



## 2016 COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION & RENOVATION RETREAT

# The year ahead

## Retreat attendees look at ever-evolving commercial construction sector

By Michael J. Pallerino

**There were many surprises in 2016. And,** to be fair, many more on the horizon, according to attendees of the 2016 Commercial Construction & Renovation Retreat.

When it comes to what lies ahead, pick a topic, any topic. Manpower. Construction materials. Technology. The impact of a new administration.

With leaders from every side of the commercial construction market represented, Commercial Construction & Renovation's annual Retreat featured a roundtable discussion where some of the industry's most prevalent topics were laid out.

Held in Daytona Beach, Fla., at The Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort, the three-day conference featured a bevy of networking opportunities – from a tour of the Daytona International Speedway, several lunch and dinner parties, and the always anticipated one-on-one meetings. The event, held Sept. 29-Oct. 2, was sponsored by Commercial Construction & Renovation magazine.

Following is the final installment of our two-part snapshot of the roundtable discussions.

**For more information, visit us at [www.ccr-mag.com](http://www.ccr-mag.com).**



**Blake Brosa**  
Sr. Vice President  
EMG



**Misty Cameron**  
Manager of  
Construction Services  
Firehouse of America, LLC



**Kevin Campbell**  
Senior Project Manager  
JLL



**Darrel Chaney**  
Consultant  
Prime Retail Services



**Rick Connors**  
Dir of Construction  
Primanti Bros



**Steve DeBerardino**  
Director, Corporate &  
Hospitality Accounts  
Cosentino NA



**Michael Echeandia**  
Dir of Construction  
& Store Planning  
NY & Company

NEW YORK & COMPANY



**Brad Gaskins**  
Principal  
The McIntosh Group



**Fatima Hakim**  
Facilities Manager  
Ashley Stewart



**Bret Hanks**  
Business Development  
National Accounts  
Ameritech Facility  
Services, LLC



**Tim Hill**  
Executive Vice President,  
Business Development  
The Beam Team



**Dedrick Kirkem**  
Facilities Manager  
John Varvatos

john varvatos



**L.J. Mohan**  
VP Facilities & Energy  
Engineering  
Polo Ralph Lauren



**Scott Moseman**  
PowerSmart Energy  
Specialist - National  
Retail Accounts  
Graybar



**Jacqueline Nation**  
Dir of Store Planning  
DKNY

DKNY



**Gina Marie Noda**  
Executive Director  
Business Development  
Rebcor Construction Inc.



**Kelly O'Brien**  
Director-National Account  
Business Development  
Illumatech, Inc.



**Herminio Pereira**  
Engineering Mgr.  
Caribbean Restaurants  
LLC/Burger King



**Demetria Peterson**  
Construction Manager  
Bridgestone Retail  
Operations



**Julia Versteegh**  
Vice President,  
Marketing and Business  
Development  
Storefloors



**Grace Daly**  
Shoptalk 360





**CCR: What kind of surprises you saw. Did you see anything that surprised you?**

**Kevin Campbell, JLL:** One of the challenges I faced in 2016 is and it looks like we are going to follow the same pattern getting through the permit process. Year after year, it is a hurdle to cross. When you talk about the economy, it seems that this process is part of the economy's downturn, especially with staffing being reduced. In some towns, it's part-time. It really can throw the project off kilter and off schedule. It's very difficult to get around it. That has been just one of the challenges that is top-of-mind for any of the projects I've worked on in the last year.

**Blake Brosa, EMG:** What comes to mind immediately this year is the shift we saw in our client's mentality when justifying cost vs. speed-to-market. Since the recession in 2009, we've all felt the enhanced scrutiny over the many costs pertaining to the design, construction, and maintenance of real estate assets and facilities.

However, this year we noticed an uptick in several clients' appetite for prioritizing speed-to-market over costs. Initiatives

that may have previously taken 12 months to design, permit, and execute are now being given three months to complete, and are being executed at a premium since many local GCs and sub-trades are already tapped for capacity. I think we can all agree this will

continue to be the norm rather than the exception for 2017, so the sooner you can establish contractor workloads and lock up resources, the better.

**Michael Echeandia, NY & Company:**

One of the difficulties we had this year was show time. We got thrown projects because of unforeseen situations, so we had to get them done quickly. Getting quality people to partner up with you hard as well. That was one of the difficulties we had this year. We had a couple locations — we do some pop-up stores — where we had two weeks to get them initiated and running. So getting somebody on board with you, someone you trust you that everything's going to be okay, is something we're focusing on.

We do a lot of different contractors; a lot of different vendors. A lot of vendors always want to get the deals up front, so I have to place that blanket order until

**“We'll be taking some time to focus on more green initiatives in our go forward spaces, innovative technology, expanding our marketing and branding.”**

— Fatima Hakim, Ashley Stewart



everything's set in sideways. They want to say you get 11 weeks or 16 weeks — things of that nature.

So we have to really step back and take a look at what we really try to do. It's about getting prepared. But once again, when we're dealing with landlords, it can be challenging. They say, "You can't do this until this day," and then all of sudden they come back to you and say, "Start tomorrow." It's all timing for us, because we have a strategy for how we're going to approach where we want to be.

**Darrel Chaney, Prime Retail Services:**

We are not seeing a lot of new builds out there. But we're pleasantly surprised with the small cap projects that are going on all over the place. As we've heard, there are lots of opportunities out there — a lot of work, so that's a good thing for all of us.

**Rick Connors, Primanti Brothers:** I've had good luck with contractors here at the end of 2016. Seems like last year, we really struggled trying to get contractors to get us bids. But it was very easy this year. There are a lot of good contractors that have stepped up, so that tells me some of the new construction and build-outs probably are slowing down a little bit and some contractors are catching back up.

One of the problems we're having is that there's an on-going battle for these sites. Everybody's probably looking at that. There's actually a bidding war out there for all of the new sites. It's very hard to get the

sites that are financially favorable for you. I think that all came from the stop of construction years ago, and now we're starting to see new construction start back up.

And with the cost of building materials, trying to budget something a year in advance, and then not knowing exactly how the market is going to be, has been an awful hard thing to do. You have to have time to get your budgets and your financial obligations in place.

**Gina Noda, Rebcor Construction:**

Over the last several years, many of the retailers are trying to rebrand or redesign their stores and moving to smaller footprints so they hire a huge design firm to come up with this great new design concept, they pay four, five hundred thousand dollars for that design, they build two locations and say, "We can't afford to roll this out; it's not feasible, it's not cost effective," then they are back to the drawing board, they look to hire a new architect and value engineer that design and the cycle begins all over again.

This is one of the many things that always seems to surprise me, why don't we learn from past mistakes? Why don't we do it right the first time around? Why do we all not work together? Like pairing up the design architectural firms with the production architecture firms along with some construction teams from the very beginning of a new design concept, so they can all work together.

The design firm is designing for the "Store of the Year Award" and they are up here. The sky is the limit, then the production architectural firm is down here and the construction company is over here. But put them all together to meet in the middle, they can assist with value engineering the design all the way through the process to keep it in reality, so that the finished product can be cost effective and feasible to be rolled out the first time around.

Overseas, they work with shop fitting models, meaning they hire one person who brings the entire team together so everybody works together from the very beginning with a team approach. I truly believe that we need to start moving more towards that model here in the U.S.

I would really like to see us all work together and communicate more. We need more integration all the way around — from the client side, your internal

**"Energy monitoring for brick and mortar stores results in substantial cost savings; a tremendous value as we begin to see the prevalence of online shopping take root."**

**— Bret Hanks, Ameritech Facility Services**







departments, such as facilities department speaking to the design department. What are some of the maintenance issues that happen over and over again that maybe are coming from a specific design? What materials are not good that maybe the design team chose that you are having issues with and are costing a fortune to maintain, design department and construction department? What details are on the plans that are incorrect?

What discrepancies come up on the drawings over and over again that are costing you change orders, real estate department, design department and construction department? What deals do you get handed over and over again that are not good or that the design does not work in, or is there something that you want or need RE to get put in those leases that would benefit you on the construction side, etc, etc? We are all on the same team here.

Everyone seems to be in such silos and only worry about their piece of the puzzle and it is not working. Then, between the internal and external teams, vendors really need to start being a true extension of their clients.

**Jacqueline Nation, DKNY:** I think it's interesting what Gina is saying. How do we get people to work together so that we can really streamline a lot of systems? The one thing that surprises

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— Blake Brosa, EMG

me is that even within the environment that I work in; it's difficult to get people all on the same page. I understand that everybody has his/her own vested interest in getting a job done, and getting it done correctly, but we have to be rational in our thinking. Everybody has to remember that we're all working for the same team. We all want this project to be wonderful. We all want it to be inexpensive and open on time.

One of the things that surprise me is how we don't always work in the same direction in order to get to the same end goal. I hope that streamlining some processes and will get things to work a little bit more efficiently and ultimately help everybody. It's true — the top priority is to get everybody on the same page.

**Rebcor Construction's Noda:** We were discussing this at dinner the other night, of how I use to love attending the annual contractor/vendor meetings that some of the retailers had each year. It was about everybody working together and learning from each other and it really benefitted all parties, especially the clients.

The GCs would tell the architects what details on the drawings didn't work or details that would be better suited on a different drawing sheet, etc. One GC would tell another GC a hint of how they

did the installation of a specific fixture or a different kind of paint they found that works better, etc., These meetings were extremely beneficial for everyone and always were very productive. They helped build strong relationships between all the vendors and bring everyone together as one team.

We're trying to do more of this design/build in-house, create more of a team approach and be more the full service company for our clients. I really think that's the wave of the future. It works tremendously internationally.

**Scott Moseman, Graybar:** I've noticed that retailers' design, IT and construction departments are sometimes not on the same page. IT will have an idea of what they want, but it may be too

**Graybar's Moseman:** It's a fine balance.

**DKNY's Nation:** Those are the challenges. Those are the things that surprise me, because nobody's going notice that corner but me, and you. A regular customer is not going to walk into the store and say, "Oh my, I can't believe that corner."

**Bret Hanks, Ameritech:** As a facility improvement provider for the last 20 years, we don't run into too many surprises. LED retrofits continue, but what we have noticed is the prevalence of multi-store rollouts across the country paired with the high demand to install thermostat sensors for energy monitoring and lighting timers- not only for the parking lots, but for interiors as



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– L.J. Mohan, Polo Ralph Lauren

costly or time consuming for construction to execute – and that's when I become a mediator and a matchmaker between the departments. I can speak to different technologies and solutions that will answer the needs of all three departments.

So I think it pulls away from working together sometimes, when everybody is tasked to get things off their checklist. Not everyone is willing to slow down for the teamwork thing. I've found that when I was outside the industry, I leaned on vendors. And now, even in the industry, I find myself offering a crutch or holster to be a resource.

**DKNY's Nation:** A couple of things that I've picked up here are that each department has their own challenges of what must get done. For me, I can say, "Okay, that corner right there – you want it to look like this and it's going to cost you this amount of money. I can get it for you less expensively, but it's going to look a little different. It's going to look like this, which is slightly different." And it's understood at the moment, but time, distance and recall from conversation is not forgiving.

well. Energy monitoring for brick and mortar stores results in substantial cost savings; a tremendous value as we begin to see the prevalence of online shopping take root.

**L.J. Mohan, Polo Ralph Lauren:** We're facing a very difficult time because material prices have, in fact, gone down over a period of time. So, even trying to maintain the same price in terms of material and labor is becoming difficult for the industry.

That was the surprise. Year after year, I've always seen a 2 or 3 percent increase in everything we do, more than labor cost and material prices. But today, and I think in the foreseeable future, I believe that with interest rates remaining so low, prices will have to go down for everybody to be competitive.

Another thing is the unusual complexion of this year's election. In other words, the companies today in the highest level are not really spending the capital expense as much as they normally had in an election year, because they weren't sure which way the wind would blow. Therefore, that what is really happening is that normal projects that would normally have seen fruit – that would



have normally become reality – are being shelved so that we will see that only coming in 2017 and beyond.

We don't know how that will go – there's an uncertainty. But, it may very well be that 2017 will usher a lot more capital expense as compared to what it is in 2016. So, you might see a tremendous upswing in projects, and so on.

Another aspect of this is, again, of course, related to the price of the electron in terms of electricity. When Bret talked about the demand side management of it, and in terms of putting the device, which turn things on and off, the payback is great.

But today in the United States, I think there are more than 11 states where you can actually buy the electron in the outside market. It's like any commodity, because it's being deregulated. And if you can purchase deregulated energy at the market price, that's important. We could never do that before.

But today in New York, California, Illinois and Texas, you can buy energy from any place in the world. You can buy it from Europe if you wanted to. The electron doesn't know where it comes from, but you can get it, you can buy and you procure energy like you procure anything else.

**“I would say that 2017 holds for us building partnerships that will help us to better serve our clients. It will be about how we can work together.”**

– Julia Versteegh Storefloors

What has happened is that in the procurement of energy, the price of energy has actually gone down. So the price of electrons is lower. The price of electricity comes with a KWH. In fact, you can buy electricity at a lower price than what you would pay your utility.

And also, in the cost of manufacturing, etc., the price of natural gas has also fallen quite a bit. All of this has had an effect on the construction industry, in terms of diminishing costs per square foot. So that was big surprise. The never happened to the extent it has now. You can actually build a building today at a cheaper price for the same materials that what you could build five years ago.

**Kelly O'Brien, Tech Sign:** My surprises are really my challenges. One of them is that I'm cold-calling a lot of retailers in different segments, which I have never had to do a lot of before. And there are a lot of personnel changes, more than there used

to be when making these calls. It used to be that I would deal with a person who had been there for 10 years, so you build trust. But with cold calling, I'm really just laying a marker, saying, “If you ever do need me...” It's about them keeping me in mind. So it's definitely a change, but hopefully it'll all work out.





**Julia Versteegh, Storefloors:** Technology still surprises me. It's amazing how far we have come and how far we have to go. In the industry, we now have lots of automation – automated service, robots, etc. We have robots serving food and cars driving themselves. Drones delivering products. And yet we have ships that take 12 weeks to get from Europe to America. We have spaceships and space stations, so why are our ships still so slow?

Twelve weeks is a long time for a store to wait. And it's still so common. So I look forward to seeing what technology brings in the future.

**Steve DeBerardino, Cosentino:** I see some good examples of understanding what everyone wants to experience something. They want to go somewhere and experience eating. They want to experience something that's attached to your brain. I think of a company named Perch.

You go there to experience all these different high-end pieces of equipment – ovens, toasters, blenders – you name it. And they'll have a gourmet cook cooking stuff. And there'll be someone providing wine and coffee, and other things. They don't care if you don't buy anything. They just want you to come and experience Perch. If you end up buying something, great. You probably will buy from them because you really enjoyed that experience. But they're doing an experience. You're there for an experience.

**“I see some good examples of understanding what everyone wants to experience something. They want to go somewhere and experience eating.”**

– Steve DeBerardino, Cosentino

And look at Amazon. They're getting into the bookstore market. We just did some community tables for them and a great store they developed. I think they're prototyping. They're obviously leveraging their distribution to supplement the bookstore. But they're very much focused on you and your experience at that bookstore.

**Polo Ralph Lauren's Mohan:** The idea that technology will enhance the experience is what it's all about. So the question simply is that whatever technology you use, it's going to, in fact, imitate that experience for the higher levels. That's the concept. The dependency, really, is the personal experience will be the force.

Technology will end up being the cause, but certainly will enhance the total experience. It's not either/or. Technology will be never replace the entire experience. That's not possible. But I think the share – the dependency – will rebalance itself in such a way that you might not need all the service you have right now in terms of human interaction. It may be technology can supplement, or add, or eliminate it.

**Rebcor Construction's Noda:** Yes, because for the younger generation, it's the technology and the experience. That's what they have to bring to the table.

Look at Samsung 837 in the meat-packing district. It is all about the experience and the best and most innovative technology. You can surf or ride on a roller coaster with virtual reality or you can load your Instagram account and walk down an aisle of all of your photos all around you, above your head, below your feet, it is crazy. It's all about the experience and enjoying it.

The space is incredible. Same thing at restaurants, they're using interactive iPads to order or play games or pay the bill on, retail apparel stores are installing digital mirrors in their fitting rooms so we can play

and see what our body looks like in all different inventory of clothes before we try anything on.

Eddie Bauer in WA, has a freezer for a fitting room, it is so cool, (figuratively and literally), you could go in the freezer and try on their coats. With today's generation it is all about the experience; that is what is going to bring people back into the brick and mortar store environment.



**Graybar's Moseman:** I'll build on the idea of customer experience: it's also controlled by the materials we use in a facility. Take, for instance, a light. Today, a lightbulb is much more than wire covered by a glass bulb. An LED light is a piece of digital equipment. Its output and color temperature can be controlled via an app on your phone. You can change the lights' color temperature with a swipe of your finger, which immediately changes the ambiance of your store.

Customers come to a brick and mortar store for the experience. They want to try something on. They want customer service — but when they want something, they want it immediately. Give them the option to pay with their smartphone while they're still in the fitting room. Let them pull up your inventory to see if the item they want is in stock. It's all about marrying the customer experience — whether that's with lighting or traditional customer service — with the digital access to which people have grown accustomed.

**Primanti Brothers' Connors:** I agree that the overall costs of raw materials and constructions costs are down. But when you look at the new digital items we're putting into the stores, especially restaurants, it's driving the cost up. Everything is

tied to your computer, so it has to be working properly. Your hot water heaters are tied to your computers, and the list goes on. This drives the cost up, but we have to do that.

And now you're bringing in the lighting program. I need a lighting program now to hue my lights and everything, but I'm looking at \$25,000 for a package when I'm used to having \$20,000 in lights. It's just the whole set.

**“We’re going to be interviewing a lot of folks from the industry and doing it in locations like New York, Chicago and Atlanta.”**

— Grace Daily, Shop Top 360

**Polo Ralph Lauren's Mohan:** You're right. So you have to add technology to the extent that you are trying to retrieve data. And it's important that you have this data, because it gives you the knowledge to operate that facility in an efficient way. So when you really look at the initial capital cost, yes, costs go up. The net present value of that capital cost is going to be much higher than what it would be if you did not install that technology.

**Primanti Brothers' Connors:** And that's fine.

**Polo Ralph Lauren's Mohan:** But in order to operate that facility the way it was designed, as per its design conditions over its life, you will spend a lot more in labor and all of the other things that are



associated with it. So, you really have to look at and say, “What are my operational costs in relation to my cabinet costs?” And if you look at the operational costs, you will find that they will have added labor or added manpower to be able to get the same efficiency if you did not install those controls. So that is the issue.

When this is analyzed, and when people make these decisions, they have to look at it in terms of is this is a keeper facility? Are we going to be in this real estate market or this domain for 20 years? 10 years?” You have to make the complete projection of both operational and capital costs. And then you have to weigh that full equation to see what, from a lifecycle cost standpoint, is the most beneficial for you?

**Fatima Hakim, Ashley Stewart:** I just wanted to add to the comments regarding the brick-and-mortar experience. Ashley Stewart is a very socially engaged brand, so what we did in our stores was add more social elements to get the customers even

because it really taints down in that area, and as far as shipment, retail operations, architectural and corporate is concerned. Everybody had to get his two cents in. It was like we were talking about earlier — nobody was really on the same page, especially when it comes to a store that’s in a really sensitive area like that. So I was surprised that we were able to accomplish it within the given time.

## CCR: Give us a snapshot of what you expect in 2017.

**Ashley Stewart’s Hakim:** Our lab store will be open in 2017 so we’ll be keeping a close eye on the performance of that space, creating some specialized KPI tools to track some of the new elements. We’ll also be preparing to build on its successes and we are aggressively looking for markets where we can replicate the prototype as we prepare for our growth period.

Additionally, we’ll be taking some time to focus on more green initiatives in our go forward spaces, innovative technology,



**“One thing I have discovered in retail is that design, IT and construction departments are sometimes not aligned. Projects necessitate that they will eventually come together, and often a full-service distributor like Graybar can help connect these stakeholders earlier in the process.”**

— Scott Moseman, Graybar



more engaged. Our customers love to be featured on Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram. We’ve added selfie stations in some locations as well as custom Snapchat filters. We encourage a lot of online activity that translates back into our brick-and-mortar business. We do a lot of model calls, sip and shops and events in our stores.

We’ve seen the traffic increase because everyone wants to be a part of that experience. They want to be featured on our social media. We now have a social media lounge; you can take a picture, hashtag it and end up on our social media space. They like the opportunity to be famous in their own feed. That builds our brick-and-mortar business with a social aspect.

**Dedrick Kirkem, John Varvatos Enterprises:** We had to deal with our build-out. That was a kind of a surprise for me,

expanding our marketing and branding while building on our already dominate social media presence. This year will be an exciting time for Ashley Stewart.

**Cosentino’s DeBeradino:** We’ve got a lot of new architectural design sales managers — 60 of them throughout North America. And the challenge for me is to get them up to speed in the corporate and hospitality world, and the applications we have. It will be fun.

**Demetria Peterson, Bridgestone Retail Operations:** We’re looking at really expediting on our development. The 20/20 vision is that we want to have 3,000 stores by the year 2020, so we have a lot of work to do. We’re looking at the combination of build-to-suit, self-development and acquisitions.



**Brad Gaskins, The McIntosh Group:**

We are seeing in 2017 a similar year to 2016. There are a strong number of smaller rollout projects scheduled. These rollouts are defined by us as a similar scope of work project across a large number of stores with a specific, fast, timeline for full completion. In addition, during 2017, we see both smaller and larger remodels return due to an increase in capital spending in this area. Many 2015 and 2016 remodel test stores have proven to be successful.

**Tim Hill, The Beam Team:** We are seeing very similar year in 2017 as we did in 2016. There are a strong number of smaller projects across a number of stores of similar projects, and a lot of stores rollouts, and refreshes. A few years ago, there were a lot of large remodels. We're seeing smaller remodels and an awful lot of them next year.

**Misty Cameron, Firehouse Subs:** Next year we plan to open at least 100-plus locations across the United States. Also, we look to lessen costs of build-outs and to get everyone on the same page.

**Graybar's Moseman:** Graybar works with best-in-class LED manufacturers. There's so much competition to make the newest and the best products and then get those products to market as quickly as possible. It can be confusing for many to know which LED light is best for their facility — and that's where we come in. Graybar works

**“As a company, we have been going through a lot transition over the last two years or so. I think it's finally coming together. I'm hopeful that 2017 is going to be a really busy year.”**

— Jacqueline Nation, DKNY

with our manufacturers to make sure our mutual customers are getting high-quality items that fit the end application — hospitals, schools, manufacturing plants, retail, commercial and the like.

Everyone expects that the cost of LED technology will continue to get cheaper and cheaper, and that's only true to a point. Look at smartphones today — the price has stabilized even though the product is in high demand. Manufacturers of LED lighting are already starting to reach that same point.

**Storefloors' Versteegh:** I would say that 2017 holds for us building partnerships that will help us to better serve our clients. It will be about how we can work together.

**Grace Daily, Shop Top 360:** We're going to be celebrating red carpet, black-tie style with our podcast series. We're going to be interviewing a lot of folks from the industry and doing it in locations like New York, Chicago and Atlanta.

**Illumatch Sign's O'Brien:** We're doing some strategic partnerships and trying to broaden our offerings. We're going to try and partner with the people who didn't primarily participate in the sign industry. We want to build partnerships and connections with them.

**Polo Ralph Lauren's Mohan:** Next year will be a year of radical change. We are working to get the best providers for the services we need. Who has the light capabilities that can provide the necessary services we need for our new designs, new prototypes, new stores, real-estate ventures, new lease agreements, etc.?

**Ameritech Facility Services' Hanks:** In today's world, with talk of global warming due to green-house emissions, it only makes sense that we are starting to see local municipalities offer rebates as incentives, specifically in the Northeast, where costs are so high for energy. There is such a demand in fact, that we've opened up office branches in Denver, Phoenix and we're planning for another in the Mid-Atlantic this year.

We know the demand for these services is cause to have more offices with capable technicians that can respond to a customer and install these money-saving devices quickly. Again, it's not much of a surprise for us, but we are getting ourselves prepared for this new wave of demand from restaurateurs and retailers alike.





**“We expect to spend more time responding to accessibility lawsuits in the first six months of 2017 than we did in all of 2016.”**

— Brad Gaskins, The McIntosh Group



**DKNY's Nation:** As a company, we have been going through a lot transition over the last two years or so. I think it's finally coming together. I'm hopeful that 2017 is going to be a really busy year.

**Rebcor Construction's Noda:** I'm extremely excited to get back to the general contracting side of the industry, it's been over five years. I miss all my subs and mall managers. I will be focusing on marketing/branding, creating a new website and new marketing materials, coming up with a strategic business development plan for growth with bringing in new clients, as well as, taking them into new markets. I'm doing what I love to do — taking a small business and helping them grow.

**Primanti Brothers' Connors:** We have 35 stores. Next year, we plan on opening eight to 10 more, with three or four remodels on current stores.

**Prime Retail Services' Chaney:** We're projecting an increase in the remodels and refresh work — a lot of it. And also, ADA compliant work.

**NY & Company's Echeandia:** We're doing about six new locations next year, as well as between 10 and 12 refreshes. That does not include the special projects we do — pop-up stores and the side-by-sides. Those are yet to be determined.

**EMG's Brosa:** We all wish we had a crystal ball, but we don't, so we'll continue to monitor the market place and listen to our customers. In 2017, I'm thinking we'll continue seeing major investments in initiatives hyper-focused on reinventing and differentiating the customer experience. For bricks and mortar retailers, this will be a combination of in-store and e-commerce enhancements. For online-only retailers, I think we'll see an influx of “e-tailers” seeking a physical presence. First, by way of pop-up shops to test proof-of-concepts, and then by flagship locations, and eventually nationwide expansion—a continued race to differentiate from competitors and capture market share, while seeking an optimal online and physical brand presence.

**JLL's Campbell:** It's all about relationships, enhancing our existing client base, providing excellent customer service while attracting new clients. We want to continue to build growth in all of our services lines turning projects into programs. I think 2017 will be a year of new partnerships and inspiration. **CCR**