


**CBRE**  
 CB RICHARD ELLIS


## Richard P. Sleasman, SIOR

Executive Vice President – Brokerage Services

### Success Magazine: How do you define success?

*Richard Sleasman: Success arrives at that point in life's journey when you come to the realization that the ride is a whole lot more interesting than the destination. I am privileged to work in an environment where new challenges step up and greet me every Monday morning. The great part is, I get to take on those challenges alongside an extraordinary group of professionals here at CBRE. I don't have the fame, or maybe even the wealth associated with the dictionary's description of success, but I know I'm successful.*

**SM:** At what point did you become interested in a career in real estate?

**RS:** In 1984. I had the opportunity to deal with Robert Cohn, our company founder, to lease a family property in Albany to a drugstore chain. I spent a great deal of time with Bob during negotiations. His passion for the commercial real estate business was contagious, and luckily he was looking for another broker at the time. Since the closure of the family business in favor of the drug store lease left me temporarily in the job market, I was able to convince Bob to roll the dice on this young Siena grad. I guess it's worked out so far.

**SM:** How did your past prepare you for a successful future in this arena?

**RS:** My father John Sleasman, along with his two older brothers, owned and operated a grocery store on New Scotland Ave in Albany for 40+ years. I was raised in the family business packing grocery bags (just paper, no plastic back then!), and stocking shelves. I eventually spent four years there, after college, handling the business aspects of the company (payroll, accounts receivable, accounts payable, etc). Watching my dad work sixty hour weeks but always finding the time to spend with his customers, I learned a valuable business lesson that I share with our brokers regularly. Recognize you are in a people business first and foremost and the sales will follow.

**SM:** You have been licensed since 1987. How have your goals changed since that time?

**RS:** Actually I was licensed in 1984 as a salesman but passed my broker's exam in 1987. As a young salesman my early goals were all quantitative....closings, listings, gross commissions, etc. Now I am looking for more qualitative results from myself, our associates, and our support staff. Quality results are measured by client satisfaction and career development.

**SM:** What do you enjoy most about being a real estate broker?

**RS:** Problem solving. We want to be part of the client's team of advisors, along with the legal and financial experts, understanding the needs of the client, identifying alternatives, analyzing the benefits of each option, and then making recommendations. It's very satisfying to achieve results that make a difference. It's so much more than just posting a sign on the building and waiting for the phone to ring.

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**SM:** Why did you end up with CB Richard Ellis? How long have you been with the company?

**RS:** Robert Cohn Associates, our predecessor company, was at a crossroads in 1999. Robert Cohn was retiring and our previous affiliation with a national real estate network was not producing the desired results. At the same time, CB Richard Ellis, a multinational commercial real estate services firm based in Los Angeles, was seeking to align with strong independent firms in targeted secondary and tertiary markets. Their goal was to provide a seamless delivery of services to their corporate clients with real estate needs in both large and smaller markets. The affiliation with CBRE seemed like a great fit for us, and it has been.

**SM:** How did you work your way up to being Executive Vice President? What characteristic do you attribute to this success?

**RS:** Given the depth of our management team, the climb to my current position as EVP was less on an extension ladder and more like a stepladder. Seriously though, we have a committed ownership team in Jeff Sperry, Eileen Lindburg and myself. There are distinct differences in skill sets and perspectives among the three of us. I think I've been able to bring to the table an experienced voice from 24 years of deal making, a big picture perspective while working on national committees with CBRE and SIOR, and a sense of humor that helps keep perspectives real. A four year degree from Siena College, with courses ranging from accounting to marketing also created a great foundation. My move from daily transactional business into the full time management of our brokerage services is, for us, a natural progression of our management focus over the next five years or so.

**SM:** What makes CBRE unique?

**RS:** Our people. No local competitor of ours can match our lineup of experienced brokers and staff who absolutely “get it” when it comes to deal making in commercial real estate.

**SM:** Just how large is the Albany division of CBRE?

**RS:** The Albany office is an affiliate of LA based CB Richard Ellis. We have sixteen licensed professionals and a support staff of six others. From a volume perspective, CBRE-Albany is consistently ranked as the number one commercial real estate brokerage firm in the Capital Region.

**SM:** What types of real estate does CBRE specialize in?

**RS:** We represent clients interested in the acquisition and disposition of retail, office, industrial, and multi family properties.

We do not list or market single family residential units.

**SM: What can clients expect from CBRE?**

RS: Knowledge. Loyalty. Honesty. Our responsibility is to deliver to our clients what we believe to be true market values for real estate and the probabilities of a successful deal. Sometimes that involves reconciling market realities with market expectations.

**SM: Where do you see current market trends heading in this area?**

RS: With very little speculative development occurring here, the Capital Region seldom experiences the wild swings in rates and vacancies that occur in larger metropolitan areas during economic hard times. The advent and growth of the nano and bio sciences combined with a very stable government workforce, will serve to further diversify and stabilize the region. I believe continued consolidations in the banking and financial services industries will keep the office market in continued inertia through 2008. There should be some increased activity in big box warehouses locally. Large retailers could begin to decentralize their distribution systems away from mega centers, in favor of regional facilities designed to cut delivery time to the stores. This would be in response to rapidly rising transportation costs.

**SM: What are your goals for your new position in the company?**

RS: I am excited about the opportunity to expand the use of the CBRE services platform here in the Capital Region. It is also one of my objectives in the coming years to keep raising the bar for the quality of service demanded and expected of a CBRE-Albany broker, and then delivering against that expectation.

**SM: What has been the biggest challenge on your path to success?**

RS: Letting go of my individual book of business while transitioning to my current

management role. Many of my long time clients have also become friends over the years. It's very important to me that they recognize that the change should be positive for them. I am, in fact, enhancing the level of service we deliver to them. Effectively, I stay involved at a strategic level with the client while adding an additional broker to his or her team.



**SM: How do you overcome adversity?**

RS: Deal with it head on and maintain a sense of humor. Some business situations can create serious stress for the participants, but I've had several friends pass away in recent years while not yet reaching 50 years of age. Their families have had to deal with real adversity. No problem from the office can come close to measuring up to that type of adversity.

**SM: You have served on many boards. Why is this important to you?**

RS: Interesting question. I've never given it much thought in terms of the benefits, or importance to me. My parents raised my siblings and me with a strong sense of community. Offering my time, talent, and treasure back to my community through board service is, I guess, my way of keeping their legacy alive. I am hopeful that my three sons will someday, wherever they eventually settle, extend to their community the same passion for

helping one another. I've had the opportunities over the past twenty years to serve as board president of organizations as varied as Siena College Annual Fund, Albany Salvation Army, Senior Services of Albany, and the Colonie Youth Center among others. I've also chaired several business organizations including the Latham Chamber (now the Colonie Chamber) and the Commercial and Industrial Real Estate Brokers, Inc. (CIRESB).

**SM: What do you enjoy most about living in the Capital District?**

RS: I'm a local product -having grown up in the upper New Scotland Avenue section of Albany. The Jacksonville, Florida area has been like a second home town to me over the past 25 years, with four siblings and my parents living there over different periods. Along with my wife Terri and my three sons, I have traveled throughout the US including trips to Hawaii and Alaska. Yet, whenever I get back to the Albany International Airport, I come to appreciate more and more this community that I call home. Albany is as comfortable being "Smallbany" as it is the world center of nanotechnology. It can be as rural as Thatcher Park or as urban as Washington Park. It just offers many opportunities to live life with variety, without the stress of the big city.

**SM: Is it difficult for you to achieve balance in your life?**

RS: Balance is a moving target. It was fairly easy to find balance in my 20's and early 30's with my growing real estate business, my wife, and community service. Time seemed plentiful and energy levels were limitless. The parenthood phase, starting in 1988 when my son Greg was born, began a twenty year period that was defined by a priority reshuffling. The clock needed 12 more hours per day to get it all done. The balancing became simpler over time ... once I made the decision that Little League held greater importance than a chamber dinner, and my best foursome on Father's Day didn't involve golf.

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