



Designation Inspiration

One CCIM and his team tackle their first investment property.

While other students burned the midnight oil to prepare for a 2005 CCIM final exam, Jeremy G. Woods, CCIM, SIOR, was thinking beyond the pin. Surrounded by his course materials and notes, Woods, now senior director of industrial services for Summit Realty Group in Indianapolis, was “in the mindset of commercial investment real estate.” He struck up a discussion about potential investment opportunities with fellow Hoosier Jonathan R. Jessup, CCIM, who also was preparing for the exam. By the time they picked up their No. 2 pencils, the pair had resolved to put their education to work: “We decided to test our CCIM knowledge in a literal way by buying an investment property,” Woods says.

When they returned to Indianapolis, Woods, Jessup, and a colleague purchased an 83,000-square-foot industrial/flex building in Lawrence, Ind. Only 50 percent occupied, the property had a small yet solid tenant base but was in dire need of structural improvements. “It was value-add to the extreme,” Woods says. Drainage problems made the property prone to flooding, and any money they might put into its renovation could be swept away and lost. Woods and his partners relied on their CCIM education and resources, specifically market analysis and the APOD form, to make sure the numbers lined up. “We knew if we could improve the building, we could push rents to the level of the surrounding area,” Woods says.

A study funded by the City of Lawrence proposed creating a 300-yard dry detention basin to alleviate the flooding that plagued the building and much of the surrounding area. “The challenge was to get the Lawrence City Council to earmark \$50,000 for what amounted to a ditch,” Woods explains. Delaying the property close until the vote passed, Woods and his team convinced the city that the basin — and their plans for the building — would boost property values and tenant satisfaction in the area.

With the city on board, the team began a complete redesign of the building’s drainage system and asphalt grading to

move the water away from the property. In addition to the new drainage system, the team oversaw a roof replacement, asphalt restoration, and a complete facelift of the building’s exterior, including uniform signage and a new color scheme, which gave the building a modern stucco look. “I applied my knowledge of building construction and proper maintenance, which I learned in my years with a real estate investment trust, to guide us in repositioning this building — that is, where to focus our money: roof, parking lot, drainage, aesthetics,” he says.

With the idea of improving their property to institutional standards in mind, Woods and his team also hired a professional property management company to oversee their newly renovated investment. “The type of tenants we planned to attract would expect professional oversight,” he says.

And thanks to a few new marketing strategies, including a color brochure, “brokers who never would have known [the property] existed were exposed to it and brought us tenants.” As of June, the property was 98 percent occupied with all tenants signed to long-term leases. Though Woods credits his “synergistic” team and a good tenant base with the project’s ultimate success, it was his CCIM study-break inspiration that opened — and closed — the floodgates on this revitalized property.



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Jeremy G. Woods, CCIM Senior Director, Industrial Services Summit Realty Group

LOCATION:
Indianapolis

ACCOMPLISHMENT:
Inspired during the CCIM final exam, Woods organized a team to purchase an industrial/flex property.

QUOTE:
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