



# MONDAY MORNING FOREFRONTS



When a real estate firm combines experience and enthusiasm, there aren't too many situations the company can't handle. Such is the case with Crossroads Partners.

Based in Schaumburg, IL Crossroads Partners, LLC is a fully integrated real estate solutions firm concentrating on commercial real estate investment/brokerage, management, and development. Crossroads offers a variety of services ranging from property operations, entitlements, construction management to financial underwriting.

"Our team can find a piece of land, assess its viability, develop plans, finance it, build it, lease it, manage it and sell it – all in-house," explained Kirsten Bowersox, the senior vice president/chief operating officer at Crossroads. "A lot of local firms claim they can do the same. However, we have invested resources to attract and retain talented professionals that have specific experience in these areas."



Michael Nortman, CEO

Overseeing Crossroads is Michael Nortman, the firm's founder and president, who, as his personal portfolio grew, recognized the need for a management company that could be flexible to the needs of its clients.

Nortman's goal then - and remains today - is to have Crossroads always be listening to its clients to make sure all interests are aligned. It is a vision that has become a reality.

With a focus on commercial properties - which includes office, retail and industrial - Crossroads has experienced some impressive growth. Formed in 2007 as a three employee management company, Crossroads has put together an impressive series of accomplishments allowing it to grow today to a staff of 19. What started out as a handful of owned properties, the Crossroads portfolio now includes over 70 properties in the Chicago area totaling more than 3.5 million square feet.



Wes Rehwoldt, Director Of Management / Senior Vice President

"Crossroads has succeeded because we manage every aspect of a real estate assignment, be it management, leasing, or selling a property, as if it were our own property," Bowersox explained. "While we certainly pay attention to the bottom line, our mission is not focused on collecting fees. It's about the relationships and providing the most efficient and beneficial services to our owners, tenants and vendors. Sometimes that comes at a cost to us, but people remember those things, and when they face their next real estate challenge or buy another property, they will call us to help them manage and lease their space."

Nortman, Bowersox and Senior Vice President/Director of Management Wes Rehwoldt, work with the rest of the team relying on everyone's collective experience to handle issues that arise and not just providing cookie cutter approaches. No matter the type of project from the smallest property to a 250,000 square foot office complex, creative solutions are offered.

"There is not too much we haven't dealt with in real estate. We listen to what people want, fulfill the immediate need and we do it well, so that when they inevitably need some other real estate-related service they come to us and ask," Rehwoldt said. "That is how we have grown."

The evolution of Crossroads continued in early 2015 with the opening of a brokerage division, which was a natural addition to the business and it already shown significant growth. With the changing ways of the real estate world, other opportunities may present themselves down the road.

"We offer a suite of services where clients can pick and choose what best serves their needs at the time, which will invariably change over time," Bowersox said. "For example they might want us manage their property on a daily basis, but they don't want to deal with the accounting so they will hire us for the accounting."



Kirsten Bowersox, Chief Operating Officer / Senior Vice President

No matter what the specific area of the firm's real estate expertise the client draws on, Crossroads takes pride in the fact they are always going to be a phone call/text/e-mail away for its customers.

"Our biggest edge is being responsive," Rehwoldt said. "Social media and other forms of electronic forms of communication have made everyone more "in touch" than they used to be. On any day, and at almost any time of day, when someone asks us a question we are totally responsive, probably over responsive. But whoever is trying to reach us, they will never feel alone or that they aren't being heard."

The success of Crossroads can also be traced to the diverse talent pool the firm offers its clients.

While Nortman started Crossroads, he brought in Rehwoldt who concentrates on property/facility management as well as development, with Bowersox being more real estate fundamental focused, as she worked for lending institutions in portfolio/asset management roles and most recently ran the OREO (other real estate owned) real estate group for MB Financial prior to joining Crossroads. Even as the team has grown, it remains a group that loves to take on challenges and whose interest in growing the company is reflected in the fact that employee turnover is rare and collaboration is a cornerstone philosophy. It is very unusual that operational decisions are made without consulting with the staff that would be affected the most.

"Our employees all feel as though they contribute to the bottom line," Bowersox said. "Those who are truly invested in making Crossroads the best it can be, and making themselves the best they can be, are not only rewarded financially, but also with the accolades of the management team and their clients, as well as the ability to grow with Crossroads."



Bowersox loves the diversity of her job, but she especially appreciates the entrepreneurial spirit she senses from the employees. "There are no bad ideas," she said. "We have brainstorming sessions on what can we do differently or better. An idea might not work for any number of reasons but we might not know that until we spent two hours talking about it. If it does work we have incentivized employees to have pride of ownership in growing the company."

But no matter how big Crossroads grows, Rehwoldt promises the basic tenets of the firm's philosophy will remain the same.

"Our goal is to be a little bigger, a lot better, and even more of a support and benefit to our existing and future customers," he said. "We continue to look forward to providing quality service to quality clients."