



In the small farming and manufacturing town of LaSalle–Peru Illinois; 90 miles southwest of Chicago on the Illinois River, Dan’s real estate career began in 1977 with his successful graduation (BS Business Management) from Quincy College (Quincy University) and employment at Cawley Realty. There he joined his brother William (GVA Cawley; Dallas, Texas) in the family owned company.

At the time, his father Ryan was operating the primarily residential brokerage company he had started in 1958. The 1960’s and early seventy’s brought great change to the Illinois Valley area with the construction of the Peru Mall; a 500,000 square foot regional mall. Ryan had assembled a couple hundred acres of farm land and convinced the farmers to provide the community with a real chance to grow and bring many needed jobs and commerce by selling to the Chicago based Landau & Hyman Developers; long time retail developers. Construction began on the parcel located on Illinois Route 251 one half mile south of the new Interstate 80 (completed in 1966) in late 1969 on the first store a 40,000 square foot Montgomery Wards. The new interstate highway system was critical in providing LaSalle-Peru its geographic and strategic location and caused the local real estate market to explode with activity over the next 10 years. Cawley Realty was at the forefront of this growth with multiple industrial, retail and residential developments throughout the area.

Upon joining the family firm, Dan first got involved in managing the firm’s developments and equity properties and started a property management company which went on to manage many third party properties. Cawley Realty joint ventured most of their developments which included a 60-acre, 100 lot residential development in north



LaSalle and an 80-acre retail and industrial park in north in north Peru. To kick off the residential development in 1977 the family built five spec homes. The construction loans were secured at 12% and by the time permanent financing was arranged the rates had gone to 21%+. The residential market specifically and the economy in general were in trouble. “We ended up breaking even on two of these homes and renting the others at a loss, just to stop the bleeding.” We owned the remaining properties until 1983 before we were able to sell them.

The Cawley family involved many in their investments including friends in many real estate deals consisting and a variety of businesses. Dan personally was responsible for opening the first “health club” in the Illinois Valley which later sold its operation to the new YMCA in 1981.

In 1983 after repeated attempts to purchase the company from their father, Bill Cawley decided it was time for him to try something else and moved to Dallas, Texas. Dan on the other hand stayed for an additional 2 years and again tried to purchase the company when he also determined Ryan was going to keep his company intact for a number of years. Dan was able to find an opportunity and began work with First United Realtors in Oak Brook, Illinois in September 1985. First United was the fifth largest residential real estate company in the country having bought Rich Port Realtors a LaGrange Illinois based residential and commercial brokerage company. Rich Port the owner of his company was the first company in Illinois to open multiple offices. Rich was very involved with the local and state Realtor Boards and an innovator in Illinois real estate practice. Mr. Port had 15-20 offices in the west and southern suburbs when he was



diagnosed with a terminal brain tumor. Mr. Port worked to sell the company business and found Jack Hamer, who owned First United Realtors and who had copied Mr. Port's multiple office concept on the north shore. First United purchased Rich Port Realtors and converted them to First United offices expanding to nearly 50 offices throughout suburban Chicago.

Dan went to work at the commercial division of First United in Naperville. Mr. Hamer wanted to have a specific autonomous commercial division for the 1500 plus residential brokers to refer commercial business. The concept was creative and well conceived but unenforceable. As a result the commercial group was left to find its own leads. This turned out to be a huge break as Dan was forced to find his own new business. In LaSalle-Peru Dan knew everyone or everyone knew his family so cold calling and canvassing were never needed. So Dan began the physical canvassing and cold calling industrial and office parks on the weekends by driving around drawing a map and writing down the tenant names then going to the library and utilizing micro-film to get pertinent contact information on these companies all on 3x5 index cards. This canvassing process would later become the backbone of business generation for the rest of his career and is still taught and enforced by everyone at Cawley Chicago Real Estate.

This was also the time Dan became aware of the competition in the Chicago real estate marketplace and worked to differentiate himself. He quickly discovered that organization of information and persistent calling over the next number of years provide that difference. All of his success is a result of organization and belief that real estate is an information based business and there is no better way to gain that information than



from the owners and users in the market. Another hallmark of Cawley's business philosophy.

In 1990, Jack Hamer became ill and the future direction of that company was in doubt. Phillips Martin Real Estate (PMRE), an Oak Brook based real estate brokerage company, called and asked Dan to join their company with the promise of ownership and equity investment opportunities. The principals of the company all worked with Bill Gahlberg, a well-known and highly respected land speculator and developer. It was at this time that the I-55 suburban industrial corridor started to rise out of the cornfields. Mr. Gahlberg along with his colleagues at the time (and soon to become PMRE) had been buying up the land for years and were now "flipping" it to industrial developers. Simultaneously, the third party logistics business started to bloom across the country (another great story of invention). The first "big box" deals to land in the I-55 corridor were 150,000 to 250,000 square feet. Today, these deals have grown to 1 million square feet plus. Gahlberg determined that a brokerage service company was no longer a fit for him as the "land flip" could be done with reduced overhead; so he changed the business goals and formed a new company to concentrate on land speculation. It was at this time, his in-house team left and started their own real estate brokerage company; Phillips Martin Real Estate.

PMRE was looking to grow its presence in leasing and sales brokerage. In 1992 they contacted Dan through a current customer and recruited him. Within an 18-months of Dan's arrival, one of the original principals of PMRE left the firm to start his own land speculation company. The remaining partners asked Dan if he would become sales



manager and help grow the brokerage business. Over the next two years, the company grew from two salespeople to eight while growing the income by 68% and rewarded Dan with an ownership interest in the company. (Cawley's hiring enabled the partners to concentrate on developing their core business buying multifamily and commercial properties in DuPage County.) The remaining principals introduced Dan to the techniques of analysis for development, purchase, and financing. (It was also at this time technology was moving in to the normally resistant brokerage business and could make a difference when competing for business.) Dan led the company initiative which allowed the niche company to compete with the ever growing national real estate companies. The results were immediate and income levels increased through specific targeted market share for the firm.

Business Planning & Goal Setting principles and techniques became an important part of the "competitive advantage initiative" utilized by PMRE to compete in recruiting and growth in the quickly growing competition in the commercial real estate industry. Technology and planning would quickly even the playing field and in many cases provide the niche companies like PMRE an advantage. Prospects and customers reacted the same way and the business grew and Dan was able to land the firm's first institutional client when Sentinel Associates, a pension fund advisor out of New York, offered their 100,000 plus square foot Naperville tech flex development leasing assignment to PMRE. The results fostered a nine year relationship which helped put Dan and the firm on the map in the suburban submarkets. This agency led to a 100,000 square foot contiguous competing owner to reach out to Dan to represent their interest. That owner; PanCor



Construction & Development had a national real estate firm representing them but was losing tenants to Dan's assignment and ownership could not understand why they were losing to a higher priced development. The concept of service over reputation was quickly realized as the most important attribute of the niche real estate company and service was what tenants wanted when deciding which space to occupy. "I was canvassing PanCor's tenants and a couple moved to our development ignoring the fact the cost to occupy was greater than the space they vacated". The lesson learned: pricing was less important than service for many customers whether you were a landlord or a tenant and PMRE was able to convince many owners and tenants in the marketplace. This victory started a targeting strategy of particular customers; a strategy that still exists today with Cawley Chicago Real Estate. The assignment added a 100,000 square foot presence in one of the most dynamic submarkets in suburban Chicago bringing PMRE to 200,000 square feet. Cawley was able to lease 14,000 feet within 120 days of the assignment. Besides service, providing market information became a strong objective in competing against the other companies. PMRE had won that assignment through consistent calling and providing accurate market information another significant tool in Dan's development as a top broker in the suburban marketplace.

Over the next 7 years Dan became the exclusive agent for all PanCor's future single story office developments (see related single story office) and it was their suggestion and funding that Cawley Chicago Real Estate came to exist. The principals of PanCor went so far as to cosign and guarantee a note that enabled Cawley Chicago



Commercial Real Estate Company (CCRE) to open its doors on June 6, 1998. Its first customer was PanCor Construction and Development.

Cawley Chicago was specifically created to fill a void in the office & industrial brokerage services industry between the large multi-national and the local real estate brokerage firms. CCRE delivers personal service to locally owned entrepreneurial companies as well as institutional owners for the mid-size space requirements (10,000-200,000 square feet).

The reality of any service business is their ability to earn income and be profitable. The larger the company, the higher the volume of profit per transaction is required. Therefore Cawley Chicago's target customer in most cases targets assignments based on a size we believe will not receive the same level of service from a large real estate company simply because that transaction will not be profitable enough to provide the necessary level of service to fill the space in a timely manner. Cawley has created in-house systems and methods along with our leverage philosophy that allows for a high volume of transactions with faster and more personable service levels up to minute market information including catalog of every tenant and landlord, every deal in the market as well as closed deals to provide the best information possible to our customers.

CCRE celebrated its 10 year anniversary on June 6, 2008 in their new office condo with more than 300 of their customers.