get discouraged. Experts estimate the average job search to last anywhere between three and 10 months—and that means a lot of rejection. Keep at it: Your dream job is out there.
6. Always be prepared. You can never be too prepared for your first meeting with a potential employer. Before you interview, always browse the company's Web site. Find out as much as you can about the company's products, leadership, mission and culture, and prepare answers to common interview questions.
7. Be on time. Whether it's an informal interview, an open house or a formal interview, always arrive about 10 minutes early. Allow plenty of time for traffic and poor weather.
8. Dress and act the part. In a business setting, always dress in professional clothing in the best quality you can afford. Take the industry and employer into consideration, but a business suit is always most appropriate for interviews.
9. Listen more than you talk. Even if you're nervous at an interview, try not to ramble. By keeping your mouth shut, you can learn valuable information about the company and avoid saying something you'll wish you hadn't.
10. Ask good questions. At the end of the interview, the employer will inevitably ask you if you have any questions. Have a list of questions prepared that showcase your company research and interest in the position.

THINGS THAT WILL GET YOU FIRED

1. Don't bother learning what's expected of you. Sit down with your manager and make sure you understand exactly what your job entails, your deadlines and any relevant department policies. This eliminates ambiguity and ensures you'll know how your performance measures up.
2. Learn to say, "That is not part of my job description," and use it frequently. Everyone needs to set limits, but doing only the bare minimum sends a clear message that you're just interested in a regular paycheck. Sooner or later, your boss will start looking for someone willing to take more initiative.
3. Go shopping in the supply closet. While you're at it, run a few errands with the company car and pad your expense report. Stealing from the company is one of the best ways to guarantee your immediate dismissal.
4. Abuse company technology. Think your boss won't notice that you spend more time instant messaging your friends than you do working? Think again. Most companies monitor all their employees' e-mails and Internet usage—and that includes what you do with your laptop after hours. Never use your company computer for anything illegal or X-rated.
5. Complain about your job to anyone who will listen. Whether your pay is too low, the work is drudgery or you think your boss is an idiot, be careful of who hears you complain. If it gets back to your boss, they may just put you out of your misery.
6. Forget teamwork—look out for No. 1. No one wants to work with an arrogant employee who steals ideas or an egotistical worker who demeans others. Helping your co-worker doesn't make you a pushover, it makes you smart. Likeable employees move up the company ranks more quickly, and your colleagues will be more likely to help you find leads when you launch your next job search.
7. Bring your personal life to work. It's inevitable that personal business is going to pop up during work hours. But keep in mind that cubicles don't lend any privacy, so the whole office can hear—and are distracted by—you making that appointment with your waxer. Keep personal calls and errands to a minimum during work hours.
8. Consistently work "abbreviated" workdays. Want to show your boss how little you care about your job or career progress? Regularly come in late and leave early. After all, if you can't be trusted to show up on time, how can your boss trust you with more responsibility?
9. Treat deadlines more like guidelines. When you procrastinate, everyone suffers. Your missed deadlines reflect poorly on you and your boss, and they delay everyone else on the project, since they can't finish their work until you do yours.
10. Operate the gossip mill. While you can't avoid office gossip completely, don't get caught spreading it. Think about it: Do you really want hurtful or untrue rumors to be traced back to you? And remember: A few martinis are no excuse for getting loose-lipped.
11. My Space. While it is your decision to choose your social circle, it is highly recommended that if you have a "My Space" account you are aware that companies now research My Space accounts to see how you interact with the world. You want to avoid having any derogatory language and or pictures that might make your boss think twice before hiring you.

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TOP 10 TIPS

1. Be an ambassador for the company. The first impression. The welcoming committee.

2. Decide to have a good attitude.

3. The guest coming through the door or the person on the phone is not an interruption. They are the reason you are needed.

4. Smile. (Even when you don't feel like it!)

5. Be polite. (Even when you don't feel like it!)

6. Use good grammar.

7. Anyone can be a Receptionist. Choose to be a Communications Specialist.

8. Anyone can be stressed, hurried and cranky. Choose to be peaceful, calm and friendly.

9. Read "People Skills" books. (How to Win Friends and Influence People, Bringing Out the Best in People, Personality Plus, etc.)

10. Choose to be positive.

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