

# Women's Work

## Opportunities and challenges

by Nancy Pekala

**W**omen are continuing to make major contributions in today's commercial real estate industry. They're brokering deals and leasing space, serving as consultants, property and institutional portfolio managers.

*The Journal of Property Management* recently caught up with Jana Turner, CPM®, president of Management Services for CB Richard Ellis, AMO®, to discuss the roles women are playing in commercial real estate. Turner, active in the real estate industry for 23 years, currently oversees approximately 282 million square feet of institutionally-owned real estate encompassing more than 500 clients, 1,400 properties and 1,100 employees.

**JPM:** Tom Peters, author and speaker, has said, "The premier untapped leadership talent in the world today rests with women!" Do you agree?

**Turner:** I view the untapped leadership talent pool as broader and much more diverse than simply a gender category. Today's global economy has opened our eyes and offered us access to a marvelous variety of untapped leadership potential. While gender is certainly a part of that talent pool, it's not the only criterion I would use.



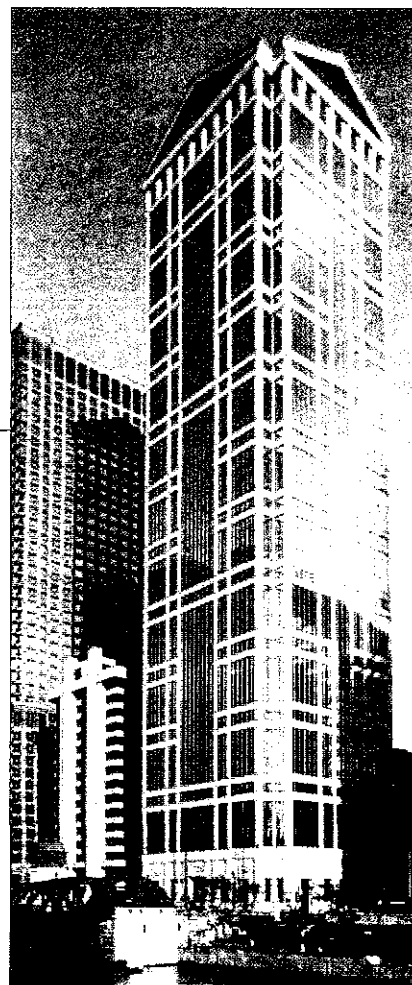
Jana Turner, CPM®  
CB Richard Ellis, AMO®

**JPM:** Have attitudes about women in commercial real estate changed?

**Turner:** Yes. Our industry has done a better job of educating women about their opportunities within commercial real estate, and that inevitably has led to an increase in the number of women who have pursued those careers and now are reaching new heights.

**JPM:** What strengths do women bring to the job?

**Turner:** In general, women who succeed in our industry possess the same qualities inherent in any good leader, male or female, and we have many wonderful examples to cite. If women



(All photos) CB Richard Ellis

CBRE executives Mark Pasquella and Ray Mazzocco are busy marketing the 240,000 square-foot RR Donnelly headquarters in Chicago for sublease.

do bring a unique quality, I'd say it's our intuitive approach to people and situations—and I think those insights can't be overlooked in supporting the decision-making process.

**JPM:** Do women make better leaders in times of crisis?

**Turner:** Effective leaders share similar qualities, even when their styles seem markedly different. Those qualities make them effective in a crisis, regardless of gender.

**JPM:** Why aren't there more women at the top of real estate companies?

**Turner:** Probably several factors have

impacted why few women currently top real estate companies. To be very candid, the “balance of life” issue was a strong consideration for women in selecting whether they wanted to pursue leadership roles and the rigors that involved. Earlier, women weren’t educated to realize what opportunities awaited them in real estate, so only

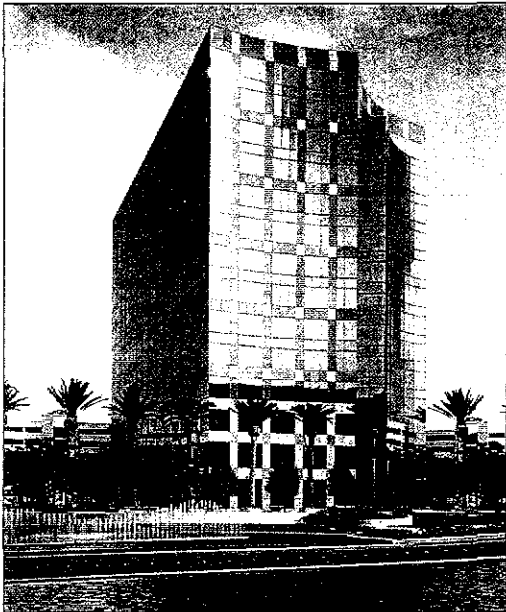
attribute some of my success to sheer good luck. I’m grateful to have had that, too!

**JPM:** *What advice would you pass on to women starting out today?*

**Turner:** As with my own career, I’d advise any woman starting today to remain focused on the goals she has set

have felt a mentoring environment provides the very best support and encouragement for any up-and-coming talent. It can be a very significant factor in anyone’s success.

**JPM:** *Has being a woman opened or closed doors for you?*



Opus Center Irvine II, part of the 930,000 square-foot Irvine Concourse Development in Irvine, CA is included in the CBRE portfolio.



CBRE’s Class A Orange City Square property offers tenants a total office environment including retail and hotel amenities.

recently have they entered in great numbers. However, I hope we see a great many women moving into these leadership roles, going forward. Our industry differs little from other big business, globally, in that regard.

**JPM:** *To what do you attribute your success?*

**Turner:** My own career has benefited from my sense of focus, the accountability I bring to my role, the networking experiences I’ve had and my personal drive and passion for this business. You absolutely must love what you do, because that’s the over-the-top factor that gives anyone an unbeatable advantage. And I’ll be very honest here—I

forth and to hold herself accountable to achieve them. I’d also network energetically, working on good communications and interpersonal skills. In addition, I’d look beyond the immediate workplace, seeking innovative ideas from other industries and learning from their successes. And finally, as with myself, I’d advise any newcomer to work at your job with joy and a passion—to love what you do, just as I always have done. That’s the key to success for anyone, anywhere and in any industry.

**JPM:** *What role do mentors play in encouraging women leaders in real estate?*

**Turner:** I’d not limit the value of mentors simply for women, but I always

**Turner:** I’d not say being a woman has opened doors for me, but I’ve never seen gender as an issue in my career. It was about succeeding or failing based on my own, personal goals and performance.

**JPM:** *What is required for women to take on more leadership roles in the area of commercial real estate?*

**Turner:** I truly believe women must be educated and informed about the great opportunities awaiting them in our industry. When they realize what they can achieve, they’ll be ready and willing to include leadership in their professional goals. □

Nancy Pekala is Managing Editor of the *Journal of Property Management*.