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2024 Women in CRE: Vicki Keenan, Cresa Boston

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Vicki Keenan
Managing Principal

What recent project, transaction, or accomplishment are you most proud of? I'm currently engaged in two projects that I'm particularly proud of. The first involves helping a client identify a new headquarters location, a process that has been underway for the past eight months. This project required a deep dive into understanding the client's "why" behind the move, ensuring that their key stakeholders, including the board of directors, fully appreciated the strategic intent. We're now approaching the final stages, and it's rewarding to see how our thorough process has aligned the entire team around a shared vision. The second project is a significant achievement with a long-term client, where we've been working over the past several months to wind down their real estate portfolio. Our goal was to generate \$500 million in additional cash reserves. I'm extremely proud to share that our team exceeded that target, generating nearly \$600 million, a result that speaks to our strategic approach and the value we consistently deliver to our clients.

What advice do you have for young women aspiring to enter commercial real estate? My biggest piece of advice is to be unapologetically yourself. Early in my career, young women were often paired with mentors who didn't always share our experiences or perspectives. I found myself trying to imitate their business style, thinking it was the path to success. However, I quickly realized that mimicking someone else's approach didn't work because I wasn't being my authentic self. The key is to embrace your individuality – your own voice, style, and way of doing business. The commercial real estate industry is diverse and constantly evolving, so there's no single blueprint for success. You don't need to fit into a mold. Instead, leverage your unique strengths and perspective to stand out and make your mark. Most importantly, seek out mentors and allies who support you in finding your authentic path, and don't be afraid to carve your own space in the industry.

What is your vision for the future of women in commercial real estate? It's important for women in the industry to be fearless. There are challenges, but you can't let those get in your way of progress. I find it is important to move forward and pursue opportunity, not waiting for a specific window or an invitation. Women in CRE need to embrace who they are, share their opinions and ideas, and simply go for it. You will not always be accepted, and it's important to move past that as quickly as possible.