

## Managing millions of square feet by managing millions of details

BY DAVID MILLS

Colliers International is a big company, overseeing more than 500 million square feet of property across the globe, but it's the little things that have made it successful in property management.

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Like turning off the lights in office buildings. Or repairing equipment before it breaks down.

In this real estate market, such gestures add up and pay off.

"There's more focus now on the specifics of property operations," said Patrick Murray, senior vice president of real estate management services for Colliers. "There's a lot more scrutiny to details."

This pinpoint philosophy has kept Colliers thriving in a tough economy. The firm oversees 12 million square feet of office, retail and indus-

trial facilities from its nine district offices in Northern California. About 5 million square feet is located in Silicon Valley and managed from offices in Santa Clara, San Jose and San Mateo.

Murray said property owners are not buying a lot of new assets. Instead, they want their management firms to focus on keeping the clients they have.

One important way to do that is to establish and maintain good relationships with both property owners and their tenants.

"We have a dedication to our clients and tenants, especially in these tough times," said Murray. "We have high-quality professionals. They've been through prior recessions. They know how to treat tenants and clients."

One company Colliers has done that for is WCV Commercial Properties. The firm entrusts Colliers with all 18 properties and 4.8 million square feet it owns in the Bay Area. Included in that portfolio is the Scott Creek Business Park and the Mission Industrial Park, both in Fremont.

Thomas Hwang, vice president and regional asset manager for WCV, said Colliers professionals are experts at tenant relationships, and these days there is nothing more vital.

"Your operations people are your front line," said Hwang. "It's all about retention right now. You need to keep the tenants you have and keep them happy."

Hwang said he deals firsthand with Colliers' regional managers and doesn't have to wait for them to check with someone else before making a decision.

"A lot is delegated to them, and that brings with it a lot of accountability," he said.



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**PATRICK MURRAY:** Cites Colliers' dedication to clients, especially in hard times.