

partners

FOR THIS TEXAS CRE FIRM,

“ AT PARTNERS,
IT'S PERSONAL ”

ISN'T JUST A CATCHY TAGLINE.
IT'S AN ESSENTIAL
KEY TO SUCCESS

How looking beyond the business and focusing on people helped Partners become one of the most sought-after-to-work-at companies in Texas.



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Partners is the only Texas commercial real estate firm in history to achieve dual #1 rankings in the state's most visible best workplace competitions.

Striding down the halls of Partners' Houston headquarters—a full-floor footprint on the 19th story of 1360 Post Oak Boulevard in the city's Uptown/Galleria neighborhood—it's impossible to miss the Culture Wall emblazoned with the company's five Core Values.

The company (which was founded and headquartered in Houston in 1997, and also has offices in San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas) proudly funnels all of its key decisions—including hiring, acquisitions, business line and geographic expansion, and many others—through the lens of this collective ethos, which is comprised of they key tenets of Clients and Investors First; Excellence & Integrity; Accountability; Entrepreneurial Passion; and Positive Collaboration.

That intentional focus on culture has elevated Partners to rarefied air: this past fall, Partners became the first Houston commercial real estate firm ever to rank as the #1 workplace in all of Houston by both The Houston Business Journal and The Houston Chronicle in the same year, and one of the only companies period to pull off a clean sweep of both awards.

“Part of what makes Partners so exceptional is that we'll pretty quickly figure out whether someone is the right fit,” says Scott Lunine, Partner and Executive Vice President of Brokerage. “You have to demonstrate a willingness to put your clients' needs ahead of your own along with a desire to positively collaborate with your teammates right out of the gate. Agents that are driven by an entrepreneurial mindset will thrive almost immediately at our company.”

It's uncommon to find a company culture where the majority of employees enjoy a genuine camaraderie with their colleagues. There's a deep and abiding sense of genuine care for each other, and for each other's success. It's also no surprise then, that the company also ranked as the #2 Small company in Austin on The Austin Business Journal's Best Places to Work (BPTW) rankings; and the #10 Small company in San Antonio per the San Antonio Business Journal's BPTW list.

Added Lunine, “We frequently ask recruits what they find most appealing about the prospect of joining Partners, and the answer is universally ‘the people.’”



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Truly, commercial real estate firms can be a dime a dozen. While most companies can claim something that is unique to their organization, at the end of the day the vast majority of firms offer similar services. Which means if you have a commercial real estate need, you're not looking for a company to service that need as much as you are looking for like-minded individuals. People that you know will go to the ends of the earth and leave no stone unturned in providing world-class solutions for your CRE service or investment requirement. And that's where Partners truly stands out from the competition: its talent roster.

Jerod Hangartner, Managing Director of the company's Dallas office, is in town for a meeting, and pauses to reflect on one of the many appealing factors that drew him to join the firm.

“A lot of firms pay lip service to their core values—I bet if you examined a random sample of 100 companies' values, the word ‘integrity’ would appear in more than half of them,” Hangartner says. “It was clear from the outset that our professionals infuse the entirety of their day-to-day activities with an elevated focus on uprightness and moral character that I hadn't seen prior to arriving here.”

Across the hall from the Culture Wall, Sloan Crady, a Vice President in the company's capital-raising arm, Partners Capital, is playing shuffleboard with Andrew Laycock, a Vice President in Partners' Industrial group. Both Crady and Laycock are among Partners' younger cohort, but have quickly raised their profiles internally and externally.

"One of the most important lessons I've learned from my mentor at Partners was taking ownership—on successes as well as when things don't go as planned," Laycock says as his puck settles perfectly in the 3-point zone. "Accountability is one of those things they don't really teach you in school—you kind of have to figure it out pretty quickly once you're in the business world."

Partners' Austin and San Antonio Managing Director Steve Druth rounds the corner and playfully slides one of Crady's pucks before making a beeline to the break room, where a half dozen of Partners' employees are chatting over lunch.

"See this?" Druth gestures toward his bantering colleagues. "This doesn't happen everywhere. I've been in work environments where everyone takes their lunch at their desks with headphones jammed in their ears. I've never really seen anything like this where our team not only enjoys collaborating with each other within the work environment, but can't get enough of each other to the point where it extends into their own time as well. The energy is electric and palpable—considering we spend most of our days in the company of our colleagues, it's refreshing when that time feels gratifying on both a professional and personal level."

The laser focus on company culture might be instilled from leadership, but it doesn't work without buy-in and execution on the part of the individuals who contribute to making it a daily reality. HR Director Jill McCall and her team play a vital role in magnifying the warm atmosphere within the office's halls, and also helping ensure that employees are rewarded verbally and tangibly.

"Our culture of recognition and employee acknowledgement is something we make sure to familiarize all of our new hires with right out of the gate during their onboarding process on day one," McCall says.

From quarterly employee superstar awards, to happy hours, to getaway days, to companywide lunches and other team-building and bonding events, Partners employees know the organization values their hard work and dedication.

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Office Manager Tammy Spencer keeps the atmosphere warm and lively daily in the reception area, and has honed the art of being everyone in the office’s best friend, while also garnering high praise from the numerous external individuals that pass through Partners’ doors on a daily basis as well. And Spencer really shines when tasked with facilitating a celebration. She was a core member of the team that pulled together a rousing gala feting of the company’s first anniversary as Partners (having divested itself from its previous affiliation with the NAI network), replete with a Partners logo cake, wide range of food options, refreshments, commemorative pins, a raffle for company swag, and even a photo booth.

“What can I say, this company energizes me in ways I never knew possible,” says Spencer. “The positive energy collectively is pretty unusual for a group that’s as focused on servicing their clients as ours is, and it makes for a joyful and rewarding experience.”



Of course, the Partners model may also not be for everyone—and that’s okay, too.

“Partners is a great fit for high achievers who care deeply about the quality of their contributions, and have an innate desire to push their limits to produce the very best work product possible,” says Larry Koestler, Executive Vice President of Marketing & Communications, walking purposefully down the hall toward his next meeting in the Client Experience Room. “Thoughtfulness, a deliberate approach, hustle, an ability to problem-solve, and taking a moment to consider the ‘why’ around a given assignment are essential ingredients for success at Partners. But just as important is maintaining a sense of humor where appropriate. The adage ‘work hard, play hard’ has been overused to the point of transcending cliché, but it’s about as apt a descriptor as it gets for the electric atmosphere we’ve cultivated at the firm.”



Jon Silberman has taken his usual seat in the large conference room on the 19th floor—his second-most-frequented daily location after his own office—tapping his pen on the massive marble table to the beat of a song only he can hear. Among the many roles he inhabits—Managing Partner of Partners Real Estate being his primary responsibility—he also plays drums during his (minimal) spare time.



The pen tapping is a familiar tic to those who work closely with Silberman, as he listens intently to key updates from his executives while also not-so-subtly trying to expedite the process.

Alongside Silberman steering the firm day-to-day is Partners' Chief Operating Officer and Partner Travis Rodgers, whose list of duties also includes functioning as the company's de facto internal sounding board. There is a seemingly endless stream of colleagues swinging by his office daily asking for his advice on any number of matters of all shapes and sizes.

Rodgers, endlessly humble, refuses to take any credit for helping foster one of the most unique and sought-after company cultures in the commercial real estate industry. While he and his colleagues up and down the firm emphasize all five of the company's core values, positive collaboration resonates particularly deeply for Rodgers.

"I'm grateful to be surrounded by an incredible group of hardworking folks — a group that puts positive collaboration into action daily, and understands we do our best work when we engage each other and all work toward the same goals," Rodgers says.

Where Partners is today is nothing short of staggering considering the company's humble beginnings. Launching in 1997 as Partners Commercial Realty (PCR) by a small handful of entrepreneurial-minded brokers (including Silberman), the company began life as vehicle primarily serving tenants seeking office space in Houston, but quickly expanded into other product types and business lines.

Silberman has been at the helm of Partners for over a decade, and has overseen the most dramatic period of growth in company history during that time. Today Partners—which recently ascended to third-largest commercial real estate brokerage in Houston—is one of the largest independent commercial real estate firms in Texas. The company employs more than 200 real estate professionals—nearly tripling its





While Silberman enjoys bantering as much as anyone, his continually expanding purview of business lines and strategic initiatives requires a laser-like focus on expediency and efficiency—two cornerstone reasons why Partners has been able to expand as rapidly as it has.

During the past two decades, Partners has evolved into a full-service commercial real estate firm providing client solutions via its services business for Office, Industrial, Retail, Land, Life Sciences, and Multifamily product types across Brokerage Services, which includes Tenant Representation, Investment Sales, and Land Sales; Investor Services, which includes Property Management, Project Leasing, Project Management, and Facilities Management; Valuation Services, which includes Valuation & Advisory, Litigation & Expert Witness Testimony, Property Tax Consulting, and Institutional Fund Valuation; and Project Services, which includes Construction Management and Space Management; and creating value for its investors through its Investments line of business, which includes its investment management platform specializing in the acquisition and disposition of office, industrial, and retail multitenant properties via multiple investment funds; the development of retail, industrial, office, and mixed-use projects; and a finance arm operating as a registered broker dealer offering real estate investment opportunities through qualified and experienced commercial real estate sponsors.

Partners is the top Houston-based full-service commercial real estate firm on the Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing private companies in America, and is annually ranked among the Best Place to Works by the Houston Chronicle; Houston Business Journal; Austin Business Journal; San Antonio Business Journal; and Dallas Business Journal.



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