

## Brokers Working Harder, Smarter in Tough Markets

### Sheryl Mazirow Mazirow Commercial Inc.

Laser focused.

Those are the words Sheryl Mazirow uses to describe her success as a tenant representative.

"All we do is specialize in working on the tenants' behalf," said Mazirow who heads the boutique firm Mazirow Commercial Inc. in Westlake Village. "There are a couple other firms who do what we do, but they are not laser-focused on one geographic area," namely the San Fernando and Conejo valleys.

She considers herself truly a tenant advocate.

"Our premise is that you would never go into court permitting the opposing party's attorney to represent you," Mazirow said in describing her role. "Tenants do this once every five years, typically, and are not very well informed, but the landlord does this day-in and day-out."

When Mazirow started her real estate career 28 years ago, she looked around the office and saw that the person making the most money in the office was focused on tenant representation. So she copied everything he did.

"Earlier in my career I did lease buildings from the ground-up," said Mazirow. "So I understand the landlord's perspective having worked on that side very early in my career."

It's not all leasing either. Mazirow does represent tenants who want to own their own building. She'll perform an analysis that helps a business owner



decide whether it would be more beneficial to lease or to buy. But even there, she is "laser focused on office product, some R&D, but not hard-core industrial. I don't sell apartment houses."

Mazirow does not only represent clients when they move, but also helps them when they want to stay where they are.

"We represent them when they exercise an option, renew a lease, or sublease excess space," she said. "Anything that has to do with office space that a tenant occupies."

Her relationship with clients can span multiple transactions over many years.

She began working with what is now one of her larger clients, Employers Direct Insurance Co., back when leasing

an executive suite was all they could manage. Years later, Mazirow said, they took a sub-lease on 12,000 square feet. Growth then caused them to lease 35,000 square feet and in what Mazirow believes is one of the largest transactions in the Conejo Valley, they recently signed up for 67,000 square feet of space. That's the entire building.

The relationship even continued after the company was sold to an out-of-town owner.

"My opinion of Sheryl is, she is probably the best business relationship that I ever made coming out the door," June Duxler, vice president human resources and administration for Employers Direct. She's worked with Mazirow since the company's inception in 2002.

"She's incredibly knowledgeable. She does what other brokers promise to do. There's not enough wonderful things I can say about her," said Duxler.

With more than \$22 million worth of transactions to date, Mazirow's business may be boutique, but it's certainly not small potatoes. She does it all with one other agent and two support staff.

And while most of the industry is fairly stagnant, she is not seeing much of a slowdown on her end.

Most leases, she said, have a holdover penalty that can be anywhere from 125 percent to 300 percent of the current rent, even if the tenant stays on the premises. So tenants don't have the luxury of procrastinating.

"It's a much more favorable environment for tenants," said Mazirow. "There are many more options than previously."