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Up Close with Danny Nguyen

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Recently, IF Magazine's Heidi Powell-Prera had the honor to interview one of our most exciting leaders, a public servant and a

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commercial real estate expert in Houston, Mr. Danny Nguyen, CCIM, who is also a best-selling author whom IF's publisher, Val Thompson, has known for a long time.

HeidiPP: This interview was originally planned nine months ago following your outbound trade mission to India with Mayor Sylvester Turner. But you have been out of the country a lot, Councilman Nguyen! I can still call you that right?! Even though your term is over, you are still a public servant in so many ways. I am so glad we finally have the opportunity to sit down and talk ...

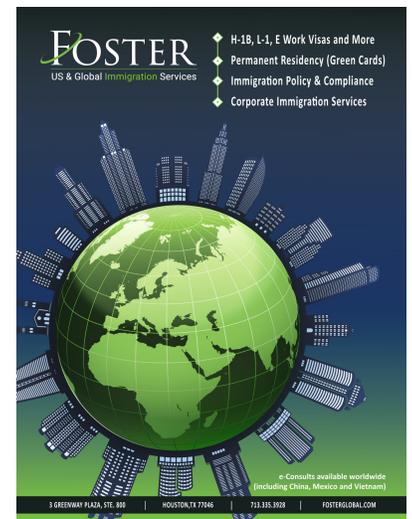
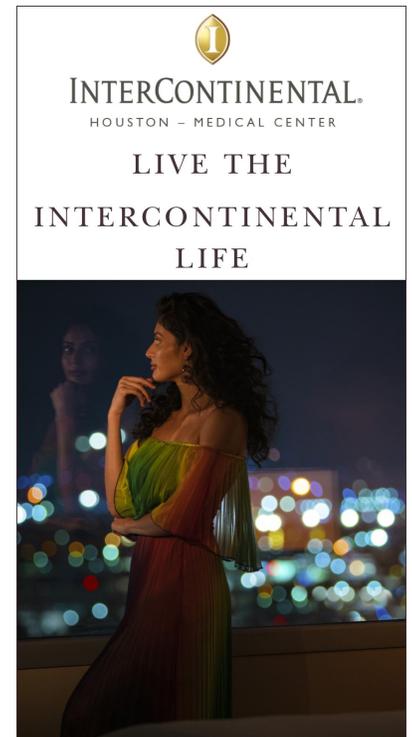
Danny Nguyen: Me too. Thank you, Heidi.

HeidiPP: You are constantly traveling with different leaders to promote our city, and even our state. You must have a lot of good news and accomplishments to share.

Danny Nguyen: I have been very blessed and honored to be invited to join many different Houston Mayors and Fort Bend Leaders to participate in International and Business Development Trade Missions. Most recently, I joined Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, with other leaders and a business delegation to visit India - Bombay & New Delhi- to explore economic opportunities and bilateral trade agreements. I met privately with many high networth business owners and investors looking to invest in Houston and surrounding cities

HeidiPP: Why International? Why not here?

Danny Nguyen: Outbound trade missions to many different countries and traveling to look for businesses have always been my passion. I believe that good leadership should make for economic development, prosperity and jobs for the people. That is a priority, regardless of the level of government involved. Today you can't just sit and wait for good things to come, you must have a go-getter attitude, be proactive and aggressive. I have been doing that since serving as a City Council Member, At-Large, Missouri City International Relations & Economic Development Committee Chair. I like to say, "Think globally and start locally." I also encourage and receive Inbound Trade Missions."



HeidiPP: I see these pro-active traits reflected in your actions through several boards and committees you have served on from very early on such as; serving as president of the International Entrepreneur Society at Texas A & M, which you founded; serving as Chairman of the City of Houston Mayor's International Affairs and Development Council – Asia/Australia Division (2010-2011); being a member of Judge Robert Hebert's County Economic Development Committee; and last but not least, being an Honorary Advisory Member of HAR (Houston Association of Realtors) International Division. You were the Founder and President of the Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce in Houston. Tell me a little bit about the VACC?



Danny Nguyen: Our Motto is to “Pursue with the same objective of bringing people together, making deals, creating jobs and expanding trade,” ... these things are good for business and for the city. That’s how we build a stronger community.

HeidiPP: We also have seen you be very active in the International Communities here.

Danny Nguyen: Yes, I have helped to introduce and connect different trade and government delegations from different countries to the city, local government and authorities such as Houston International Airport, Port of Houston, Texas Medical Center, etc. and many different private companies.

HeidiPP: I saw where ABC interviewed you about your trip to Panama with GHP (Greater Houston Partnership)? You are very well known and regarded in you industry how long have you been in the Commercial Real Estate Business?

Danny Nguyen: Over 21 years.

I. CRE BUSINESS/CAREER

HeidiPP: Wow! More than 21 years? Congratulations! You must have a strong passion for Commercial Real Estate. What is it about this industry that gets you up every day?

Danny Nguyen: Yes, more than 21 years of making deals and I still love doing it every day. It is very fulfilling and rewarding to see not

only tangible results for my clients, but,also, the impact they have had on our community and city. I am very passionate about Commercial Real Estate. After 21+ years of making deals, I still love doing it, and I do it every day full-time. My niche is Retail Shopping Centers and Land. My clients know I am laser-focused on getting their deals closed. There's excitement when I bring the right players together and I am able to make a positive impact in the community. There is personal joy and satisfaction when everyone walks away from the closing table happy and satisfied.

HeidiPP: Who are your clients? Past clients?

Danny Nguyen: My target clients that I serve and focus on are: business owners, investors, developers, landlords, land shopping center owners. Some of our past clients are: Walgreens, Albertsons, CVS, Shipley Do-Nuts, Dollar Tree, Discount Tire, H&R Block, Kim Son, etc. I have also helped several small businesses as well. No two deals are the same, and each one presents its own unique challenges and rewards. I am grateful and honored for they are the catalysts of our local economy, along with the corporate giants.

HeidiPP: You owned a REMAX Business franchise in your early business years, and were featured in the CCIM Magazine as a rising Star.

Danny Nguyen: Yes, also I was Entrepreneur of the Year in 2009, and I served on the Houston West Chamber of Commerce. I believe in giving back. I'm devoted to making the Real Estate community better and I actively participate in the vision of the industry. I have served as:

- HAR Houston Association Realtors – Commercial Chair 2018
- AREAA – Asian Real Estate Association of America – Founding board member
- Chairman City of Houston Mayor's International Affairs and Development Council – Asia/Australia Division (2010-2011)
- HAR (Houston Association of Realtors) International – Honorary Advisory Member

HeidiPP: What was your first deal 25 years ago?

Danny Nguyen: My first deals were with Simon Properties helping my family to negotiate spaces and open stores in shopping malls in San Antonio, Corpus Christi and Austin in the early 90's. Since then, I've closed maybe thousands of commercial real estate transactions. I love making deals! I'm a Deal Maker. A singer sings, a painter paints, and I love doing deals.

HeidiPP: What are your secrets of success? What sets you apart from others?

Danny Nguyen: I would say that there are several things that have combined to create a successful career. My extensive background in education, business, real estate experience, and my network with other business owners, investors, contacts, and leadership skills. Real estate captured my interest and focus to such a degree that even my hobbies, interests, passions reflect that. You might say I did my homework. My understanding of different languages and cultures has been a big plus and helps me to understand my clients better. I enjoy talking to business owners at convenience stores, gas stations, and business locations to learn the stories of how they started, the history of their enterprise, their journeys to America, the history of the property, their languages, personalities... so that I can better understand my clients' needs at a deeper level.

I'm also focused, experienced and specialized. Ultimately, it's my hard work and network of contacts accumulated over the years. My devotion to excellence and dedication to my industry have earned me some awards and recognition like the CCIM designation, considered to be the equivalent of the PhD in commercial real estate, which I received in 2006. All of these things might not have led me to where I am today if it were not for my attitude and beliefs. I am all about free enterprise and the rights of property owners in the U.S. It is the foundation of our economy. I am very grateful — I love what I do, there is not a day that is the same.

I am proud of what I do and its impact. Every successful real estate deal I orchestrated was not only good for my clients and investors; they were also great for the city and the people in the area by creating jobs, revenues for the city, schools, state, etc.

I understand local government, city requirements for projects, and the vision of the projects. I get the big picture.

HeidiPP: Please share some of the projects and deals that you have most recently closed on that created a lot of impact

Danny Nguyen: Thank you for bringing that up, I would love to. At this time, we have several deals we are working on. On Ella Blvd. near Beltway 8 and the Intercontinental Airport, we closed a commercial land deal for 103 acres. In the City of Pearland, we have a 35,000-SF shopping center that we have taken from 100% vacant to 100% leased with a nationally accredited tenant. Most recently, we negotiated the purchase of an \$8 million shopping center in a designated Economic Development Incentive area. I represented the buyer in this deal.

HeidiPP: Tell us about some of your upcoming special projects, development, and investment opportunities: Do you list land and shopping centers for sale to the public?

Danny Nguyen: We are in the process of renovating 65,000+ SF of underutilized retail space in the heart of Missouri City, a great opportunity for investment for the whole project or partially. Creek Forest On Ella Blvd. We have a mixed use project on 45 acres of land with a 540-Unit apartment project, called Creek Forest plus about 100,000 SF of commercial development. It is a great investment opportunity for investors and could be a joint venture. The project cost is \$70 million.

Additionally, I have a new shopping center on Hwy 6 near Sienna Plantation with only 8,000 SF left for lease. We even have a retail project in Galveston with substantial frontage on Seawall facing the ocean. It is a great corner with awesome views of the ocean and is perfect for a restaurant with rooftop dining and other retail uses.

Also, we have several land listings from lots of an acre up to 200 acres for development or long term investment.

II. INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TRIPS EXPERIENCE

HeidiPP: How was your India Trade Mission trip with the Mayor to New Delhi and Mumbai last year? Please give us some highlights.

Danny Nguyen: The Mayor and about 30 business leaders of Houston did an outstanding job of representing Houston to our counterparts. The delegation included some other leaders such as: Swapan Dhairyawan president of Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston, Houston Vice Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Davis and Council Member Jack Christie. We also met with the Indian Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu and Mumbai Mayor Vishwanath Mahadeshwar. From the moment we were on the ground, the connections between the Houston business community and our Indian counterparts were strong, resulting in new business opportunities and partnerships that will potentially lead to more jobs, wealth and cultural enrichment for Houston.

HeidiPP: How about the trips to London and Germany in the previous year?

Danny Nguyen: It was a nine-day excursion across the globe visiting the cities of London, Frankfurt and Munich, to promote and attract business for the Houston area. I attended a series of meetings, including a briefing by the United States Embassy and discussed the business scene in Houston with other renowned leaders from top companies in the field. Along the way, we also met an array of great business counterparts and companies, and got to visit spectacular cities across Europe. Another valuable aspect for me was the opportunity to come together with leaders in business to discuss important topics for our community here in Houston, Texas. Mayor Turner and William F. McKeon of the Texas Medical Center did an outstanding job of promoting Houston.

HeidiPP: In 2012 You and the Greater Houston Partnership led a delegation of about 50 members with the former Viet Nameese Consul General Dung Le on a trade mission to Indonesia and VietNam.

Danny Nguyen: Yes, that was when I was on the Council and served as an International Relations and Economic Development Council Chair in Missouri City. Those positions have opened doors to more local economic and cultural expansion. We formed some alliances

that will be profitable for Houston and our foreign partners for years to come.

HeidiPP: Elaborate on your involvement with the Greater Houston Partnership.

Danny Nguyen: Since 1997, I have worked with the Greater Houston Partnership Mr. Jeff Moseley, former CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership, receiving and introducing several delegations from Vietnam to different U.S. companies, the Port of Houston, the airport, etc. for the opportunities for investment and cooperation that exist here. Thank you Mr. Jensen (Jiansheng) Shen, Director, Asia, Australia and Oceania at the Greater Houston Partnership, for pushing education and bilateral trade with Vietnam.

III. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM AND IMPACT IN HOUSTON

HeidiPP: How were your two business trips to VietNam in the last six months?

Danny Nguyen: Great. they were successful and very productive. Thanks.

HeidiPP: I saw several articles online about your partnership and you position as the vice chair of the board of the Renaissance International School in Viet Nam. What was your mission and your role there?

Danny Nguyen: My mission was to expand the EMASI School nationwide; especially in the area of real estate expansion and business development for EMASI. My role also involves creating an advisory committee and support and bringing different programs and resources from the US for the growth and vision. Overall, we would like to make the EMASI School education available in many cities in Vietnam. Our other objective is having the next Vietnamese generation understanding and speaking English well. After graduating, these students will be well prepared and ready to attend colleges in the U.S.

I would like to thank the Vietnamese General Consul in Houston, Mr. Luong Quoc Huy, for being very instrumental in supporting and introducing us to the local government leaders in Vietnam. A special thank you also goes to all the leaders of Hanoi, Thanh Hoa, Da Nang and Saigon, and other cities for their hospitality, support and guidance. This is very encouraging!

I also would like to thank Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner for his encouragement of quality education, economic development, and bilateral trades with Vietnam; William Harris, President & CEO of Space Center Houston, for his ideas and potential collaboration with our school and education programs; Bob Harvey, President and CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership, for his platform on many trade delegations from Vietnam doing business in the U.S.; the former U.S Ambassador to Vietnam Theodore George Osius III, for his passion about education in Vietnam and his support and endorsement; Donna Bahorich, chair of the Texas State Board of Education, for her wisdom and meeting with us and our partners; as well as my family, and many other friends and supporters for this endeavor.

HeidiPP: How would this impact Houston?

Danny Nguyen: This is what bilateral trade, prosperity and trade development are all about! In the end, success will not be individual partnerships, contractual agreements between the two companies, or individuals... It will be a great collaboration between two city leaders and the government of Vietnam. Delegations from Vietnam will be more welcome and better received here and vice versa. It's a catalyst for many more opportunities to come!

HeidiPP: Are there any other highlights from the Vietnamese trips before we conclude our interview today?

Danny Nguyen: The other highlight was to give the commencement address at the Renaissance International School Saigon graduation ceremony where I was honored to have served as the Vice Chair. This experience and the opportunity to inspire these students to think big and to plant a seed in them to give back and make a positive impact was fantastic! It was very satisfying to see the

excitement on the faces of those students and to meet and talk with the proud parents and friends in the audience.

