Commercial real estate services are not one-size-fits-all. A tenant looking for a new office, a landlord trying to fill a vacant suite and an investor evaluating an acquisition all approach a deal with different goals, risks and questions. The best brokers understand those differences and tailor their approach to each client.

Working with a full-service commercial real estate firm can help, because such firms typically support every side of the market. Still, it pays to know what you should expect from a broker based on your role. Here is a breakdown.

Commercial Real Estate Services for Tenants

Tenants want the right space at the right cost with terms that support their business. A good tenant representative focuses on:

- **Needs analysis:** Defining space size, layout, location and budget based on business operations.
- **Market search:** Identifying listed and off-market options across relevant submarkets.
- **Financial comparison:** Evaluating total occupancy cost, not just quoted rent.
- **Negotiation:** Securing concessions, improvement allowances and flexible terms.
- **Project coordination:** Supporting build-out and move timelines.

Tenants should expect their broker to be candid about trade-offs and to advocate firmly on their behalf.

What Landlords Need

Landlords want reliable tenants, competitive rents and minimal vacancy. Their brokers act as marketing and leasing specialists. Key responsibilities include:

1. Pricing space correctly based on current market conditions
2. Marketing the property through listings, signage, outreach and broker networks
3. Screening prospective tenants for credit and fit
4. Negotiating leases that protect the owner's income and asset value
5. Advising on improvements that could make the property more competitive

Landlords also benefit from brokers who understand tenant mix. In a retail center or multi-tenant office building, the right combination of occupiers can support the property's overall appeal.

What Investors Need

Investors buy and sell commercial property to generate income and long-term returns. As the overview of commercial property as an asset class explains, these assets range from offices and retail to industrial and multi-family buildings, each with distinct risk profiles. Investment brokers help clients:

- Identify acquisition opportunities that match investment criteria
- Underwrite properties using rent rolls, expenses and market data
- Assess risks such as lease rollover, tenant credit and deferred maintenance
- Price and market properties for sale
- Manage due diligence and closing timelines

Investors should expect rigorous analysis and honest opinions about value, even when the numbers are not what they hoped to see.

Developers fall somewhere between investors and occupiers. They need help finding land or redevelopment sites, understanding zoning and entitlements, gauging demand for the finished product and eventually leasing or selling it. Brokers with research capabilities and local relationships add particular value here.

Where the Roles Overlap

Despite different goals, all clients share some needs. They want accurate market information, clear communication, sound negotiation and someone who understands local conditions. They also want transparency about how their broker is compensated and how any conflicts of interest are handled, particularly when one firm represents both sides of a transaction.

Full-service firms can be valuable because they see the market from every angle. DAUM, for example, serves tenants, landlords, developers and investors, and offers brokerage, property management, market research and consulting across Southern California and Arizona. That broad view can help clients anticipate how the other side of the table is thinking.

How Needs Change Over Time

Client roles are not always fixed. A growing company that leases space today may decide to buy its own building in a few years. An investor may become a landlord with tenants to manage. A landlord may decide to sell or redevelop. Brokers who understand the full life cycle of commercial property can help clients anticipate these shifts and plan for them, rather than reacting when the moment arrives.

That is one reason long-term relationships with an advisor can be valuable. A broker who already knows your business, your portfolio and your goals can move quickly when an opportunity or a challenge appears.

How to Set Expectations Early

Whatever your role, start any broker relationship with a clear conversation about goals, timeline, communication preferences and how https://charlierhjq360.northstarcolumn.com/posts/commercial-real-estate-cycles-lessons-from-120-years-in-la success will be measured. Put key expectations in writing. This simple step prevents misunderstandings and keeps the process focused.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can one broker represent both a tenant and a landlord?

In some cases, dual representation is permitted with proper disclosure and consent. Many clients prefer separate representation to ensure undivided advocacy.

Do investors need a different type of broker than tenants?

Often, yes. Investment brokers specialize in valuation, underwriting and sales processes, while tenant reps focus on occupancy needs and lease negotiation.

What should I ask before hiring a broker?

Ask about relevant experience, the team assigned to you, market data they provide, compensation and how they handle potential conflicts.

Understanding what you need from a broker based on your role helps you choose the right advisor and get more value from the relationship. The clearer your expectations, the better your results are likely to be.