Navigating a Career in Real Estate

DISCOVER A REWARDING AND MEANINGFUL CAREER IN REAL ESTATE

WWW.CAREERSBUILDINGCOMMUNITIES.COM
Real estate is a huge part of your life. Are you ready to shape the communities of the world?
Contents

04
Introduction

06
Areas of Specialization

16
Location

17
Networking

23
The Job Search

24
The Interview

26
Top 10 Things to Improve Your Employability

27
Notes
Introduction.

Preparation is paramount.

You may be wondering how you can use your talents and strengths in the real estate industry. This guide is intended as a navigation tool to help you discover a rewarding and meaningful career. As helpful as this resource may be, there is no substitute for persistence, positivity, and rigorous follow-up! Preparation is paramount.

We hope this guide will assist you in finding your path to a successful, rewarding and prosperous career. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please reach out to any participating organization or email Debbie@careersbuildingcommunities.org.
TAKE THE QUIZ.
Take the quiz and find two areas in real estate that might be right for you.

EXPLORE THE MAP.
Explore our interactive map to identify career tracks, types of positions and types of properties.

DISCOVER REAL ESTATE.
Explore those areas and many more under “Discover the Industry”

Resources.
Visit our website to find these other useful resources.
Areas of Specialization

One of the exciting aspects of real estate is that it can be approached from so many different perspectives. There are hundreds of ways for you to use your strengths in this industry. You can use your skills to project and analyze cash flows for new developments; broker large transactions with institutional clients; exercise your entrepreneurial spirit as a property owner developing and designing new and exciting spaces to live, work and play.

One of the first considerations you need to make is what area of real estate you are interested in pursuing. We believe this is the perfect time for self-reflection and by using a variety of assessments you can determine what area would be best suited to your personality, natural abilities, and key interests. Consider these tools as you identify your strengths:

- www.myersbriggs.com
- www.keirsey.com
- www.2h.com
- www.uscience.com
- www.gallup.com (Strengthfinder 2.0)
- www.everythingDISC.com (DISC Profile)

Also, think about the following when making your decision:

- What do you thrive on? For example: interaction with people, analysis, research, closing deals, managing people, designing spaces.
- Ask your professors for feedback regarding your strengths and opportunities. They might surprise you with their insight!
- Apply for an Internship – it’s one of the best ways 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 take less money in lieu of a commission? The following table can help you with your comparison research with major Areas of Specialization and average compensation structures.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Specialization</th>
<th>Compensation Type</th>
<th>Entry Level Position</th>
<th>Average 1st Year Compensation</th>
<th>Average 5th Year Compensation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leasing (Brokerage)</td>
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<td>Example: $64,000</td>
<td>$110,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appraisal</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Salary</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lending / Banking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Market Research</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Management</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysts</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage Brokers</td>
<td>Commission</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Management</td>
<td>Salary</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asset Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Salary</td>
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</tr>
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*Note: Websites such as ZipRecruiter, Glassdoor or Salary.com can be helpful when estimating salary ranges.*

Once you determine your personality traits and compensation requirements, you can bridge those areas to the appropriate skill set needed for your desired 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. Explore your state’s real estate commission’s website.

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 highly competitive and relationship intensive environment.

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 featured on this site, www.careersbuildingcommunities.org. Successful commercial agents can earn executive-level compensation. They must closely watch markets to anticipate economic trends affecting the real estate industry.

- For commercial brokerage, explore CCIM.
- For industrial property, explore NAIOP.
- For office and industrial, explore SIOR.
- For retail, explore ICSC.
- For residential, explore NMHC, IREM, and NAA.
- For diverse properties, explore ULI.
- And for Commercial Real Estate Women, explore CREW.
Construction and Architecture

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

To be an architect or contractor it requires special education, experience, and licenses but there are areas within these disciplines where your specific craft, education and experience can qualify you for many entry level jobs. Many major architectural and contracting firms have internal business development/marketing departments as well as interior design. Broad skills provide a base for you to qualify for entry-level positions, although to prosper and advance within this profession, a specialized set of skills would need to be learned.

Business development in these professions entails extensive involvement and participation in multiple industry related organizations, along with strong networking allows you to explore many facets of the 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 or establishing the image for the property or company.

Explore the organizations featured on this website and realize that many of these organizations have chapters within each state that offer special networking events. Explore ABC, AGC, AIA, ASLA, CSI, ASID, CMAA, & IIDA.
Appraisal and Consulting

Appraisers are paid to estimate the value of a 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 real estate industry and is a great way to use your skills in a specific niche.

For more information about appraisal and consulting, see AI, CRE, and RLI.
Corporate Real Estate

All major corporations have a need for real estate. 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 leaders 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 CoreNet Global, IFMA, BOMA, and BOMI.
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), large 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 and demographic trends as well as 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, explore AFIRE, CRE, CCIM, IREM, NAREIT, NMHC, and RER.
Property Management

Property management involves maximizing net revenues or productivity of properties based on managing rental flows, tenant retention, maintaining the physical asset and enhancing the value, and operating the property profitably.

Property operation includes cleaning, maintenance and repairs, paying utilities, property insurance, property taxes and so on), reporting to owners and overseeing residents and/or combination of tenants. 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 and residents.

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. Apartment communities and resort properties require superior customer service skills, leadership, marketing, management, and maintenance.

For more information about property management, explore ARDA, BOMA, IREM, NAA, NMHC, and IFMA.
Mortgage and Construction Lending

Mortgage lenders specialize by the size of loan and property types, like developers or commercial brokers. Primary lenders for the residential single family include mortgage companies that resell 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, explore 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 opportunities and trends explore NAIOP, NMHC, ICSC, and ULI.

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**Marketing / Sales / Customer Relations**

Developing and operating diverse real estate assets requires a skill set that can identify the target audience, promote the property or service, and keep the resident or customer satisfied.

These positions are available within the real estate companies or can be provided as a third party vendor. Many of the positions require a bachelor’s degree or transferable experience.

It is also important to remember that companies who supply goods and services to the real estate industry also hire employees that possess excellent communication and leadership skills. These companies are generally referred to as vendors or suppliers. Most real estate professionals agree that these vendors are actually viewed as “partners” since many of the day to day business practices are dependent on the quality of these services. For example, these suppliers provide the materials needed to build apartments, offices, and warehouses, not to mention the ancillary services such as property insurance, landscape, temporary personnel, marketing, legal and risk management services.
Location.

Now that you’ve explored an area of specialization, 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:

- Consider your immediate family and/or future family plans? Long distance relationships can be stressful and expensive.
- 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 real estate careers are less dependent on local market knowledge. Many of these opportunities are found in primary and secondary geographic markets.
- Larger markets generally equal more opportunity and more compensation, 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.
- Consider your appetite for travel? Corporate and Institutional real estate careers generally require significant travel. Exciting in the beginning but can end up being challenging depending on your other life goals. Relocation is almost always necessary to be considered for promotion.
Networking.

Did you know that the majority of job opportunities aren’t always the most advertised? How do people know about these secret “one of a kind” opportunities? 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 more prepared than the other candidates!

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 quality questions, listen to the answers, and follow up with another good question. Most people are great at talking and weak at listening. 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 email. A handwritten thank you note makes even more of a positive impression.

4. **Purchase business cards** with your complete contact information, including email (be sure to change your college email address to a general professional email. Hand them out during meetings, conferences, etc.)
5. Join a Professional Organization / Attend Conferences:
   - **Conferences**: Continue to attend conferences (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. Again, discuss these opportunities with your major professor or advisor. Many of these professors get special invitations to invite students. If you enjoy research, consider co-authoring a paper or making a presentation at an upcoming conference.
   - **Chamber of Commerce**: Join your local Chamber of Commerce and sign-up for a 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.
   - **Student Memberships**: Many of the organizations on the CBC site offer student memberships and scholarships for advanced certification.
     - **AIA** – The American Institute of Architects (www.aia.org). Now more than ever, the collective voice of architects is essential for designing a better future for our country and planet. Even in times of change, AIA’s values remain constant. Members are at the table with policymakers who are committed to a better built environment and a prosperous architecture profession.
     - **ASID** – American Society of Interior Designers (www.asid.org). ASID is a community of professionals who believe in the power of interior design to improve the human experience. With more than 25,000 members, members serve to unite people who share the belief and seek collaboration with those working to promote the value of interior design.
     - **ASLA** – American Society of Landscape Architects (www.asla.org). ASLA is the professional association for landscape architects in the United States, representing more than 15,000 members. The Society’s mission is to advance landscape architecture through advocacy, communication, education, and fellowship. Sustainability has been part of ASLA’s mission since its founding and is an overarching value that informs all of the Society’s programs and operations.
   - 6. **ABC** - Associated Builders and Contractors (www.abc.org) is a national construction industry trade association representing more than 21,000
members. Based on the merit shop philosophy, ABC helps its members develop people, win work and deliver work safely, ethically and profitably for the betterment of the communities in which they work.

7. **AGC** - The Associated General Contractors of America (www.agc.org) is another leading association for the construction industry. AGC represents more than 26,000 firms, including over 6,500 of America’s leading general contractors, and over 9,000 specialty-contracting firms. More than 10,500 service providers and suppliers are also associated with AGC, all through a nationwide network of chapters. AGC provides a full range of services satisfying the needs and concerns of its members, thereby improving the quality of construction and protecting the public interest.

8. **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 estate 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.

9. **CREW** – Commercial Real Estate Women Network (www.crewnetwork.org) was founded in 1989 to bring together women involved in the many aspects of commercial real estate to exchange information, develop business contacts and help each other succeed professionally. Today, CREW Network is the premier business networking organization dedicated to transforming the commercial real estate industry by advancing women globally. CREW provides support to our 10,000+ members worldwide through business development, leadership development, industry research and career outreach.

10. **CMAA** – (www.cmaanet.org) Construction Management Association of America's mission is to promote the profession of construction management and the use of qualified construction managers on capital projects and programs. CMAA's vision is that all owners will realize capital project and program success by using professionally qualified construction managers. CMAA was formed in 1982 as a way to establish a set of standards for managing capital construction projects. Construction management is rooted in traditional project management practices, however, it requires its own unique set of skills and professional knowledge.
to perform. One of CMAA’s goals is to help the construction management profession further develop its own unique identity within the Architecture/Engineering/Construction industry.

11. **CoreNet Global** - CoreNet Global (www.corenetglobal.org) is a non-profit association, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia (US), representing more than 10,000 executives in 50 countries with strategic responsibility for the real estate assets of large corporations. The organization’s mission is to advance the practice of corporate real estate through professional development opportunities, publications, research, conferences, designations and networking in 47 local chapters and networking groups globally.

12. **IIDA** – International Interior Design Association (www.iida.org) is the Commercial Interior Design association with global reach. IIDA supports design professionals, industry affiliates, educators, students, firms, and their clients through our network of 15,000+ members across 58 countries. Members advocate for advancement in education, design excellence, legislation, leadership, accreditation, and community outreach to increase the value and understanding of Interior Design as a profession that enhances business value and positively impacts the health and well-being of people’s lives every day.

13. **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.

14. **MBA** – Mortgage Bankers Association (www.mba.org). Commercial Real Estate Finance (CREF) is a dynamic, growing industry that provides $3 trillion in financing for office buildings, apartment properties, shopping malls, industrial properties and other income-producing real estate throughout the United States. The CREF Careers Forum is your opportunity to learn about the industry, connect with people in it and find out about your next internship, job or career.

15. **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
- Practice your “elevator” speech
- 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
- Discuss religion, politics, or other controversial topics
- Give your business card immediately
- Get stuck with a self-centered ego-maniac
- Forget those who you want to remember
The Art of the Conversation:

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

Additional Resources:

1. How to Win Friends and Influence People - Dale Carnegie
2. Never Eat Alone - Keith Ferrazzi • Tahl Raz
3. Presence – Amy Cuddy
4. Give and Take - Adam Grant
5. Super Connector - Gerber & Paugh
6. Highly Effective Networking – Orville Pierson
7. The 20 Minute Networking Meeting – Marcia Ballinger and Nathan Perez
8. Leadership Handbook for Real Estate Professionals – IREM
9. Professional Real Estate Development – ULI
10. Multifamily Housing – The Essential Industry Text – NAA, NMHC, & IREM
The Job Search.

Networking is one of the best ways to explore careers, however, here are other recommendations. The list below offers some tools to help you maximize your search:

1. **Explore careers and utilize resources** on the individual organizations located on the “About” page at www.careersbuildingcommunities.org.


3. **Search Company websites** – if you’re interested in working for a specific company, search their website for job postings and human resource contacts. Cross reference alumni on LinkedIn. Professionals enjoy helping others from their alma mater.

4. **Read trade journals and industry blogs** - Every area of real estate has a trade journal, and organizations affiliated with CBC have research and other publications as well as resources written by thought leaders. Get a copy and read it judiciously. 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:
   - The Dealmakers (Reporting the Nation’s Weekly News on Retailing and Retail Real Estate)
   - Professional Retail Store Maintenance. (1-year subscription, $59)
   - American Demographics. www.demographics.com. (10 issues, $50.00)
   - Southeast Real Estate Business www.southeastrealestatebusiness.com (12 issues, $69)
   - Institutional Real Estate Newsline www.irei.com
   - Building Operating Management www.reachfms.com/bom.aspx
   - Units Magazine www.naahq.org/news-publications/units
   - JPM by IREM www.irem.org/jpm
   - Multifamily Executive www.multifamilyexecutive.com
   - BOMA Magazine www.boma.org
   - Commercial Investment RE www.nar.realtor/commercial-investment-real-estate
   - Commercial Property Executive www.cpxecutive.com
   - Multihousing News www.multihousingnews.com
   - Urbanland https://urbanland.uli.org/
   - SCT – Shopping Centers Today https://sct.epubxp.com/t/10975-shopping-centers-today
   - Real Estate Forum www.reforum-digital.com

Note: Many of your schools have access to these journals through their library or other sources. Check with your advisor regarding subscriptions/usage.
The Interview.

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

1. Visit the company’s website where you can review corporate or annual reports and recent press releases – they will often provide 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 graduate of your Alma Mater!

2. Secure some independent perspectives on your prospective employer. Advisory board members from your school or university make great recommendations. Hoover’s Online (www.hoovers.com) for one, provides capsule descriptions, financial data and a list of competitors for thousands of large corporations.

3. 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 local publications 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.

4. Anticipate your responses to the frequently asked interview questions:
   - **Tell me about yourself?** Be honest, be energetic, be thorough, and be brief.
   - **What are your strengths and weaknesses?** They want to hear 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.
   - **Articulate your short and long term goals.** Employers are looking for ambition; be mindful that you are likely competing with other candidates with diverse experience.
   - **Why should we hire you?** State how you can help company growth, solve a problem or add to its strengths.
   - **Why do you want to work here?** Relate your interests to key components of the job; tell them you prefer the company’s size, creative business practices, position in the market, etc. BE ENTHUSIASTIC!

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. Dress for the job you want, not the job you have.
Show up on time or a few minutes early. Do not show up more than 5 minutes early. Remember to engage the receptionist in conversation— they are often asked their impression 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. Investigate parking options.

Have approximate 5-10 prepared questions. Bring a leather portfolio containing a writing tablet (and extra copies of your resume or digital portfolio) 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 within the first few months?
- How does your company stand apart from its competition?
- How do you see the future of this industry?
- How did you find your current position?
- What has been a rewarding accomplishment in the last year?

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. Avoid asking about salary, vacation or other benefits during the first 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 email and handwritten 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 or you may see them at future industry events.

Additional Resources:
- Knock ‘Em Dead 2004: Great Answers to over 200 Tough Interview Questions, by Martin Yate
- The Craft of Interviewing, by John Brady
- Your Career – How to Make it Happen, by Levitt & Harwood
Top 10 Things That Will Improve Your Employability

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. Realize that many employers use an applicant tracking system so using key words that are in the job description can increase your chances of having your resume reviewed.

2. **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.

3. **Find a company where you fit in.** Browse potential employers’ websites 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.

4. **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. Persevere. Your dream job is out there.

5. **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 website. Find out as much as you can about the company’s products, leadership, mission and culture, and prepare answers to common interview questions.

6. **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, inclement weather, or road construction.

7. **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.

8. **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.

9. **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.

10. **Follow-up.** Candidates that follow-up with an email and handwritten note increase their chances of securing the job.
Notes:

My top five strengths:

1. ______________________________________________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________________________________________
4. ______________________________________________________________________________________
5. ______________________________________________________________________________________

Job positions that interest me:

1. ______________________________________________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________________________________________
4. ______________________________________________________________________________________
5. ______________________________________________________________________________________

Organizations:

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Qualifications required for the position:

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Navigating a Career in Real Estate 27
Organizations that I would like to research:

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

Questions I would like to ask:

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

My mentors, professors or other contacts that can help:

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
My career plan:

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Target Date: ___________________

Completed?  
☐ Yes
☐ No

My next step:

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Target Date: ___________________

Completed?  
☐ Yes
☐ No
Thank You for your participation.

Get in touch.
CareersBuildingCommunities.com