

NAIOP news

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE
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NAIOP Maryland represents the state's commercial real estate industry. The association's membership is largely comprised of companies involved in development, construction, brokerage, asset management, finance, architecture, engineering and legal services associated with office, industrial, retail and mixed use real estate.



TINA URQUHART, CHARM CITY CONCIERGE: "TENANTS CRAVE AMENITIES THAT MAKE THE WORKPLACE MORE HOME-LIKE"

"We have never experienced more activity or energy than we do now, in the local commercial real estate marketplace, and we attribute that to a variety of factors," explained Tina Urquhart, who founded Charm City Concierge in 1993 and has grown the company to more than 50 employees which service more than 200 buildings encompassing 35 million square feet of space. "Most importantly, the economy is performing much better, so developers and owners have the resources to invest in programs that benefits its tenants. Employees are spending an ever-increasing amount of time in the workplace while, at the same time, seeking a more appealing work-life balance. That is where Charm City Concierge is filling an emerging need."

Urquhart explains that tenants crave amenities that make the workplace more "home-like." They also expect top-notch service from its landlord that is several steps above providing a comfortable and well-maintained working environment. The service menu that began with arranging luncheons and dinners, making travel arrangements, acquiring tickets and ordering flowers now skews heavily towards employee wellness programs and helping employees make healthy living choices.

A recent addition to its offerings are CSA Boxes, which contain season-specific fruits and vegetables that are delivered directly to the workplace on a weekly basis. To supplement

the service, Charm City Concierge also includes creative recipes that utilize the products contained within each shipment. "We even send an e-mail each Monday that explains what employees can expect in its box several days later," she said.

"Developers hire concierge services to differentiate their portfolio from the competition. It is also about creating a sense of community within the workplace and making the lives of employees easier and less hectic. And, to inject a bit of excitement," she added. Historically, available services varied building to building but now, according to Urquhart, entire portfolios are being custom-branded with a slate of amenities and programming. "This provides new marketing possibilities for landlords and owners."

NAIOP Maryland is critical to the success of Charm City Concierge. "Attending events and programming keeps us connected to the commercial real estate industry, allows us the opportunity to network with key players and keeps us relevant," Urquhart added. "By learning about new trends, we can mold our services appropriately to address changes in the industry."

Charm City Concierge offers its services throughout the Baltimore-Washington, D.C.-Northern Virginia marketplaces, but "is also dabbling in Pennsylvania. We want to expand nationally and will follow the lead of our customers."

