

By Steve Lewis

While a good deal of the stress that successful real estate brokers face occurs within their work life, SIORs agree that in order to manage that stress they must not only address work activities, but their overall lifestyles as well.

That's at least partly due to the fact that as individuals they don't all find the sources of their stress to be the same – even at work.

“The most stressful aspect is that everyone wants their information NOW, and so the difficulty is prioritizing all the requests, because at the end of the day, somebody will not be happy,” says **Bryce Custer, SIOR**, industrial specialist Real Estate Advisor Energy Services, NAI Spring, Canton, Ohio.

Ian M. Grusd, SIOR, CCIM, principal of GreenGate Capital in Tifton Falls, N.J., agrees. “It used to be that if you returned a call within 24 hours you were providing excellent customer service. Today, a call or e-mail not returned the same day is not acceptable,” he notes. But Grusd also cites:

Not being able to focus on the “sales process” while bogged down with daily e-mails and non-sales related activities.

The reliance on third parties (i.e. co-broker, landlord, tenant) to provide timely necessary information to move a deal forward.

The major transportation corridors are always “under construction” in the North/Central New Jersey market, and this affects client meetings and showings and can cause last minute rescheduling.

But **Dan S. Granot, SIOR**, office specialist and principal of Joel & Granot Real Estate/CORFAC International in Atlanta, Ga., says “the aspect of our profession that is most stressful is that the difference between a great year and a not so great year can be out of your hands as a broker. A deal can fall through for many reasons and most of the time none of those have anything to do with you. Another stressful aspect is that every day your livelihood is based on an ‘eat what you kill’ mentality. What we love about the business can also be a very stressful part of the business.”

“I think the most stressful part my business is cold calling or business development when you have to go out and hunt for it – knock on doors or call when nobody wants to hear from you,” adds **Randy Mason, SIOR, CCIM**, partner in Commercial Realty Specialists, Newport Beach, Calif.

James Baker, SIOR, CCIM, of Baker Commercial Real Estate in Jeffersonville, Ind., cites “Indecisive and/or unhappy customers and clients.” In addition, he mentions, “listed properties that are difficult to find buyers or tenants for at a price and/or terms that the owner requires.”

DIFFERENT SOURCES, DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS

Just as the main causes of stress vary from individual to individual, so do the strategies to relieve that stress. For example, Granot says, “The best method for mitigating my stress level is exercise. I wake up very early and work up a sweat and that seems to equip me for the rest of the day.”

Another stress reducer, he adds, is family time. “When I can go watch a cross country meet or go to a dance recital or a tennis match that a child is playing it takes me to another world... a more important one,” he stresses. “Then there is always date night -- if you can get one.”

“I use music, prayer, reading and study, silence and solitude, and fellowship with others as healthy ways to deal with stress,” says Baker. “I meet about twice a week with a couple of Christian men's groups in a confidential and open forum. Through sharing my struggles and stresses with other men I have found a healthy outlet to release my stress and to receive wise counsel. We talk about our struggles and share confidentially with each other in what we refer to as a ‘safe container.’ Without trust and agreeing to confidentiality this would not work. We also share a common bond through our faith in Christ.”

Baker is also a musician and occasionally gets to perform with various local groups. “My degree is in music and I played professionally for a number of years prior to working in real estate,” he explains. “I'm a percussionist/drummer and also play piano. Music allows me to relax and to get away from only thinking about the current ‘deals’ I'm working on.” Recently,

contributing SIORs



he recalls, he was walking out of an SIOR event in Indianapolis and heard some drums playing along the downtown canal next to where the event was held. “I walked over and was invited to join the group, which I did, and I had a great time beating on a drum and making music with the ‘drum circle’ group that meets there once a week,” he shares. “That was a great stress reliever for me -- and a lot of fun.”

Mason says one of his most successful methods of stress reduction has been his decision to only give out his cell number and not his office number. “I would not call the office at 10:00 at night before I went to bed because people would call saying ‘I want the answer now,’” he recalls. “If they need me now they know they can call me and if not, I know nothing is pending. I also have autoreplies -- so, for example, if I’m in a meeting I say ‘I’m in a meeting, please leave me a detailed text.’”

Mason recently has gotten into kite boarding, which he says is “an adrenaline producer. I do not think about the office because I need to think about my next move, trick, or wave.”

Mason also lives well below his means. “I don’t need to worry about a deal working, or making a dollar, but just how to find the next client,” he explains. “I work for letters of appreciation -- that’s what floats my boat and gives me an adrenaline rush.”

And, while Mason used to get up in the morning and rush to the office, he realized that much of that work could be done at home “sitting by my fountain and waiting for my wife and kids to get up. This way I’m able to see them before going to the office; that relieves stress too,” says Mason.



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FEATURE ARTICLE

"I originally tried to handle stress by eating lousy (made me feel better at the moment) and by working harder (not smarter)," recalls Granot ironically. "On November 21, 2013, I suffered a heart attack at age 50, and the doctor said I must reduce stress or die. It was a pretty simple decision."

Actually, he continues, reducing stress itself was not the goal, but rather changing attitudes toward work and personal habits. He improved his diet (losing 50 pounds) and now "breaks a sweat" at least 20-25 minutes a day.

"I arrive at the office around 6:30 - 7:00 a.m. before everyone else for quality time to catch up on e-mail, articles that I had put aside, business/professional journals etc. (my time to educate myself and take care of time wasters i.e. e-mail)," he shares. He has also fired stressful clients. "This allows me to be more productive; I have happier clients overall and I'm happier overall, which reduces stress," says Granot.

In addition, he notes, working with the Massimo Group "helps me reduce stress and achieve my personal, work, and financial goals."

Grusd says he prioritizes a daily to do list and checks items off. "Even getting small things off the list creates momentum and sets the tone for a productive day," he says. He also seeks "quiet" time. "Many days I will not go into the office -- especially first thing -- so I am able to take care of the priorities without any distractions," he explains.

Exercise, Grusd adds, is a must. "It can be hard to commit to a regular schedule due to the nature of the business, but to me it is the most important stress reduction method," he says. "On busier days I will find a local park or track and return my phone calls while taking a walk. The combination of being outdoors, exercising, and doing business is a win-win."

He says he also finds it valuable to switch things up. "The other night I took a 10 mile bike ride at 9 o'clock p.m. to 'recharge' my batteries," he shares.

BE OPEN TO NEW METHODS

None of the SIORs we spoke to has closed the door to new opportunities for stress management. "I am always looking for different ways to relieve my stress and am certainly open to new methods," says Granot. "I am a self help reader, so I am always looking for other ways or methods to help me."

"I try to evaluate new approaches of stress management by making sure that they are true to who I am and what I believe, and also that they don't result in creating other stresses as an unintended consequence," adds Baker.

"As brokers, we are always looking for new ways to service business, compete for business and utilize technologies -- and stress management is no different," says Grusd. He says he learns about new approaches "primarily through word of mouth from others that seem less stressed than me!" ■



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