

Shared Responsibility

An Interview with Robert Owens, President and Chief Executive Officer, Owens Realty Services

EDITORS' NOTE Bob Owens is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Owens Realty Services. He founded the company in 1990 and currently employs over 800 employees throughout the Owens portfolio. Owens has over 40 years of experience in commercial real estate marketing, management, and construction. His marketing and industry foresight created an organization of expertise in facility development and operations. He sits on multiple boards including Give Kids the World, the Winter Park Memorial Hospital Foundation, and the New Image Youth Center. In 2019, he was recognized as one of Orlando Business Journal's CEOs of the Year. Owens earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Vermont.



Robert Owens

Will you provide an overview of Owens Realty Services and how you define its mission?

Owens Realty Services, established in 1990, is a comprehensive, full-service commercial real estate company. We specialize in brokerage, investment, management, maintenance, housekeeping, and environmental services. The company is known for its ability to effectively and economically manage sophisticated real estate investment portfolios. Operating in both the public and private sectors, Owens oversees

a diverse range of properties such as government facilities, state office buildings, convention centers, college campuses, condominiums and family entertainment parks. Our portfolio spans over 50 million square feet of prime real estate across Connecticut, Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, Rhode Island, and New York, with a total value of more than \$8 billion. With a dedicated workforce of more than 800 industry professionals, we are known for delivering outstanding services that result in substantial operational cost savings and long-term value preservation for clients.

Owens Realty Services defines its mission through a focus on customized, client-centered management solutions that ensure the maximum life cycle of critical capital investments while maintaining a healthy and clean environment for all building tenants and visitors. The company aims to provide substantial cost savings, typically saving clients \$1 per square foot in operational costs through efficient and innovative management practices.

The company is dedicated to providing high-quality service, a commitment that has led to remarkable growth and expansion. With an emphasis on excellence, Owens Realty Services strives to be a leader in real estate services, continuously improving and adapting to meet the evolving needs of clients across various sectors.

How do you describe Owens Realty Services' culture and values?

Owens Realty Services fosters a culture of excellence where innovation, integrity, and a customer-centric approach are at the heart of everything we do. Our values center around delivering the highest standard of service, ensuring that every client receives tailored solutions designed to meet their unique needs. Owens is deeply committed to sustainability and creating healthy, safe environments for both tenants and clients. Above all, Owens values long-term relationships and aims to provide trustworthy, innovative solutions that contribute to the success and growth of our clients, partners and communities.

Will you highlight Owens Realty Services' capabilities and offerings?

Owens Realty Services stands out in the marketplace for its comprehensive range of commercial and institutional real estate solutions, providing everything from brokerage and investment services to property management, maintenance, housekeeping, and environmental services. Our expertise spans a variety of property types, including government facilities, state office buildings, convention centers, college campuses, condominiums and family entertainment parks. This extensive portfolio showcases our ability to handle both private and public sector properties with precision and care. With a proven track record of managing over 50 million square feet of high-profile facilities across multiple states, our capabilities and offerings are built on decades of industry experience, a dedicated team of over 800 professionals, and a strong commitment to quality, growth and client satisfaction.

What have been the keys to Owens Realty Services' growth, and how do you define the Owens' difference?

The growth of Owens Realty Services can be attributed to several strategic decisions and an ability to seize opportunities in times of economic uncertainty. In the wake of the 1989

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savings and loan crash, I saw a chance to position the company as a receiver – managing distressed assets during the foreclosure process. Owens capitalized on this period of economic downturn, which proved to be a recession-proof strategy. The company’s vertically integrated operation provided stability, even in challenging markets. This strategy, along with leveraging Owens’ extensive expertise in asset management, helped the company build strong relationships with key players in the public and private sectors. By focusing on opportunistic property investments and managing government assets, the company has created long-lasting value. Today, the ability to help clients achieve substantial operational savings and successfully manage complex portfolios continues to drive the company’s growth.

Owens Realty Services distinguishes itself with a forward-thinking, client-centric approach. We exceed the traditional scope of asset management by developing customized solutions that deliver tangible results – whether it’s through reducing operational costs or revitalizing distressed properties into valuable community assets. Our vertically integrated model, coupled with an owner-operator mindset, ensures that every property is managed with exceptional attention to detail and efficiency. At Owens, we are committed to creating lasting value, prioritizing sustainability, and fostering long-term relationships that stand the test of time.

What do you see as Owens Realty Services’ responsibility to be engaged in the communities it serves?

Owens Realty Services is deeply committed to positively impacting the communities we serve. Through our sponsorships, volunteering efforts, charity work and philanthropic initiatives, we support local education, public services, and disadvantaged communities. Our longstanding support for events like the CREC Foundation Golf Tournament, as well as our active involvement with organizations such as the New Image Youth Center, demonstrates our dedication to fostering growth and opportunity.

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How important is it for Owens Realty Services to build a diverse and inclusive workforce?

At Owens Realty Services, we understand that our strength stems from the unique experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds of our team members. Cultivating a diverse and inclusive workforce is not only key to driving business success, but also to nurturing a company culture that thrives on collaboration, innovation, and mutual respect. As Owens continues to grow, our commitment to diversity and inclusion will ensure we stay adaptable, responsive, and deeply attuned to the needs of both our clients and the communities we serve.

What do you see as the keys to effective leadership and how do you approach your management style?

Effective leadership is about fostering a culture where every team member feels valued and empowered to contribute their best. At Owens Realty Services, I firmly believe that sales success is not the result of individual effort alone – it’s a collective achievement driven by the performance of our entire team. My approach to leadership revolves around

inclusiveness and treating all team members with the utmost respect, regardless of their role. A key part of my leadership philosophy is recognizing that each individual has unique strengths, and it’s through collaboration that we achieve the best outcomes. By empowering our team and providing them with the resources and support they need, we create an environment where everyone can succeed. I strive to lead by example, demonstrating that respect, transparency, and communication are the core principles of my management style.

The power of a team is amplified when everyone feels they have a stake in the company’s success. I place great importance on inclusivity and ensure that every team member has a voice and the opportunity to contribute. It’s this sense of shared responsibility and mutual respect that fuels our ongoing success and drives Owens Realty Services forward.

What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers?

For those starting their careers, my advice is rooted in the combination of practical experience and personal integrity. Internships are invaluable as they provide hands-on learning that enhances academic knowledge and offers a deeper insight into the industry you’re entering. Real-world exposure is essential, as it allows you to hone your skills and gain a comprehensive understanding of your profession. Equally important is maintaining confidentiality and honoring your commitments. Trust is the foundation of your professional reputation, and safeguarding both personal and business information is key to sustaining that trust. Listening more than speaking is vital – growth comes from absorbing knowledge and learning from those around you. Humility plays a crucial role as well. Stay receptive to learning from colleagues at all levels and continually seek opportunities for self-improvement. Lastly, prioritize relationships – never burn bridges, as the colleagues and mentors you encounter today could be instrumental to your future. By embracing these principles, you’ll cultivate a career that is not only respected, but also sustainable. ●

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