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PROFILE

Daniel Hedaya, president,
Platinum Properties

Rising star Hedaya riding downtown's rebound

By KONRAD PUTZIER

Daniel Hedaya's first inkling that he had a successful career ahead of him must have come when he was a teenager. "The first job I ever had was in a bagel place," he remembered. "I was 14 years old and they had never hired anyone as young as me, but I guess I impressed them."

The maturity and determination that landed him a job at such an early age has also helped him succeed in the world of real estate.

When I started working in the Financial District, I literally had to pay for people's cabs to get them down here.

At just 27, the president of Platinum Properties is one of the industry's rising stars, with several high-profile deals under his belt and clients from around the world.

Based on Wall Street, he has played a crucial role in the financial district's rebirth over the past few years. But his path to the top has been far from steady, and at some point it seemed almost certain that he would become a chef.

In hindsight, Hedaya's ultimate career choice had a lot to do with his upbringing — but not in the traditional sense.

Growing up in Great Neck, Long Island, Hedaya went to school with Dezireh Eyn. Hedaya is a descendant of Syrian Jews, Eyn has Iranian Jewish heritage, and the two had mutual friends. When Dezireh and her older brother, Khashy, founded the brokerage Platinum Properties years later, this connection would open Hedaya the door to a promising career.

Hedaya said he was a good student in high school and decided to go to college — hardly surprising for the son of

a doctor. But he broke off his studies at the University of Maryland after just one semester. "College just wasn't for me," he said. "It was difficult for me to work so hard for a grade. I was always more motivated in the entrepreneurial field."

Hedaya returned to New York and enrolled in cooking school — a passion he inherited from his father, who often cooked traditional Syrian dishes. But just when he was about to start school in late 2005, Khashy Eyn offered him the opportunity to join his new brokerage in Manhattan.

"I always loved to cook, but it's difficult to make a living with it. To make a career, I chose real estate," he said, adding that he still enjoys cooking traditional Syrian dishes in his free time. "I love having a fast-paced business life — it's exciting. There are so many different levels that I enjoy. I am a very social person, and that's perfect for real estate."

At Platinum, Hedaya rose from broker, to senior manager, to executive vice president, to president in less than six years, and now oversees more than 80 agents. During that time, he noticed how dramatically the brokerage's core downtown market changed.

"When I started to work in the financial district, I literally had to pay for people's cabs to get them to come down here. But seven-out-of-ten times, they ended up renting or buying. Now it's a destination. Years ago, there were a lot more shuttered windows, now there's a lot of cool stuff to do down here. It's no longer a nine-to-five, but a 24-hour neighborhood."

When Hurricane Sandy hit New York a year ago, Platinum Properties' office was closed for eight days. Nevertheless, the agency did its best to help its downtown neighbors find temporary housing in short-term rentals or hotels.

He said the market suffered initially, but has since recovered. "New York is such a resilient city. Everyone in the

world thinks of New York as the destination. People want to live here.

"I think the downtown market will continue to grow," he added. "There are so many unique aspects — the subway access alone. You can get on almost every single subway line from here. Which other neighborhood can offer that?"

Hedaya still remembers his first sale, a \$2.8 million apartment at 1 Jackson Square. Since then, the price range he works with has expanded dramatically. He closed on a penthouse in Miami last year that is now valued at \$28 million, and recently brokered the sale of a Tribeca penthouse for \$13 million.

His current listings include a loft at 114 Liberty Street for \$7.79 million, an apartment at 88 Franklin Street for \$7.495 million, and a townhouse at 9 Commerce Street for \$5.595 million. Called Commercehouse, the latter had its interior completely redesigned by GRADE Architects + Design, and features an open floor plan.

Hedaya said his childhood connection to Khashy and Dezireh Eyn has shaped the way Platinum Properties works. "We grew up together. And that we are so close trickles down through the company," he said. "I don't think we have ever desired to be a big name brand. We are a family company. We are able to provide most of the solutions large-name brands offer, but with a personalized touch."

And while his professional family is growing, his actual family is taking shape, too. This March, Hedaya got married to schoolteacher, Amanda.

