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The VIBE of today's commercial real estate - by Meredith Christensen

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In French, the phrase “je ne sais quoi” is used to describe something with an intangible quality that makes it distinctive and attractive. In accounting the term “good will” describes the value of an intangible asset. In real estate, the term is “VIBE.”

At CBRE/New England's 2017 Market Overview in January, we defined the concept of VIBE as the following:

- Vibrant and sometimes untraditional neighborhoods;
- Innovative new and old design;
- Bold lifestyle amenities; and
- Entrepreneurial ecosystem.

VIBE is that extra something that drives a tenant to a project. Most landlords lay claim to their building as being in a neighborhood that is in a 24/7 live-work-play environment, but there are certain buildings that go a step further, bringing a level of sophisticated funkiness that tenants are often willing to pay up for. With the unemployment rate in Massachusetts dropping below 3% for the first time in almost 16 years, real estate has become a consistent recruitment and retention tool.

Today's companies operate differently than they did a decade ago, and their real estate strategy should follow suit. When Samuels & Associates was designated as the developer of Parcel 12 in the Back Bay, their stated goal was to design a building different than any other ever constructed in Boston. The resulting design draws on the neighborhood's hip nature, while delivering the state-of-the-art flexibility companies need today, with more than a quarter acre of outdoor space and unprecedented branding opportunities. There are dozens of startups within proximity, a mature residential community and some of the city's best amenities mere steps away. With over 10 million s/f of new projects in the Greater Boston pipeline—all competing for the best tenants, who in turn are competing for the city's top talent—the one that provides that “je ne sais quoi,” that “good will,” that “VIBE,” will come out on top.

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