

Turning the City's Skyline Green

Rosenberg is not the only one turning New York green. Richard Sobelsohn '98, an associate in the real estate practice at Moses & Singer LLP in New York, is also a crusader for the greening of the city's skyline. He is one of only twenty-two lawyers in New York City to become a LEED Accredited Professional. Armed with his law degree and LEED accreditation, Sobelsohn is in a rare position to represent developers, corporations, financial institutions, landlords, tenants, and individuals in the world of sustainable development.

His in-depth knowledge of the LEED Rating System has turned him into a champion of green real estate development. On any given day you'll find him teaching CLE classes, speaking to the banking and legal communities, and presenting at some of the country's leading environmental conferences, including the National Council for Science and the Environment, the Green Earth Expo, and the Alternate Energy Conference. This fall he channeled this knowledge into a new course at the Law School, Legal Issues Affecting Sustainable Buildings, which he hopes will help young lawyers learn about green real estate issues of the future.

"No other law school was offering this kind of class and it is so important to the practice of real estate law," said Sobelsohn. "I am optimistic about the growth of this area of the law because there is an ongoing requirement of compliance, monitoring, and reporting. When you add on all the government regulations everyone needs to follow to get there, practitioners in this area are indispensable."

"Years ago it was for the greater good to go green, but now it is to save money. Everyone will eventually be affiliated with green properties. There is nothing that will stop the trend."

—Richard Sobelsohn '98

Sobelsohn believes wholeheartedly that being green is the way of the future not only because of the benefits it confers to the earth, but because of the boost it gives to the bottom line. "Years ago it was for the greater good to go green, but now it is to save money. Everyone will eventually be affiliated with green properties," said Sobelsohn. "There is nothing that will stop the trend."

While green building costs a slight premium, Sobelsohn says the overall savings far outweigh the initial outlay. "There are savings on water bills, electric bills, and even lower insurance premiums," explained Sobelsohn. "It's all quantifiable, and that is not conjecture." There are also other indirect tangible benefits to being green. Sobelsohn points to studies that have shown that occupants in green buildings have higher productivity levels, lower absentee rates, and better health. "You don't have to be LEED-certified to see these benefits," said Sobelsohn. "Even if you add green elements like the ability of employees to see the outdoors through windows and to control their own lighting and air conditioning, and cleaning without harmful chemicals, you'll have a healthier, happier workforce. The biggest cost of any company is its staff, and if they can reduce costs of health care and increase productivity then your bottom line increases."



Richard Sobelsohn '98
Associate, LEED Accredited Professional, Moses & Singer LLP