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## 30 Under 30 of NYC's Rising Real Estate Stars

By The Editors

Thirty years ago Google was spelled Googol (and it was a mathematical term, not a search engine), 15 Central Park West was the Mayflower Hotel, and nobody knew just how deeply weird young Mel Gibson was.

That, and none of the pros on *Commercial Observer's* third annual 30 Under 30 list were born.

At *CO*, we expend a lot of column inches on the big, established machers of the real estate business—but we also make time to consider the up-and-comers. And that's why our list of 30 pros under 30 years old is so important.

To a certain extent, for the people in the commercial real estate business who are younger than the movie *Ghostbusters*, it's too early to know who's a light of the universe, and who's a flash in the pan. We asked for nominations from firms big and small and were left with an embarrassment of riches. Some of the names we chose are striking out with real estate firms of their own. Others nailed 5 million square feet worth of deals while at long-established companies. We tried to expand our reach to the young guns of construction. We threw in a few names of pros who in their spare time started real estate blogs or taquerias.

Our only rule was that we wanted people who had not yet reached 30 years old. (Although one of them turns 30 this month.) We tried to keep the list to no more than three names per firm. And we wanted names who had not appeared on *CO's* 30 Under 30 list before. (With one exception. But it was a big move for that individual.)

Of course, nobody—save Marty McFly—has a time machine and we don't know how our picks will fare, say, 30 years hence. But, honestly, we don't need a DeLorean to know these ladies and gentlemen will do very well. (Nominees: You may be too young to remember Marty McFly and the DeLorean, but this is a reference to a movie called *Back to the Future*, which might have been before your time.)—*Max Gross, Editor in Chief*

***With reporting by Tobias Salinger, Danielle Schlanger and Lauren Elkies Schram***

***Portraits by Russ Tudor***

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## Alex Kaskel (25)

### Director, ABS Partners Real Estate

Leases for 100,000 square feet of space have turned over at 915 Broadway since Alex Kaskel joined ABS Partners in the middle of 2013. But Mr. Kaskel and the team that manages leasing at the Flatiron District building have replaced each tenant lost with a new one at double the previous rent.



Mr. Kaskel, a director at ABS, works on the company's leasing and acquisition team, representing landlords and tenants and arranging equity and debt financing. And he's taking a page from the book of his grandfather, ABS co-founder Earle Altman.

"He started with nothing," Mr. Kaskel said, "and you see the success than can be created. It's inspiring."

At the Flatiron District property, Mr. Kaskel's team repositioned the building, expanding the onsite footprint of tech education providers General Assembly to more than 40,000 square feet and inking a new 30,000-square-foot lease for the nonprofit Math for America. He's also helping manage Bridgeport Trade and Technology Center, a small business incubator and office property in Bridgeport, Conn., and raising equity to support a 114-acre, 371-room hotel property in Rye Brook, NY.

Meanwhile, he was a managing member of the team that acquired a two-story retail property at 32-46 Steinway Street in Astoria, Queens for \$5 million. Mr. Kaskel secured a second-floor, long-term lease at the building for a karate studio that allowed ABS to avoid placing \$230,000 in escrow during the purchase. There's much more to come from ABS in the outer boroughs, he said.

"We're looking at deals every day," Mr. Kaskel said. "We like retail in the boroughs."—*T.S.*

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## Robert Kempner (25)

### Director, ABS Partners Real Estate

Robert Kempner works on a team that has exclusive listings from 12 different New York City landlords.

Mr. Kempner, a director at ABS, has spent the past two years booking and managing retail tenants from Tribeca to Harlem.



“I’ve been a part of an exciting growth period at ABS—working closely with Mark Tergesen, Dean Valentino and John Brod,” he wrote in an email. “Everybody brings something to the table here at such a well respected full-service real estate company.”

Mr. Kempner has leased around 30,000 square feet of retail in Harlem alone in the past two years, including Perkins Restaurant & Bakery’s first New York City flagship location at East 125th Street and Third Avenue.

In Gramercy Park, he’s the exclusive leasing agent and a limited partner on the ownership side of a retail condominium at 280 Third Avenue that will be on the ground floor of a 21-story Toll Brothers residential building. Further south in Tribeca, Mr. Kempner represents the landlord at the 1 Hudson retail condo, which counts Brushstroke Restaurant, Gotham Bikes, Bikram Yoga, HSBC and Citibank as tenants.

All told, Mr. Kempner worked on teams that leased nearly 72,000 square feet of retail space for transactions worth approximately \$20 million over the past two years. But those activities could just represent the beginning for the retail broker. “Over the past 18 months, our team has increased the quantity and size of large-scale assignments,” he said. “I only see this trend continuing.”—*T.S.*

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200 Park Avenue South, 10<sup>th</sup> Fl, New York, NY 10003-1503  
T (212) 400-6060 • F (212) 400-6099  
[www.absre.com](http://www.absre.com)