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Not-so-secret formula for boosting your real estate career

By JENNIFER WHITELOW, Special to the Daily Transcript

No savvy real estate professional expects 2010 to be a windfall year. Residential markets will likely continue their snail's pace up from rock bottom and commercial markets most likely have yet to weather the worst of it.

Times of challenge bring times of opportunity -- for those clever enough to find the opportunity. Fortunately, San Diego has many professional real estate associations that offer networking, promotion and education that just might help provide the tools for years of prosperity, even in turbulent times.

One much-respected destination for commercial real estate professionals is **CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women) San Diego**. By no means limited to women only, the organization's events and membership draw a large cross section of the industry. CREW offers events every month, ranging from educational breakfasts and luncheons to networking mixers and from property tours to an annual golf tournament. When the real estate industry began its downturn in mid-2008, CREW made a concerted effort to develop programs and opportunities that would help members reposition themselves in a fast changing environment with networking and education at the forefront.

Members have access to CREW Network's career center and Network Deal Room database. CREW members can also choose to serve on one of five committees and/or to participate in CREW's charity of choice, the Susan Friedman Memorial Scholarship to benefit graduate students at the University of San Diego Burnham-Moores Center for Real Estate. This year, CREW rolls out a speakers bureau to showcase the talent of its chapter members. To receive notices about CREW events and opportunities, send a request to crewsd@crewnetwork.org.

NAIOP San Diego is one of the region's premier professional associations for commercial real estate professionals. NAIOP serves its professional community through strong legislative representation and diverse networking opportunities, educational programs and mixers.

NAIOP is well known for its Market Snapshot series, where panels of real estate professionals offer insights into regional and industry sectors of San Diego's commercial real estate market, and for its Bus Tour series, where knowledgeable real estate brokers serve as tour guides to educate the bus tour attendees about significant projects in different areas of the county.

NAIOP also has a program specifically geared toward young real estate professionals called Developing Leaders, where NAIOP members 35 and under get special access to tools, networking, resources and mentorships to help them develop their careers.

Members can participate in a number of NAIOP committees and in NAIOP San Diego's charitable programs, Adopt a Platoon and Adopt a Marine/Buddy. NAIOP is also an active supporter of HomeAid San Diego. To receive information about NAIOP events and opportunities, contact Karen@naiopsd.org.

Another well-respected association, Urban Land Institute's (ULI) San Diego/Tijuana District Council, caters to both residential and commercial real estate professionals. Their mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land to enhance the total environment. The District Council addresses issues involving land use, real estate, housing, transportation and urban development.

ULI hosts a breakfast event the second Tuesday of each month in downtown San Diego, which features a panel of experts addressing current affairs affecting the real estate industry. The group also offers periodic [ULI@Lunch](#) sessions where a smaller group of attendees gather for presentations from experts in real estate and related fields who educate the audience about specific topics.

ULI members can also join one of more than 10 ULI committees. ULI members under the age of 35 can also join its Young Leaders program, which offers several events each year, including networking socials and roundtable forums where small groups are teamed with a real estate industry leader for educational sessions. To receive notices about ULI events and opportunities, sign up at www.ulisd.org.

San Diego offers many other real estate-related associations as well. Citizens Coordinate for Century 3 (C-3) is a unique organization that brings real estate professionals together with citizens who hope to shape the natural and built environments of San Diego. The group hosts regular monthly programs and periodic events.

For real estate professionals involved in the homebuilding industry, Building Industry Association (BIA) offers educational, legislative and networking programs. Commercial Real Estate brokers have Commercial Realtors Association of San Diego (CRASD), CCIM Institute and Society of Industrial and Office Realtors (SIOR). Residential realtors find resources through San Diego Association of Realtors. Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) caters to professionals who own or manage office buildings, and apartment owners, managers and service providers often belong to San Diego County Apartment Association (SDCAA).

Architects can find career advancement opportunities through American Institute of Architecture's (AIA) San Diego chapter, interior designers through the local American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) chapter and contractors through the local Associated of General Contractors of America (AGC) chapter. The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) also has a local chapter and offers opportunities and events to those involved in sustainable building practices.

Though not a comprehensive list of association opportunities, the resources listed above can help make a difference for any real estate professional looking to gain a competitive edge in his or her career.

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