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Jazzed up Ambrosini Manages to Tune into the Needs of City's Property Owners

By Holly Dutton

John Ambrosini learned to juggle multiple tasks from a young age.

From growing up on Long Island as one of 11 children, to studying music composition and steering a ship with the Coast Guard, Ambrosini seemed destined to be a manager.

Now the senior managing director of property management at ABS Partners Real Estate, he leads a team that currently manages a six million square feet commercial portfolio that continues to grow.

"It's growing all the time," he said. "It's growing because people see that we are very professional and we do what we say we're going to do."

Ahead of Hurricane Sandy, Ambrosini readied his team for the worst. Although the bulk of the portfolio is in midtown, two ABS-managed buildings downtown suffered significant flooding.

"Because of our staff, we were able to take control of the situation," Ambrosini said. "One of the building managers pre-emptively emptied large storage tanks so they were able to pump water in there."

"Through some good engineering practices and understanding how buildings can be used in emergencies, I think we took control of a storm that was devastating."

It's that kind of thinking on his feet that has helped Ambrosini develop dual careers as both a manager and a successful musician who has performed with the likes of American folk icon Pete Seeger.

His work has been performed by the Harlem School of the Arts Choir and he has released a total of seven jazz albums. Ambrosini also continues to perform at many venues around the city, including Trinity Church, the Triad Theatre and Grasso's in Long Island.

"I've been blessed to do both these things — make an adult salary and be a musician," he said. Ambrosini grew up in Massapequa, on the south shore of Long Island. By high school graduation, he was an accomplished pianist and composer, but decided to pursue a more practical career and enrolled at the SUNY Maritime College in the Bronx, where he studied engineering and earned an assistant coast guard license.

On a six-month voyage on a merchant vessel in college, he gained hands-on mechanical and engineering skills that would give him an early start on managing properties.



John Ambrosini

“You’re literally running every aspect of the ship,” he said of his time aboard.

That included taking charge of electrical generation, running boilers, sanitation systems and heating supplies for several hundred students on board.

“An entire city is basically floating,” he said. “It was an excellent experience for me and it’s where I got hands on experience.”

While at sea for six months, he even managed to bring piano on board, enabling him to practice as well as entertain fellow cadets.

Before he was at ABS, Ambrosini got his start at the Domino Sugar manufacturing plant in Brooklyn where he ran a large power plant. Tough economic times and tight margins on sugar manufacturing lead to downsizing in the company, which in turn led Ambrosini to look for the next step.

Soon after, he took a job running facilities at Fordham University’s Rosehill campus. Running the dorms on campus gave him his first glimpse of engineering buildings.

“I got a taste of it and very much enjoyed the day-to-day dynamics, problem solving and people skills,” he said. “I was able to see this was something I could be good at.”

In the years following 9/11, he was a member of the executive real estate team at Trinity Real Estate & the Parish of Trinity Church and later worked as vice president of real estate at Alliance Bernstein. Now living in Huntington, Long Island with his wife and two children, Ambrosini joined ABS in 2007. He said he has focused on efficiency and growth.

“We’re very focused on sustainability and being green,” he said, adding that the company has adopted sophisticated software and mechanical analysis technology to ensure its buildings are as efficient as possible.

“We have an in-house construction team that we use at our buildings that helps us keep our costs down,” he added. “If we can do the work and compete with non-union and union construction teams, we try to do that as much as we can.”

Current projects involve front lobby renovation work at 270 Madison Avenue, and planning for lobby projects at for 915 Broadway and 200 Park Avenue South.

Ambrosini said he plans to keep recording, releasing albums and performing live, but he is also committed to elevating the position of ABS within the property management field.

“I’m very committed to ongoing improvements in how we serve our tenants,” he said. “My goal is to help create a great name for ABS.”



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