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From Sommelier To Real Estate Director

Paul Buttenhoff “I had always wanted to get into real estate, and working in the restaurant and hospitality business, you need to be able to talk to people and have some sales ability—you are selling a luxe product...”

Paul Buttenhoff, Director of Leasing at the Midtown West branch of Platinum Properties, is able to see opportunity in any situation. After all, it was after the onset of the 2008 financial crisis that Buttenhoff decided to embark on a career in real estate.

“I’m a firm believer that there is opportunity in any market if you know how to take advantage of it,” Buttenhoff said of the decision. “I’d always been very interested in real estate, and felt it was a field I could do well in.”

Although gainfully employed at the time by 21 Club as the restaurant’s sommelier, a position both lucrative and enjoyable, Buttenhoff concluded that the economically tumultuous time, hard on most businesses, was as good a time as any to change things up.

A resident of New York City and New Jersey for the majority of his life, Buttenhoff was familiar with the local real estate market and knowledgeable of the area before he became an agent.

With a background in the hospitality industry, Buttenhoff fostered an interest in real estate, and even got his real estate license before he made any decisions to change career paths.

Joining Citi Habitats as a broker at the end

of 2008, the ambitious and hard-working Buttenhoff quickly found success, and was awarded the firm’s Rookie of the Year award for the 2009 calendar year.

“I had always wanted to get into real estate, and working in the restaurant and hospitality business, you need to be able to talk to people and have some sales ability—you are selling a luxe product,” he said. “So, I honed many of the key skills for success in real estate even before I became an agent.”

After a short time as an agent but with many rental and sales transactions under his belt, Buttenhoff was promoted to Senior Managing Director. In charge of the rental business at one of the Citi Habitats branch offices, the managerial role was a great fit. “It’s about managing people, setting goals and expectations. It’s about supporting the efforts of your agents and helping them to achieve,” Buttenhoff said.

He found the focus on agent development very fulfilling; he loved helping those under him discover new skills, and sharing in their successes.

Agent development remained the priority for Buttenhoff when he transitioned to brokerage firm Platinum Properties. Currently serving as Director of Leasing at the Midtown West office, he presides over thirty agents in their daily endeavors

and long-term goals. He has also focused on office growth, which has been rapid both in agent numbers and business.

Buttenhoff relishes the flexibility provided by his position at Platinum Properties, where he says that his agents are free and encouraged to pursue any opportunity that comes their way.

If there is an option to do some work in commercial leasing, an agile office environment embraces and supports it. “It’s very fulfilling to help someone put a new spin on their business, and continue to further potential,” said Buttenhoff. “The nature of the job is very fast-paced—I can come into the office one morning and have a huge new project, with many different components. I love that.”

A graduate of Rowan University, Buttenhoff holds an M.S. in Political Science. In his free time he enjoys spending time with his wife and three-year-old daughter. The family is a frequent visitor of the Central Park Zoo and the New York Aquarium. ■

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