Meet the man who’s growing Knight Frank’s industrial representation in Occupier Solutions

Q&A with Knight Frank’s James O’Neill

James O’Neill has recently joined the Occupier Solutions team at Knight Frank. In just the few months James has been with the team he has already established a clear focus on growing the firm’s industrial representation in this area of the business. The autonomy afforded to him to build the business is what makes his job most interesting.

Why did you decide to enter this industry?

I wanted to work in a positive and dynamic industry close to Australia’s capital cities.

What are some of your recent appointments?

I work with the following corporates in various capacities:

- CPB Contractors – assisting with transaction management
- Ventia/Silcar/Vision Stream – strategic corporate real estate management
- Boeing – transaction management in NSW and VIC
- Cameron – strategic corporate real estate management
- European-based multinational – NDA signed, transaction management in VIC
- Otis – strategic corporate real estate management in SA and VIC
What is your career highlight to date?

The opportunity to work for the largest privately owned real estate company in the world is a great start however; having the opportunity to build a new product line within this business presents an even better opportunity. Knight Frank’s reach is global and I hope to leverage off this and the local relationships offered to someone in my position.

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What do you enjoy most about your position?

The most enjoyable part of my job is having the autonomy afforded to me to get on with building the business and the opportunity to work for corporate businesses nationally.

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What advice would you give to a young person thinking of getting into your line of work?

Learn to be patient and understand from cover to cover what a lease is.

Where’s your market headed in the future?

Corporates are still going through a trend of ‘cost saving’ and ‘staff rationalisation’. This is resulting in subleasing and asset divestment both freehold and leasehold.

What’s a typical day like for you?

I work through a variety of matters each day from managing a lease renewal to help forming up corporate strategy for a multi-site consolidation.

If you weren’t in property, what would you be doing?

Being a husband and dad, skiing and riding my bike.

Three key ingredients for being successful in your role:

1. Tenacity
2. Integrity
What advice would you give to your younger self?

Follow through on all your ideas no matter how silly they may seem.