



YLG SPOTLIGHT

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How did you find your way into the industry? After graduating from Cal State Long Beach with a Masters in Public Administration, I attended the California Redevelopment Association's Annual Conference that was held at the Long Beach Convention Center that year. It was there that I was able to engage leaders in the industry and learn all about the world of economic development and redevelopment. At the conference, I took the opportunity to hand my resume out to many firms and public agencies looking to hire and was fortunate to obtain an Analyst position with a prominent redevelopment consulting firm.

What advice would you give to an emerging young leader just starting their professional career? My advice would be to take on tough assignments in your workplace as personal challenges. I believe that taking on new challenges can serve as a tremendous opportunity for professional growth and will make you an invaluable member of any team and/or organization. I also believe that one of the best opportunities for personal and professional growth is to join a professional organization that closely aligns with your interests and allows you to collaborate with and learn from peers in your industry. ULI's Young Leaders Group is one example of a tremendous organization that provides a plethora of opportunities to get involved and engage with peers on a personal and professional level.

What traits do you think define a successful leader? I think a successful leader is one that leads by example. A leader that is hardworking, decisive, confident, ethical, and passionate about the work that they do can inspire others to be the same. I also think that a successful leader needs to be able to recognize and understand the needs of others through communication in order to foster a work environment that builds and retains successful working relationships with peers and/or employees.

What is your current job and what types of projects are you working on now? I am Vice President with Kosmont Companies, a nationally recognized real estate, financial advisory, and economic development services firm that serves cities, counties, public agencies, private corporations, landowners, non-profit organizations and developers across California. I am currently working with many cities to design and implement economic development strategies as well as navigate the legal and technical aspects of the dissolution of redevelopment agencies and develop strategies for the management and disposition of real estate assets.

What do you find most challenging about your profession on a day-to-day basis? One of the most challenging aspects of my profession on a day to day basis is finding creative solutions to unique and varied economic development and/or real estate problems. However, I believe that the most rewarding part of my job is the opportunity to work with public and/or private sector clients to help successfully address these unique challenges and fulfill the goals and objectives of a community.

What are you looking for in terms of career development - OR In what areas would you like to professionally develop further? In terms of career development, I want to continue to develop new

skills, take on new leadership challenges, and gain new experiences that will help provide a well rounded background for a career in economic development and real estate. I also would love to continue to work with clients to solve complex real estate, community development planning, financing, and housing challenges, particularly in this current economic climate where cities are faced with diminished resources and funding, so that they can leverage their existing resources and tools to further their economic development goals and objectives.

Describe a situation that was a great learning experience. With the State's decision to eliminate redevelopment in 2012 as a local funding mechanism for community and economic development, many cities were forced to lay off thousands of employees. As a consultant to these cities, I learned that diversification, whether it be in my own career (skills, expertise, experience) or running a consulting firm (service offerings), is critical and key to a lasting and fulfilling career as well as a long-term business strategy, especially when faced with the inevitable threats posed by an economic downturn and/or legislative changes.

How do you deal with stress at work? I find that one of the most effective ways to alleviate stress at work is taking a pro-active approach to organizing and prioritizing my tasks and assignments. I try to set some time aside each day to review and update my list of tasks/assignments, so that I can manage my time effectively. Although, when it comes to beating stress, I also find that going for a long run or spending quality time with my family can go a long way in terms of managing stress levels when projects and deadlines become overwhelming.