

CAREER NOTES: “THAT GREAT REAL ESTATE CAREER”

Whether the market is up, down, or sideways, every day I meet people who are searching for That Great Real Estate Career. When I graduated from UBC Commerce in 1994, I decided that I wasn't going to find a short-term job that would just pay the bills, but rather search for a long-term career that I would be passionate about. My first task was to determine the type of real estate career to pursue. In my view, there are three types:

1. Developer/investor: a decision-maker who risks his or her shareholder's equity in pursuit of a greater return
2. Service provider: a consultant who provides specialized advice or service
3. Government agent: an officer who ensures that the investor has complied with the laws of the land

All career types can be rewarding and some can overlap, but at some point you need to determine which one best fits you. For me, the developer/investor career best suited my personality and preferred threshold for risk. My next step was to research the industry to find out who is “Best in Class.” I define Best in Class developers/investors as having the following attributes:

- Ability to dream: the company principals have big dreams and vision. They believe in the greatness of their company and its people.
- Access to capital: a dreamer without money is only a dreamer. Real estate is a capital-intensive activity; you need large sums of capital and supportive shareholders to execute those dreams.
- Exceptional character and reputation: the principals have an impeccable reputation and track record. They are well regarded in both the real estate industry and the overall community for their integrity and honourable business approach.



After all the research, informational interviews, and library newspaper clippings (no Internet back then), I identified six firms that fit the box. Some were big and others were small; some were in Vancouver while others were in Toronto. None had any job postings, but I pursued them anyway. To make a long story short, I was fortunate to receive certain job offers and decided to choose Concert Properties (then known as VLC Properties) in June 1994. Over the years, as opportunity presented itself, I moved from department to department, gaining exposure to different disciplines of our business. I have been fortunate that throughout my career I was given roles that were meaningful and interesting. When I joined, VLC was a small residential development company; today Concert is a fully integrated development and investment enterprise that has over \$1.8 billion in assets. Our activities include residential (condominium, rental, and seniors), industrial, and office projects in BC, Alberta, and Ontario.

How do you land That Great Real Estate Career? You need to know yourself, the industry, and the players. Then, you need to identify those real estate leaders who show exceptional character and reputation. And once you are fortunate enough to join That Great Firm, you need to continue to learn all sides of their business so that you can ultimately have a career that is meaningful to you and to the company's activities.

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Andrew leads Concert's real estate acquisition activities across Canada. He has completed over \$1 billion in acquisition and disposition transactions for land development sites and existing developed properties. In addition, Andrew oversees Concert's asset management and term financing activities for its residential, industrial, and office income-property portfolio totalling over 10 million square feet. Andrew is active with UDI and NAIOP and serves with several non-profit organizations both locally and nationally. Andrew has been awarded numerous awards, including “Emerging Leaders Award” by NAIOP North America, “BC's Top 40 Under 40” by Business in Vancouver, and “One of 10 Alumni to Watch” from UBC's Sauder School of Business.