

LYNN YANGCHANA

I Too Can Conquer the World

Lynn Yangchana specializes in commercial real estate primarily in office buildings in the Inland Empire areas of Southern California. Lynn has been directly involved in over \$500 million in transactions at MGR Real Estate since 2005. She's an investor with an amazing story and the mother of twins.

The Black Sheep

I was born in Thailand and grew up in a Chinese family that had traditional Asian values: superior status for males, entrepreneurial spirit, and a strong belief in the value of real estate.

Growing up, I observed my father's motto: "work hard, take risks, and enjoy life." From her hard childhood, my mother had a traditional belief of "work hard, play later, and wealth accumulation is the goal in life."

I may be something of the black sheep of the family. My motto is "work hard and remember what's important in life." And I believe that as a female, I can do as good a job as anyone. As long as I commit to fully engaging my mind and my efforts, I can definitely succeed in the world.

A New Life at Age Six

When I was six years old, my mother took me to an assessment for placement at a private school, hoping that I would get in as my two older sisters had. I remember the teacher handing me a sheet of paper with a picture of an apple, a doll, and a few other items for me to mark up the relationship between the pictures and the words. I understood the instructions but did not do anything the whole time.

I ended up not being accepted, and my mother convinced my father to send me to Taiwan to live with my maternal grandparents to learn Chinese. I only spoke Thai at the time and was thrown into the unknown of a different culture and language. Within a year, I was able to speak simple Mandarin Chinese, get on the school bus myself, and make friends at school. Living away from home at the age of six and having to suddenly learn a second language in a different country taught me independence quickly. It was a major challenge at the time, but I am grateful that my parents set me on that path. That experience gave me a thirst for new experiences, taught me resilience, and instilled a lifelong love of traveling.

I also came away with a deep-seated ability to listen, internalize, and understand others. I tend to notice body language and emotion more than others. I learned early to fend for myself by observing the world and people around me. I had to do this just to make my way at only six.

In my twenties, my interest in communication and new experiences continued to grow, and I moved to the United States to complete my master's degree in communications from California State University, Fullerton. I began my career learning and exploring the art of marketing by working for an advertising agency.

A Family Culture of Real Estate

I grew up with real estate. On my family's property in Bangkok, we were surrounded by rental houses. When I was young and playing with our tenants' kids, my mom would ask me to pick up the rent checks from their parents. Everything my parents talked about was either real estate, investments, or business.

My father was looking forward to building a property in Bangkok. I remember seeing a rendering of a tall building on his desk and thinking, "Wow! That's such a big goal. That would be so wonderful to build this building ourselves." Unfortunately, he became ill and passed away before realizing his dream.

The picture of the tall, white, beautiful building was always in my mind, and that image gave me the desire to get my real estate license and explore the real estate investment arena.

Commercial Real Estate

Day one, I was attracted to commercial real estate. I love being surrounded by large buildings. I asked myself, "If I want to be the owner of such a building, what do I need to do?" It is not just about having the money and making the purchase. How would I buy it right and keep it going? That thought led me to finding and working with the company I am with now.

I started one step at a time and over the years began to understand the importance of cash flow. Cash flow is 100% about finding and selecting tenants carefully, mitigating turnover, and supporting them with active property management. I have had the pleasure of working with clients from small business owners to national corporate clients and learning the best practices of sound management and underwriting of investment properties. Every deal and relationship is the basis of a new learning curve and the foundation for the next level.

In leasing, I work from multiple perspectives. From the building owners' perspective, I need to understand the tenant business, their rental and financial history. When I started in the business, tenants were just names and numbers because I did not know what to look for. Today, I can tell early on with a pretty high success rate how their story is going to unfold. Based on a tenant's background and how they show up and negotiate, I can judge whether this would be a good move for both parties.

What I enjoy most about leasing is the opportunity to meet with business owners and entrepreneurs. These are all very creative people with great conviction for the future. It feels great when I walk the empty space with them and get into the details of envisioning how they will build their business in the space. Once a business has moved in, the relationship continues. They will call me months and years later as they continue to expand because, from the start of our relationship, I shared their vision.

I tell my mentees today that effective leasing is the blood and soul that makes this asset class profitable.

A High-Level Chess Game

My greatest strength in the deals I do is managing relationships and crafting win-win agreements. Acquiring a second language the way I did gave me lots of practice in noticing patterns. My secret to successful contracts is understanding their patterns and uncovering hidden landmines as well as unintended consequences.

For me, these negotiations are like a challenging chess game. It is my responsibility to manage a dynamic of the right tenants, maintaining efficient space plans, and projecting the current and future cash flow while also preparing for any turnover. I juggle a great many elements in addition to attending to underwriting and acquisition opportunities. I just love the game.

#1 Advice from My Mentor: Setting the Table

Having a mentor is essential. I never could have come this far this fast without great mentors. I wish I had met my current mentor much sooner because he has greatly expedited my learning curve.

His first lesson was “how to set the table.” I wanted to learn real estate, sales, and leasing. Why did he want me to set the table? It took me quite some time to fully understand the essence of setting the table. And it is applicable to every team, business, family, and relationship.

Setting the table is all about the power of proper preparation. If you are going to have a meeting, how do you prepare the night and days before? If you are going out for a leasing appointment, what do you need to prepare for? You need to understand your inventory, the market, the tenant’s requirements, and most importantly, always consider who they are and where they want to be.

This is preparation. You want to be thoughtful about the process to ensure the good outcome that you envisioned and prepared for.

Not only do I need to have the right materials, I also need to look presentable, be professional, and be on time. These are all the preparations. I am teaching my kids to “set the table” before they go to school, especially if they have a test. It is how you set yourself up to be successful.

I love this quote from Napoleon Hill: “Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, the mind can achieve.” That is setting the table—creating a picture of how that meeting’s going to go and how it’s going to finish.

Love Conquers All

At my core, my deepest value is love of my family and love of pursuing what I enjoy in my career. Despite a very competitive real estate environment, I tend to have tunnel vision for my love of the game and for what I would like to achieve. Love gives me the greatest energy to overcome obstacles and be resilient.

My husband and I encourage our kids to find their true love by continuing to keep dreaming with an open mind. We teach our kids that you will succeed at anything you love to pursue if you persevere. It is easy to say, but not easy to accomplish. Ultimately, I believe that if you have a passion for your work and love what you do, you will achieve your goals. Because love really does conquer all.



Reach Lynn Yangchana about office investments in Southern California from East San Gabriel Valley to West Inland Empire markets at 1-714-273-0208, lynn.yangchana@gmail.com