

Tenant Representation

An Interview with Janet Woods,
Executive Vice President and Northeast Region Lead, Savills

EDITORS' NOTE Backed by more than 25 years of commercial real estate experience, Janet Woods provides management of the firm's operations in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, New Jersey and all future offices in the region. Prior to joining the firm in 2019, she spent more than three years as a regional director and regional managing director at Stan Johnson Company. She was also the national group leader of the corporate finance team. Woods spent more than a year with Cushman & Wakefield as an executive managing director providing brokerage services throughout the tri-state area. Previously, she spent six years with JLL as executive vice president and seven years as a principal for The Staubach Company. Woods is a graduate of Fordham University.



Janet Woods

COMPANY BRIEF Established in 1855, Savills (savills.us) is one of the leading real estate advisors in the world. Savills helps organizations find the right solutions that ensure employee success. With services in tenant representation, workforce and incentives strategy, workplace strategy and occupant experience, project management, and capital markets, Savills has elevated the potential of workplaces around the corner, and around the world, for 160 years and counting.

Will you discuss your role at Savills and how you define the Savills difference?

As the region lead for the Northeast, I work to deploy best practices, support interdisciplinary collaboration between the offices and among service lines, recruit brokers and teams, open new locations and identify acquisition opportunities that will complement the firm's existing capabilities.

Savills is one of the largest real estate firms in the world. We have a strong legacy of exceptional advisory and tenant representation in North America, which gives us a unique and thorough understanding of how to deliver the most value for our clients. Our management structure and nimble approach also gives us the ability to assemble the best possible advisory team across disciplines and geographies to solve each specific real estate challenge anywhere in the world.

Will you discuss Savills' commitment to innovation?

Savills is heavily focused on innovation. If companies aren't innovating, then they're going to be left behind. This is why we've invested in client technology solutions such as Knowledge Cubed, which integrates portfolio, business, market and occupancy data with advanced analytics that become actionable insights. The software uses artificial intelligence to extract and visualize information from leases, contracts and other documents, which allows our clients to stay ahead of existing and emerging opportunities and optimize their real estate.

Also, in the U.S., we recently launched Workthere – our online property listing platform and advisory service that enables any business or individual to find flexible, co-working and serviced office space around the world.

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How has the role of the broker evolved?

The commercial real estate industry is changing. We understand that the decisions our clients make can impact the long-term health of their companies. Our brokers are no longer

just focused on identifying space. They need to come up with a holistic solution that addresses the organization's needs throughout the real estate cycle. We look at how to stay in front of changing occupancy standards and market conditions, and adapt clients' strategies to their evolving business drivers, risk tolerances, and financial and operational objectives.

How critical is it to have a diverse workforce to address the needs of Savills' clients?

This couldn't be a more important topic to me. In order to develop the most creative and considered services and solutions for our clients, it is critical that we bring unique cultures, characteristics, thoughts and experiences to the proverbial table. This industry has been lagging a bit in terms of a more diverse workforce – an area where Savills has made some notable advancements. As our region and our clients have become more diverse, Savills is making a more explicit effort to recruit, retain and promote more diverse talent, in addition to ensuring that we foster an equitable and inclusive environment throughout the firm.

In 2020, we will have the first class of our new junior onboarding program. Understanding that finances are among the biggest inhibitors of adding diverse talent, the positions within the program will be salary positions. The commitment is that this class will not be less than 50 percent diverse. We've also formed an internal group, Building Inclusion and Diversity, to cultivate strong culture, attract and grow talent, and advance underrepresented populations internally and externally. Additionally, our CEO and our president for North America signed the CEO Action diversity pledge. Started by PwC, this is the largest CEO-driven business commitment to advance diversity and inclusion within the workplace.

What advice do you offer young people interested in building a career in the real estate industry?

I would say don't be afraid to reach out to some of the industry leaders. They're more accessible than you might believe them to be. We all know how hard it was to get to where we are and there is a lot to learn from where we've been. We can help someone create a pathway to success probably quicker than they can do on their own. You should not be afraid to lean on those of us that have, to some extent, made it in the industry. ●