



# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO LEASING YOUR COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

Next Phase Commercial, brokered by  
Epique Realty



[www.NextPhaseCommercial.com](http://www.NextPhaseCommercial.com)



# WELCOME!

Leasing out your commercial property—whether office, retail, industrial, or mixed-use—is a proven way to generate steady income, add value, and build wealth. A successful lease not only fills your space but also protects your investment and reputation. This guide walks you step-by-step through the process, helping you attract great tenants, avoid costly mistakes, and create win-win lease agreements.



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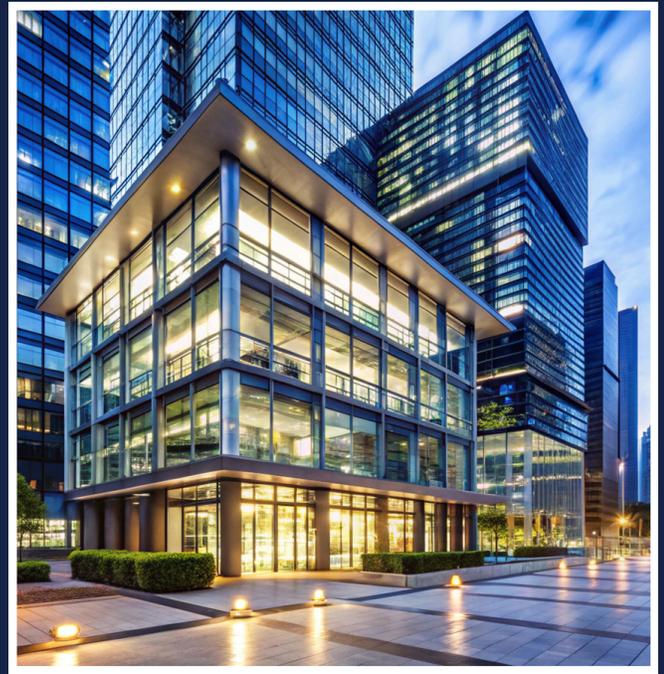
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# 01

## Finding the Right Real Estate Agent



Choosing the right commercial real estate agent is one of the most important decisions you'll make as a landlord. The right agent will not only help you fill your space quickly, but also secure strong tenants, negotiate favorable lease terms, and protect your long-term interests.

### What to Look for in a CRE Agent:

- ▶ **Specialization:** Experience with your property type (office, retail, industrial, medical, mixed-use).
- ▶ **Local Market Knowledge:** Understanding of current trends and tenant demand.
- ▶ **Track Record:** Proven success in leasing similar properties.
- ▶ **Network:** Access to qualified tenants and strong broker relationships.
- ▶ **Marketing Tools:** Professional photos, online listings (LoopNet, Crexi, CoStar), and broker outreach.
- ▶ **Screening Process:** Ability to thoroughly vet tenant financials and business plans.
- ▶ **Negotiation Expertise:** Experience balancing tenant appeal with landlord protection.
- ▶ **Clear Communication:** Timely updates, honesty, and partnership.

## Questions to Ask When Interviewing Agents:

- 1 What is your experience with properties like mine in this market?
- 2 How will you market my property and reach qualified tenants?
- 3 What is your process for screening prospective tenants?
- 4 How do you keep landlords updated during the leasing process?
- 5 What are your commission rates and terms of your agreement?
- 6 What support do you offer after the lease is signed?

## Why Work With Next Phase Commercial?

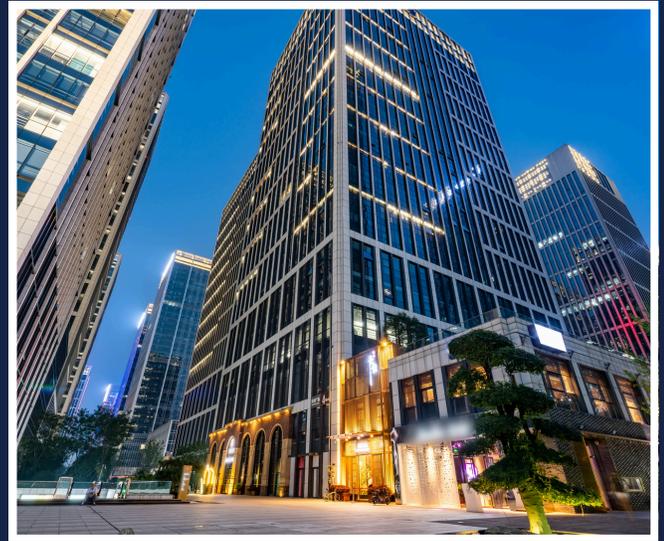
- ▶ **Local Experts:** Decades of leasing experience in Minnesota and Wisconsin
- ▶ **Full-Service Support:** Pricing, marketing, negotiation, and move-in guidance
- ▶ **Aggressive Marketing:** Exposure on all major platforms and broker channels
- ▶ **Tenant Screening:** Detailed vetting for reliable, long-term tenants
- ▶ **Landlord-Focused:** Your goals and risk protection are always the priority



The right commercial agent is your partner in maximizing property value and protecting your interests. Don't settle—choose an advisor who treats your investment like their own.

# 02

## LANDLORD PREPARATION



### Set Your Leasing Goals

- ▶ Target rental rate and lease term
- ▶ Stable, long-term tenants vs. short-term revenue
- ▶ Lease all or part of your property? Multi-tenant or single-tenant?
- ▶ Ideal tenant profile: business type, financials, use, experience

### Know Your Property's Strengths & Weaknesses

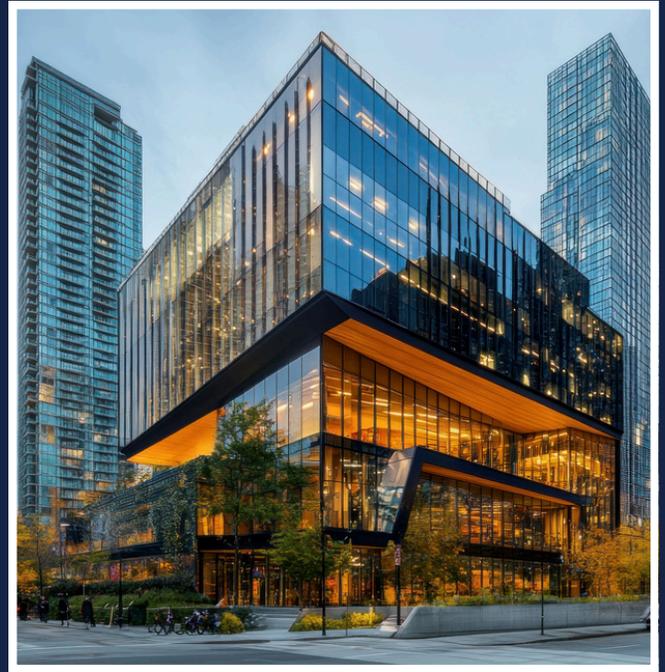
- ▶ Location, visibility, access
- ▶ Parking, signage, amenities, and unique features
- ▶ Building age, systems (HVAC, electrical, roof), ADA compliance
- ▶ Recent improvements and deferred maintenance

### Gather Key Documents

- ▶ Floor plans and site plans
- ▶ Operating expenses (taxes, insurance, utilities, repairs)
- ▶ Zoning verification and permitted uses
- ▶ Prior leases, amendments, service contracts
- ▶ Certificates of occupancy, warranties, and environmental reports

# 03

## PROPERTY READINESS



### Make Your Space “Tenant Ready”

- ▶ Clean and repair interiors and exteriors
- ▶ Address safety issues and deferred maintenance
- ▶ Update lighting, paint, signage, and landscaping
- ▶ Remove old office furniture/equipment

### Decide on Buildout/Improvements

- ▶ Offer Tenant Improvement (TI) allowance?
- ▶ Deliver “as-is” or turnkey improvements?
- ▶ Get contractor bids for potential work.

### Set Clear Terms for NNN/CAM Charges

- ▶ Itemize property taxes, insurance, maintenance, and common area costs
- ▶ Prepare to explain how costs are calculated and billed.

# 04

## MARKETING YOUR SPACE



### Prepare Professional Marketing Materials

- ▶ Property flyer/OM with photos, floor plan, rent, highlights, amenities
- ▶ 3D tour or video, if possible

### List on Major Platforms

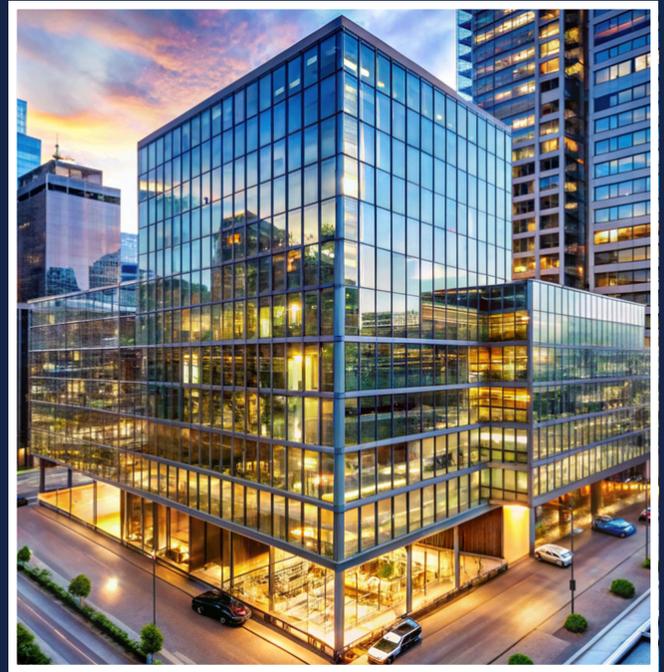
- ▶ LoopNet, Crexi, Moody's/MNCar, CoStar, Next Phase Commercial website
- ▶ MLS and local CRE boards

### Network & Outreach

- ▶ Email and call brokers, tenant reps, business owners
- ▶ Promote on LinkedIn and social media
- ▶ Use prominent onsite signage

# 05

## TENANT SCREENING & SELECTION



### Qualify Prospects Thoroughly

- ▶ Require a business plan (especially for startups/first-time businesses)
- ▶ Request business and personal financials (balance sheet, P&L, bank statements)
- ▶ Check credit, background, and references.
- ▶ Verify business history and experience.

### Meet With Prospective Tenants

- ▶ Assess business fit, communication, long-term stability.
- ▶ Discuss intended use, improvement needs and timeline.

### Protect Yourself But Stay Competitive

- ▶ Balance strong standards with responsiveness and flexibility
- ▶ Good tenants pay rent on time, maintain the space, and add value.

# 06

## NEGOTIATION & LEASE STRUCTURE



### Understand Key Lease Types

- ▶ **NNN (Triple Net):** Tenant pays rent plus taxes, insurance, maintenance
- ▶ **Gross Lease:** Fixed rent, landlord pays most expenses
- ▶ **Modified Gross:** Hybrid—some costs split

### Negotiate Win-Win Terms

- ▶ Rent, term, renewal options, TI allowance, free rent, escalation clauses
- ▶ Deposit and guarantee structure (personal/corporate)
- ▶ Maintenance, repairs, improvements responsibilities
- ▶ Signage, parking, use, subleasing, exclusivity

### Prepare a Letter of Intent (LOI)

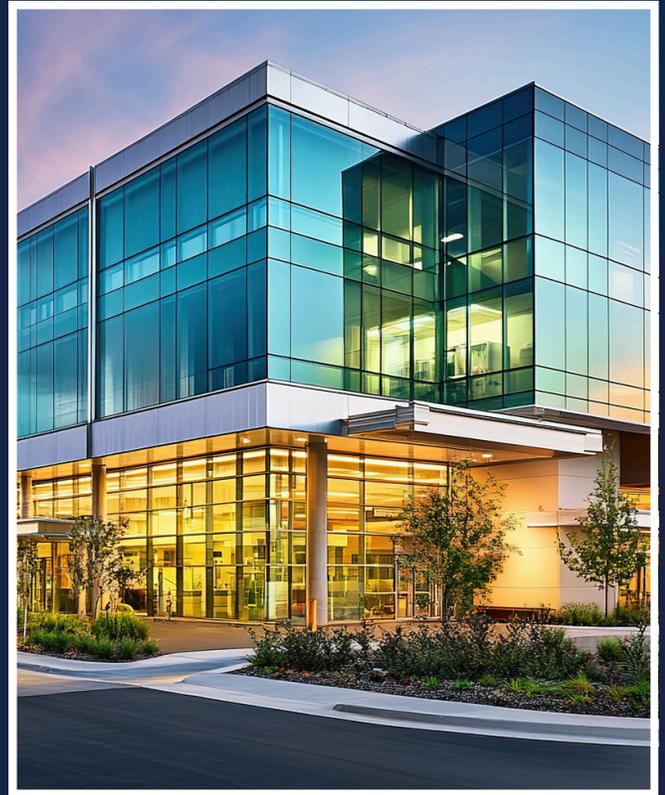
- ▶ Outline deal terms before full lease drafting

### Draft a Professional Lease Agreement

- ▶ Use attorney-reviewed templates
- ▶ Clearly state all obligations, expenses, rights

# 07

## DUE DILIGENCE & DOCUMENTATION



### Due Diligence Steps

- ▶ Verify tenant's financials and references
- ▶ Confirm intended use matches zoning/code
- ▶ Collect insurance certificates
- ▶ Prepare move-in inspection and punch list

### Compliance

- ▶ Ensure code compliance (zoning, ADA, fire, health)
- ▶ Provide all required disclosures

# 08

## MOVE-IN & MANAGEMENT



### Move-In Process

- ▶ Finalize/sign all documents
- ▶ Collect deposits, first month's rent
- ▶ Walk-through, condition report
- ▶ Handover keys, access, instructions

### Ongoing Responsibilities

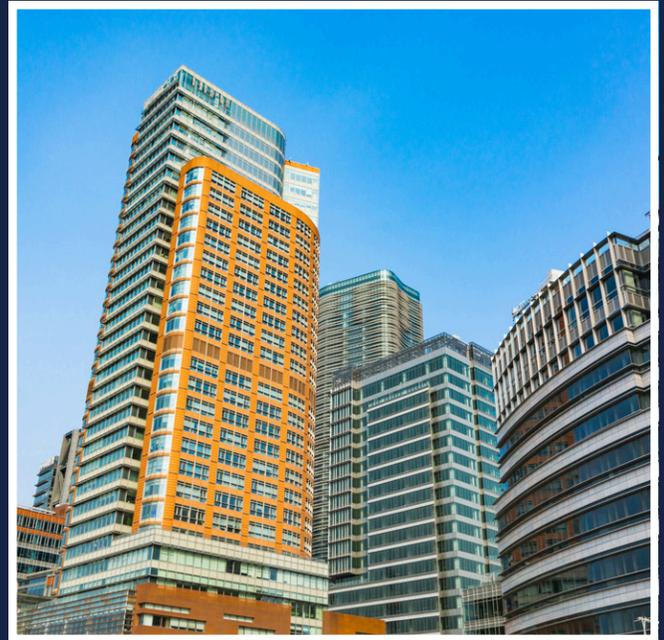
- ▶ Respond to repair/maintenance requests promptly
- ▶ Regularly inspect property/common areas
- ▶ Communicate proactively
- ▶ Keep detailed records

### Handling Issues

- ▶ Follow lease/legal process for non-payment or violations
- ▶ Consider mediation for disputes

# 09

## LANDLORD CHECKLISTS



### Pre-Market

- Gather all documents
- Repair/clean space
- Set rent/marketing plan
- Prepare CAM/NNN calculations

### Marketing & Showings

- List online, alert brokers
- Create flyer/OM and signage
- Schedule tours, track interest

### Tenant Screening & Lease

- Review business plan/financials
- Negotiate LOI/lease
- Credit/background check
- Draft/sign lease

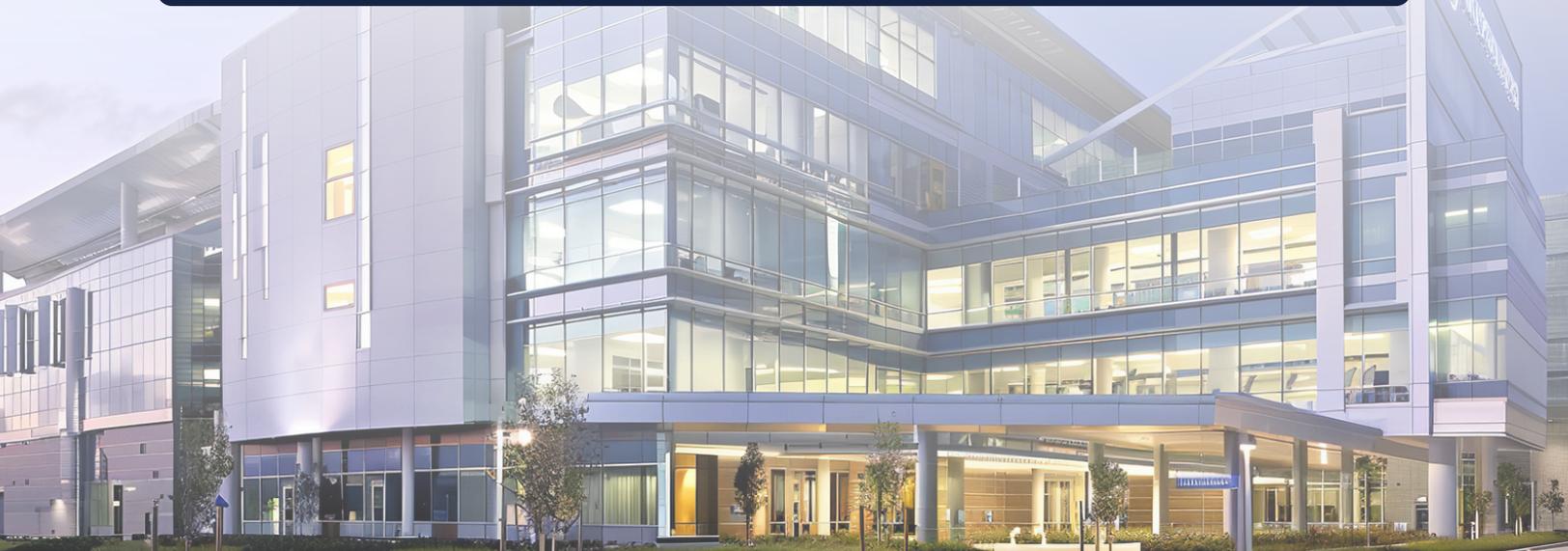
## Move-In

- ✓ Collect deposit/rent
- ✓ Complete walk-through
- ✓ Transfer keys/utilities

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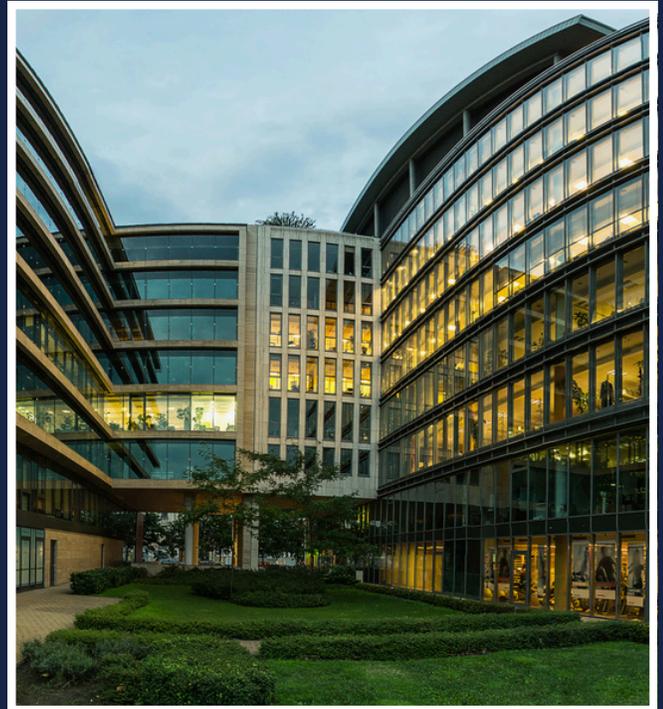
### PRO TIPS & SHORTCUTS

- ▶ Require a business plan for all startups/new tenants. Landlords are much more likely to lease to a business with a clear plan and realistic financial projections.
- ▶ Always run credit and reference checks—even for referrals.
- ▶ Provide a clear lease summary sheet for tenants.
- ▶ Budget for vacancy/downtime.
- ▶ Keep strong tenant relationships—renewals and referrals matter.
- ▶ Review/update lease terms annually for market changes.



# 11

## GLOSSARY



- ▶ **CAM:** Common Area Maintenance charges
- ▶ **Estoppel Certificate:** Tenant letter confirming lease terms
- ▶ **Gross Lease:** Fixed rent, most expenses included
- ▶ **Letter of Intent (LOI):** Initial deal outline
- ▶ **NNN Lease:** Tenant pays rent plus property expenses
- ▶ **Punch List:** List of move-in repairs/corrections
- ▶ **Renewal Option:** Right to extend lease
- ▶ **Tenant Improvement (TI):** Allowance for buildout
- ▶ **Use Clause:** Allowed tenant business activities
- ▶ **Zoning Verification:** Proof of permitted use

# ABOUT NEXT PHASE COMMERCIAL

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At Next Phase Commercial, brokered by Epique Realty, we help landlords fill vacancies faster, attract quality tenants, and protect your investment. With smart marketing, thorough screening, and expert lease negotiation, we make leasing simple and successful, so you can focus on what matters most.

Let's lease your property with confidence.

## Contact:

 612.386.7249

 [Andy@NextPhaseCommercial.com](mailto:Andy@NextPhaseCommercial.com)

 [www.NextPhaseCommercial.com](http://www.NextPhaseCommercial.com)

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