



## Beth Azor is always on the go, planning her next deal

By: Rebecca Meiser

Beth Azor remembers clearly her very first day at Terranova. She joined the Miami Beach, Fla., firm in 1986, having first been a special-events coordinator for a time before checking out real estate. That proved to be an astute choice for this Florida State University graduate with a degree in English literature: In time, she would become president of the firm before striking out on her own.

Azor recalls that on that initial day at Terranova, she was supposed to be “reading a manual or signing paperwork or something.” She also remembers that she began to get a bit antsy. So she picked up the phone and dialed Sir Speedy, a printing and copying services company that she had noticed was doing some expanding. “I really had no idea what I was doing, but I said: ‘Hi, I’m a real estate person, and we find space for people. Do you need any new locations?’ And the guy said: ‘Actually, I’m looking for a new corporate office. Can you come by

tomorrow?’ My boss came by to check on me, and I said, ‘Hey, we have an appointment at 2 p.m. tomorrow for someone who needs space.’”

To be sure, such gumption raised eyebrows among her superiors, including Stephen H. Bittel, Terranova’s founder. “From the moment Beth arrived, she brought an intensity to everything she undertook,” said Bittel. “The rapidity of her rise might be unusual, but when you work side by side with Beth, none of that seemed exceptional, because she just never quits.”

Over the next decade or so, Azor continued working her way up until she became president. When she left, it was to start up Florida-based Azor Advisory Services, and today Azor also owns and manages five shopping centers and an office building, all in South Florida. In addition, she leads about 50 instructional seminars per year for eager and driven leasing agents.

While at Terranova, Azor was known to work 60-hour weeks. She built up a reputation for what she describes as “respectful persistence” — a belief that every potential tenant should be contacted five times.

There was one instance, though, in the early 1990s, in which she briefly began to doubt the approach. After six months of cold-calling 50 people a day to lease a 400,000-square-foot listing, Azor almost gave up.

In the end, her persistence and the five-touch philosophy paid off nicely, in the form of a lease to Padrino’s Cuban Cuisine. “My favorite Cuban restaurant at the time was Padrino’s,” Azor said. Everyone said, ‘They are never going to move — they’ve been in the same location for 30 years.’” Azor continued to push, however. One day, after the eighth conversation with the owner’s sister, someone suggested Azor talk to the son, Mario Padrino, instead. Azor got him on the phone, and the resulting lease to Padrino’s triggered the signing of some 50,000 additional square feet.

Last year, for the first time, Azor built a new shopping center from the ground up. Today she maintains a full schedule, though she does try to pick up her two sons from school every day. On a typical day recently, Azor was at work on eight different leasing agreements, had a phone call scheduled with a client in Israel and had already spent half the morning canvassing. “I’m always looking for deals,” she said. “Right now I have a list of 10 that I’d love to buy.”