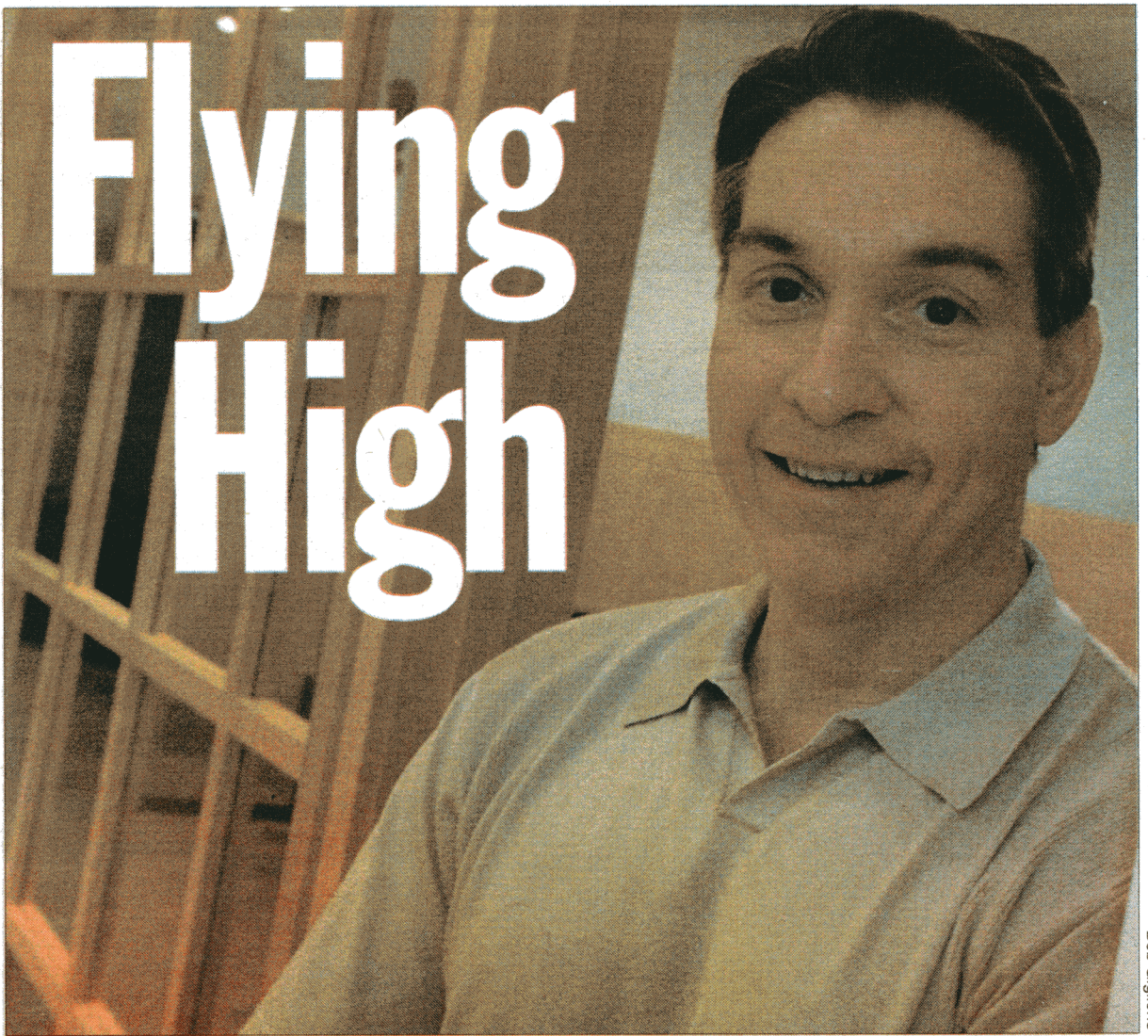


Flying High



Bob Giglione

AERO DYNAMIC: Corporate Realty Consultants founder – and pilot – Don Catalano covers Allstate interests in six states and he’s looking to expand.

By applying his passions for technology and aviation to the real estate game, Don Catalano has managed to carve out a comfortable niche in the tenant service market on Long Island.

He says his flight path to success – he’s the founder and president of Corporate Realty Consultants – has been guided by discipline and training. The bou-

tique firm, which focuses specifically on tenant representation, has a client list that includes insurance giant Allstate.

Catalano has learned most of his lessons in the real world rather than the classroom.

The discipline was instilled during a four-year, post-Vietnam stint in the Army’s Special Forces branch, mostly at Fort Bragg, N.C. His training included scuba diving and high-altitude, low-opening parachute jumping.

After he left the Army in 1981, Catalano returned to school at Nassau County Community

College. But before long, the self-described “gadget guy” dropped out to start a computer company in an effort to take advantage of the growing young market. Although that venture failed after four years, Catalano took valuable lessons to his new career in real estate.

“I like people, numbers, negotiations and creativity,” said Catalano, who added that the failed computer business helped him to determine how to best harness his skills and talents.

In 1987, he started a second career, this time in commercial real estate at the Woodbury-based real estate brokerage, Greiner-Maltz.

“Real estate brought in all of the talents that I had for numbers, people, negotiations, analysis and aviation,” Catalano said. “It’s like golf, you never get bored and there is always room for improvement.”

Sounds good, right? His first year he grossed only \$4,000.

By
NICK ANASTASI

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Catalano creating a real estate platform for expansion

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But real estate was a strong match for Catalano, who enjoyed the fact that clients understood the product he was selling a lot better than they understood computers. "I would sell something and it would stick," he explained.

After his stint with Greiner, Catalano jumped to United Realty and then to the former Whitman Realty, which is now Newmark & Co., before striking out on his own.

His interest in gadgets has helped him excel in a highly competitive industry, allowing him to stay ahead of the curve as technology has made increasing inroads in real estate.

"He got me started with digital photography," said Greiner-Maltz President Bill Greiner, who taught Catalano the real estate ropes.

Catalano started CRC in 1993 while he was still with Whitman. That was also the year he won the "Deal of the Year" award from the Association for a Better Long Island, a trade group for developers, for his representation of Sbarro Corp. in the acquisition of its headquarters building in Melville.

"That was one of the first CRC deals," he said. In 1996, he and partner John Hoblin, decided to dedicate their efforts to CRC full time and opened an office in Farmingdale.

Bill Fitzmaurice, a former director

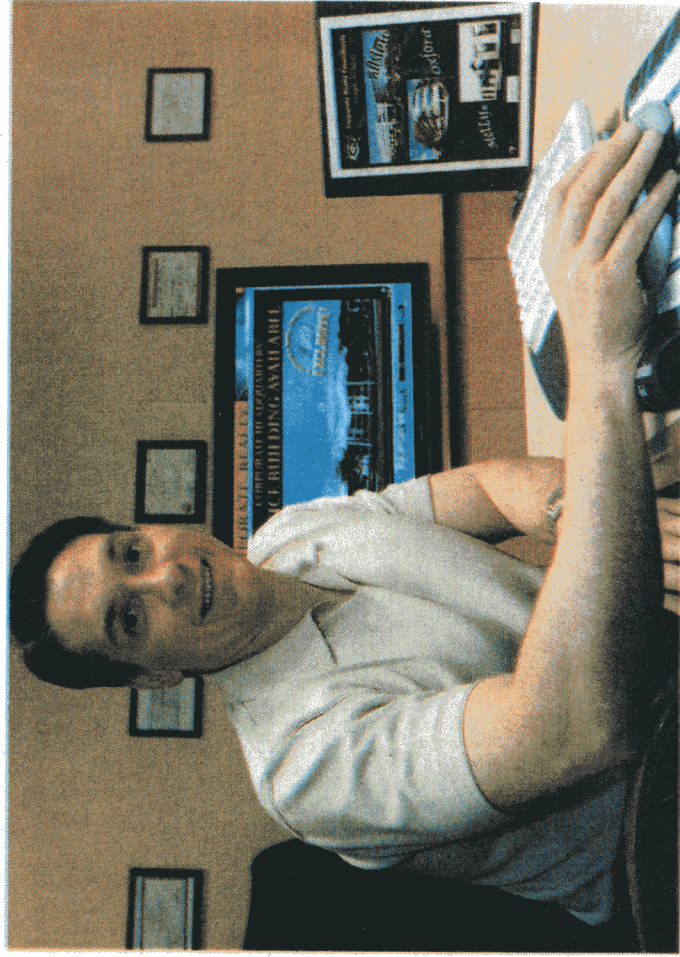
of real estate for Allstate who had worked with Catalano for 18 years before he retired, remarked on Catalano's prowess. "I told him, 'I have needs, and I'll keep feeding you till you hang yourself,'" said Fitzmaurice, who thought Catalano's operation might become overwhelmed by his requirements. But that did not occur. "There was never the need to go elsewhere."

CRC's latest activity with Allstate involves the anticipated sale of its 221,000-square-foot facility in Farmingville to the Town of Brookhaven for an expected \$21 million.

Though CRC is based on Long Island, the Nassau-Suffolk market represents only a small part of its target area. That's where Catalano's passion for aviation comes in.

"In college, I learned to fly," said Catalano. But time was a rare commodity. "It took me three years to solo." But he continued to pursue flying for pleasure and upon receiving his instrument rating, he began to look for a plane. He recognized flying's potential to expand CRC's operational envelope.

"It allows for a compression of time," he said of the plane, a Mooney Ovaltion. But Catalano is looking to expand even further. He is in negotiations to acquire a new plane, a Piper Meridian, which has greater speed than the Mooney.



Bob Gligione

GROWTH STRATEGY: Corporate Realty Consultants' Don Catalano has plans to expand his operation in Commack.

The plane has helped CRC find 50 percent of its deals off Long Island. The Commack-based company now represents Allstate in six states, and Catalano is licensed to practice real estate in seven states. He hopes to get licensed in five more states within a year.

In 2002, CRC is having its best year ever despite an economy that is only

haltingly emerging from a recession. "You have to prove you can take care of the client," he said. "The rest is icing."

Catalano said he also has plans to expand CRC's base of operations in Commack.

"I have 14 desks ready," Catalano said. "Our goal is to be one of the most respected tenant representatives on the East Coast."