

# BANKER & TRADESMAN

THE REAL ESTATE, BANKING AND COMMERCIAL WEEKLY FOR MASSACHUSETTS

Monday, October 24, 2011

## Squeezing Value From Design

In a market saturated with real estate services firms, SN Consulting Group recently opened its doors with a suite of resource management services for owners and developers of commercial properties typically offered by separate service providers – all under one roof.

Led by design and development industry veterans Kevin Nice and Avi Shoss, the firm was created to help identify efficient paths to feasibility, bringing projects to market faster and incorporating features that will make properties economically viable and attractive to tenants.

### KEVIN NICE

**Title:** Principal and co-founder, SN Consulting Group; Medford

**Age:** 53

**Experience:** 30 years



### How are you setting yourselves apart from the many other real estate services firms in the area?

We know how to add value to projects at every level. We can structure our work so it reduces clients' risk up front. We're nimble and we put together the right team for each project. In many firms there are multiple partners that have to all approve how something gets done, so you fall into the same format. We can format our contractual agreements to fit each job. We work on everything from kiosk design to restaurant design. We were brought in to find added value for a major mixed-use project in San Juan that had been stalled due to market conditions. I'm working right now on a re-model of a major mixed-use project in Boston ... that I can't talk about yet.

### Can you give our readers of an example of something you're working on right now?

We're doing a lot of preliminary work on larger buildings in the 80,000- to 200,000-square-foot range. We're working on a 3,500-square-foot retail outbuilding in Bangor, Maine, right now. More locally, I'm working



with Boston Properties on an information desk at Prudential Center. I've been doing their tenant reviews for the center for about 12 years. There's a criteria we have for ... what tenants submit for their store design. I'm basically a gatekeeper to help maintain a level of design required at that center. As a mixed-use project, it's not just about one use or one tenant. It's about every use working together. Prudential Center is kind of the lobby for a lot of residential and office buildings, so it's important to maintain the quality of design there to maintain the value of the other buildings.

**Before forming SN Consulting, you were most recently a principal at Arrowstreet. Do you consider yourself more of an architect than a developer?**

The majority of my background has been in retail and mixed-use, but I have worked in virtually every building type out there, all on the commercial side in terms of buildings that are done for profit, not institutional or university properties. I am a registered architect, but I use design to solve problems, and in many cases it's solving a business problem. I love great design, but you also have to look at how you get projects to work. I'm more interested in creating projects that people use and environments that they like to be in ... projects you can live in as opposed to just look at, and that has been the focus of my career.

**Are you trying to get projects from their infancy and keep them through construction, or to work on parts of projects?**

We can do everything from due diligence all the way through construction administration. We don't need to get the entire project, and in fact we are very careful about only going after work we know we can do well. We're happy to come in and add value where it makes sense. Often times it's redesign. A lot of times it's budget reallocation to squeeze additional value from a project.



**Kevin Nice's Five Favorite Food Cities:**

- **New York** – they have a good version of every type of food, which I think makes it stand out in the world.
- **Boston** – I know a lot of people in the industry and I know where to get great food.
- **London** – over the past 10 years, I think they've gotten to be interesting for food.
- **Venice** – simply because I find that city magical, and any place you eat is part of that experience.
- **Taipei** – they introduced me to a whole new world of food, the true Chinese cuisines that we don't necessarily see here on a regular basis.