

## PEOPLE

# Yes, I'm the boss

## *Fresh-faced vice president eyes his first million*

By MAGGIE HAWRYLUK

If Brown Harris Stevens' David Kornmeier looks a little young to have vice president/director as his job title, it's because he is. Clocking in at the ripe age of 27, Kornmeier is the youngest in the firm's 135-year history to earn the designation.

But what he lacks in years, Kornmeier makes up for in ability, enthusiasm and a natural knack for the residential business.

In his five years at the firm, he's closed a multi-million dollar exclusive at the Time Warner Center for more than \$5,300 psf, set an Upper West Side price record for a mid-block townhouse that sold for more than 20% of its asking price and set the highest block sale price for a Harlem townhouse.

"How do I get people to take me seriously?" he asked. "I know what I'm talking about and I make it a point to show them what I know."

And although the young executive already has a lot to list on his resume, Kornmeier knows that he still has a lot to learn. He said he's just taking his business strategy all in stride.

"I know I can't possibly know everything. That's why I pick one aspect, focus on it and learn everything I can about it," the Maryland-native said. "I focus on being honest and open with people and just being myself, being a normal, thoughtful person and having

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respect. You can really distinguish yourself by just being normal."

While some brokers get into the business for the earning potential and yet others are attracted by entrepreneurial aspects of the job, Kornmeier was lured into real estate because a career test suggested it.

"I didn't even know what a real estate broker really did. My family had lived in the same house since before I was born," he recalled, laughing.

Upon earning a degree in behavioral neuroscience from Carleton College in Minnesota, Kornmeier, like many fresh graduates, wasn't sure what career path he wanted to follow. His father suggested he take the

assessment to help steer him in the right direction. And the results: actor, psychologist or real estate broker.

So Kornmeier set up a few interviews, booked a flight to New York and set off to launch his real estate career, taking on an assistant position for two brokers. And only a few months into the business, he was already making a name for himself.

"They fired me because they thought I was too aggressive; I wanted to earn commission not salary," Kornmeier said, adding that he then applied to be an assistant at Brown Harris Stevens. "[Human resources] said they didn't want to hire me because they heard I was a shark."

Luckily, he was able to dispel the rumors and landed a position as a broker's second assistant — and he even arranged it so that he'd earn a base salary plus commission. But it still wasn't smooth sailing.

"After 10 months [the broker] told me that I was a lousy assistant, I was disorganized," Kornmeier said. "So he gave me some of his buyers and offered me full commission. At the time, I thought I was doing a great job."

And as if he didn't have enough pressure in pleasing his boss who just handed over a few clients, Kornmeier had the added pressure of not having much money. "I had to sell in that first month or I'd be broke," he said.

Although he sold a building for \$2.1 million within three weeks, the closing was delayed by nearly a year because of an oil spill on the land, and there didn't seem to be any other deals on the horizon. Right when Kornmeier was ready to throw in the towel and move back home, he sold two buildings in a month, closed them in three and created some much-needed padding for his bank account.

And then he was on a roll. Within his second year, Kornmeier sold eight townhouses and two apartments. He remained as the broker's sales associate for three years, essentially learning the business as he went.

"In my mind, I was treating it as grad school," he



said. "I was given buyers and he helped with negotiations. At that point, I didn't know enough to work alone."

Eventually, Kornmeier felt comfortable enough to go off on his own, working from referrals he earned from past deals.

Today, Kornmeier has an assistant and a secretary to assist him in his day-to-day as he's representing listings all over the city — including additional Time Warner Center listings that have stemmed from the more than \$5,000 psf deal that he said "was an incredibly difficult sale, there were many people involved."

And as Kornmeier is focusing on further growing his career — his goal is to have a \$1 million net earning year — he also just wants to enjoy being young. In his free time he enjoys traveling, sailing and improving his golf game, all while growing as a person.

"The big revelation for me was being comfortable with myself," he mused. "My clients helped me a lot. They put their trust in me and it helped me trust myself."

## *Wanted: 1,000 big-hearted brokers to build some hope*

Brokers Build, an organization of New York City's top real estate brokers dedicated to raising funds for Habitat for Humanity — New York City, has set an ambitious target — to get 1,000 of their colleagues to raise \$1,000 each for affordable homes.

To date, Brokers build has raised \$125,000 towards its goal of \$1 million, which will fund 11 homes in Habitat-NYC's Atlantic Avenue complex in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Brooklyn, now under construction.

"We are delighted with the outpouring of generosity from our industry," said Mara Flash Blum, chair

of the Brokers Build Advisory Committee and a senior VP at Sotheby's International Realty. "Brokers understand better than anyone how affordable homes can help a community and improve the lives of New York City families."

"When brokers give, someone in need gets a roof over their head," said Brian Lewis, a senior VP at Halstead and a Brokers Build Advisory Committee Member. "We brokers can change lives — it's as simple as that."

The Habitat-NYC project, at 1870 Eastern Parkway on the corner of Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, is

comprised of three, four-story buildings with 41 homes total, making it Habitat-NYC's largest project to date.

The project is being constructed with energy-efficient and environmentally friendly materials and designed to qualify for a LEED rating, which will save the homeowners 30 percent or more on their energy bills.

Brokers Build is dedicated to assisting Habitat for Humanity — New York City in its effort to bring affordable housing to New York City. To contact or make a donation to Brokers Build, please call 212-991-4000 x330 or visit [www.brokersbuild.org](http://www.brokersbuild.org).