

REAL ESTATE WITH REAL BREADTH

BY PATRICK SULLIVAN



WHEN THE REAL estate market all but collapsed in 2008, Michael Pensabene knew that he would find new opportunities for his firm and his clients.

As a partner at the New York City real estate law firm Rosenberg & Estis, Pensabene knows that the real estate market can be volatile. "The very nature of the real estate market is that it fluctuates," he said. "Companies that succeed in any industry are those that adapt to market conditions. That's what we've done, and that's what we help our clients do. What sets us apart from our competitors is the depth of our understanding of real estate and our ability to provide legal representation based on unsailable business principles."

Rosenberg & Estis has 50 lawyers working in one of the biggest markets in the world. Its broad client base includes

investment firms and trusts, prominent real estate companies, and individual owners and investors. "The size of the firm enables us to service a diverse clientele," explained Pensabene. "We're big enough to service large clients with substantial staffing needs, but we are not too big for smaller clients to receive the same personalized attention."

Though R&E handles a variety of matters—real estate transactions, financing, foreclosures, commercial law, co-op and condo matters, landlord-tenant disputes and more—Pensabene says all matters are real estate-related. For example, he recently used his knowledge of landlord-tenant law to score a big win for a substantial client in a bankruptcy dispute.

Pensabene says R&E's key to success in a slow economy is to focus on relationships. "The way to maintain an ongoing relationship with clients is by looking at clients' business objectives and working with them to achieve those objectives, which may not necessarily be the reason that brought them through the front door," he said. ■



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ONLY RESULTS COUNT

For this law firm, a diverse range of clients doesn't change the game plan

BY SARA SOLANO



For attorney Catherine Mackey, variety is the spice of life. As managing partner of Mackey Law Group in Bradenton, Fla., she said they can have up to 100 cases at any given time. "It's challenging and rewarding," she said. "We don't get bored." Founded in 1991 in a \$250-per-month storefront, the Mackey Law Group provides a range

of legal services ranging from high-profile divorce cases to complex commercial litigation trials.

Mackey stressed the importance of never relying on one big client, explaining that flexibility and a solid reputation among local developers, contractors and subcontractors have

ensured that the firm will weather these turbulent economic tides. In fact, their profit margin has remained the same over the past few years, and they plan to continue with their full staff in 2012.

In spite of facing diverse cases every day and dealing with the recession, Mackey says their business model hasn't changed much through the years; all that matters to clients is results. Those clients remain predominantly in the local construction and business community.

Mackey Law Group has always been averse to opening a line of credit, favoring more conservative fiscal practices. However, the economy has encouraged them to operate on a tighter budget and to be more prudent when accepting cases. "Bigger in our business doesn't necessarily mean higher profits," she said.

Coming from a family of entrepreneurs, Mackey is proud to run a business that truly makes a difference in her community. Her firm's clients are more than satisfied with the work, and Mackey says she's thrilled to be doing what she does best: "I just love making a living this way!" ■