

## COMMERCIAL BROKER OF THE YEAR: FINALIST

# Former CPA crunches real estate numbers

'Clients want to know how (a real estate structure) will impact their financial statements. It all comes down to numbers.'

– Phil Arnautou, Colliers International

BY N. SHEREE SAUNDERS

When downtown San Jose finally landed the Big Four accounting and consulting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP as a tenant at the 17-story building at 488 Almaden Blvd. last November, the city — or at least Mayor Chuck Reed — seemed to breathe a sigh of relief. The structure had been vacant since it was built by the Sobrato Organization in 2002. PwC signed a 15-year lease to

take up 209,000 square feet, the largest such deal in the history of the city's central business district.

With the lease being touted as one of the biggest of the year, it made sense that the Association of Silicon

owner, Oracle.

He's also a veteran in Silicon Valley commercial real estate, with 19 years of experience, and the deal was actually one of 21 lease and sale transactions totaling approximately 1.75 million square feet and \$214.1 million between August 2010 and August 2011.

His past and present clients include Adobe Systems Inc., Novell Inc., NEC Electronics and Oracle.

"Clients seek him out because he understands their business and how the real estate transaction impacts the individual employee, the site manager, the sales organization and the CFO," said Roger van Overbeek, director of corporate real estate at Autodesk, who has worked with Arnautou on lease transactions for buildings from the Bay Area to Shanghai.

"Phil has a near photographic memory and a keen strategic and financial mind."

Indeed, sizing up the big financial picture is one of Arnautou's areas of expertise, honed by his past life as a CPA; he spent four years in public accounting at the auditor firm Deloitte Haskins & Sells.

"(Having that background) has been a huge benefit," Arnautou said. "Clients want to know how (a real estate struc-



**ACCOUNTING MOVE:** Phil Arnautou, senior vice president at Colliers International, helped broker the deal that saw PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP move into the 17-story building in San Jose's central business district last year.

DINO VOURNAS

### PHIL ARNAUTOU

- **TITLE:** Sr. vice president
- **YEARS IN BUSINESS:** 19
- **TRANSACTIONS:** 21 lease and sale transactions totaling approximately 1.75 million square feet and \$214.1 million between August 2010 and August 2011.

Valley Brokers (ASVB) would name it, well, Lease of The Year, recognizing Phil Arnautou and teammates at Colliers International in Redwood City and San Jose in the process.

Arnautou, a senior vice president at Colliers, represents the building's

snatched up a seven year office lease for 267,886 square feet at 699 Eighth St. in San Francisco, a TMG Partners Development.

"That's the fun thing about working with startups — you can have a very material impact on their success," he said.

And Arnautou doesn't offer that advice to well-established corporations only — he particularly enjoys working with startups. Last year, for instance, he represented the fast-growing social gaming company Zynga as it

snatched up a seven year office lease for 267,886 square feet at 699 Eighth St. in San Francisco, a TMG Partners Development.