

Eliza Solender helps nonprofits and small businesses find commercial real-estate.



Education:

BA in Communication Studies from Emerson College; MA in Communication from Purdue University

Continued Education:

Certificate of Director Education from the National Association of Corporate Directors

Experience:

Manager of Human Resources, Sun Oil Company's Exploration Division

Senior Lecturer, School of Management at the University of Texas at Dallas

office *space*

Eliza Solender's firm helps nonprofits and small businesses buy, sell, and lease commercial real-estate *by Joyce Finn*

in 1991, Eliza Solender, owner of Solender Hall Inc., launched a pioneering commercial real-estate and consulting business catering to the realty needs of nonprofit organizations in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Here, she talks with *MARCH* about finding and filling a niche.

How did you get started in commercial real estate?

I was in my late 30s and followed my father into the business. I had been working for

a Fortune 500 company and liked the management-consulting side of my job, but I also wanted bottom-line responsibility and to see the results of my work. I liked what my father was doing and saw it as an opportunity. I joined Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) Dallas and the women in CREW taught me real estate. That is one of the reasons I led the formation of the Commercial Real Estate Women Foundation. I wouldn't have learned real estate without these women who so graciously spent the time to teach me. Eventually, I was the national president as well as chairman of the Foundation.

Did you start your commercial real-estate business for nonprofits as a niche market?

I always wanted to have a boutique firm. I'd been on a number of nonprofit boards, and every time I was president, a real estate issue would come up, so we'd hire an out-side broker. They were well meaning

people, but they didn't understand how a nonprofit worked. We struggled and they struggled. When I started my company it hit me that no one specializes in nonprofits, so that is what we did. We have been doing it for 20 years now and have literally helped hundreds of nonprofits buy, sell or lease properties.

How do you differentiate yourself from your competitors?

Because of my background in management consulting and human resources, I offer clients added areas of expertise they wouldn't get otherwise—it's not just a real-estate deal. For example, I'm on the board of a local bank, the second bank board I've been on. That experience has given me the opportunity to understand banking and finance. Because I understand what a loan committee is looking for, I can bring that area of expertise to both my for-profit and nonprofit clients.

Who are your clients?

Over 65 percent of our business is for nonprofits, the rest is with small businesses such as law, architecture, design, and technology firms that need individualized attention. The problem is that the large

real-estate companies don't really want to spend time on small-business owners and nonprofits, so that becomes a good opportunity for us.

Recently, we worked with the United Methodist Reporter, which prints church publications. They had a 72,000-square-foot property on a major highway, which they did not need. We were representing the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, so we decided to bring both groups together.

How do you grow your company?

I give a lot of speeches, I write a lot of articles, I do some direct marketing, and then happy clients tell their friends about me. I get a lot of calls from people saying they heard about me from someone. They say "Everybody keeps saying to call you, so we're calling you." It's very gratifying after all this time to have that kind of strong referral base.

What is your favorite part of your job?

I love working with groups and serving on boards; I really like corporate governance. Currently, I serve on two corporate boards and one nonprofit, the National Association

of Corporate Directors. I'm president of the North Texas Chapter board.

What gives you satisfaction?

To be able to look back and see—whether it's an animal shelter, battered women shelter, HIV/AIDS clinic, children's theatre, food pantry, or school—we've affected thousands and thousands of lives. **11**

A message from Commercial Real Estate Women

CREW Foundation was incorporated in 1998 as the 501(c)3, philanthropic arm of CREW Network and continues to stand as the sole foundation dedicating its resources towards building opportunities for women and girls in commercial real estate. In collaboration with CREW Network, CREW Foundation implements and supports a Career Outreach Agenda which cultivates our future Network leaders through participation in a continuum of educational outreach, scholarship and mentoring programs built to introduce the commercial real estate industry to female high school while connecting female college students and entry-level career women to the resources, support and network they need to gain financial independence and economic self-sufficiency through a successful career in the commercial real estate industry.



CREW Network and its philanthropic arm, CREW Foundation, are proud to support the career advancement of women in commercial real estate. To become a part of our growing business network, please contact us today.



www.crewnetwork.org
888.866.CREW

IF YOU SERVE ON A NONPROFIT BOARD OR MANAGE A NONPROFIT, YOU NEED:

Available Free on our Website

S O L E N D E R H A L L
COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE SERVICES

Ten Real Estate Rules Every Nonprofit Organization in America Should Know

- No matter what size your organization,
- No matter how big or small the transaction,
- Whether you are renting or purchasing...

These Rules Will Save Your Group Time and Money.

Solender/Hall, Inc. is a nationally recognized (and award winning) commercial real estate firm established in 1991 and based in Dallas. -We specialize in and offer full commercial real estate brokerage services to nonprofit and small business clients in Texas. -We offer real estate consulting services to nonprofit organizations on a national basis. Call us at 214-265-8200 or see our website: www.solenderhall.com