

# One Region

An Interview with Dorothy L. Alpert, Tri-State President and Principal, Avison Young

**EDITORS' NOTE** Strategic commercial real estate leader Dorothy Alpert recently joined Avison Young as its new Tri-State President and Principal. Alpert joins Avison Young following a 30+ year career at Deloitte, where she focused on strategy and operations consulting in the real estate industry, including leading the firm's real estate services practice in the U.S. where she fostered significant client relationships. Building on a strong foundation within business advisory and



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leading large-scale client relationships, Alpert also has demonstrated experience leveraging technology to enhance client service capabilities. As the co-founder of the ULI Women's Leadership Initiative, Alpert is an advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in the commercial real estate industry. She has been honored as one of Real Estate Forum's Women in Influence: Legends, Real Estate Forum's Women to Watch, and Real Estate New York's Women of Influence. She holds an MBA from Fordham University and a BA in Mathematics from Bates College.

**FIRM BRIEF** Avison Young ([avisonyoung.com](http://avisonyoung.com)) creates real economic, social and environmental value as a global real estate advisor, powered by people. As a private company, its

clients collaborate with an empowered partner that is invested in their success. The firm's integrated talent realizes the full potential of real estate by using global intelligence platforms that provide clients with insight and advantage.

**What excited you about the opportunity to join Avison Young and made you feel it was the right fit?**

I spent my career at Deloitte and was about a year and a half away from their mandatory retirement age.

Since I was in between assignments, I decided to retire early and get a head start on what I wanted to do next. It was not long into my retirement when I was approached by Avison Young and I discovered that there were multiple factors that made it feel like the right opportunity for me. One was that after having spent over 30 years at Deloitte, I was going to be able to be involved in many aspects of the firm which would build on the many career experiences I had during my time at Deloitte, such as leading the U.S. Real Estate practice, serving as the chief of staff to our managing partner, and leading large client relationships. This made me feel very prepared to join a firm like Avison Young that has different service lines, has principals who in many ways act as partners, is in

a growth phase, and has people and a culture that felt very similar to what I had experienced at Deloitte. I had around 23 interviews before I took the position which indicates that I had a very strong affinity for the people and culture of Avison Young.

**What were your priorities for the business as you assumed your role?**

My style is to observe first, and not come in with any preconceived notions. I am on my listening tour and am spending time in our Tri-State offices. Since my role is regional, I have been to our offices in New Jersey, Long Island and Connecticut as well as New York. One priority coming out of these visits is a focus on building on the opportunity for the offices to work together as one region since we have tremendous resources throughout this area. My plan is to do a lot of listening and then to regroup with the managing directors of each of the offices to discuss what I have observed and where I see opportunities for the growth of service lines that are already in place and that will build momentum behind our efforts to make Avison Young the firm of choice in the Tri-state region.

**How do you define the Avison Young difference and what sets the firm apart in the industry?**

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**What are your views on the future of work and the lasting impact of the pandemic on the role of the office?**

The layouts of offices are certainly going to have to change to make people comfortable. I think there will be some companies that go to a hybrid work model and others that will want their people in the office. The disruption will increase activity in the office market and Avison Young is positioned to serve companies with any needs they may have as they adapt to this changing environment.

**Are you optimistic about New York's recovery and rebuilding as it faces many challenges from the pandemic?**

I am on the board of the American Red Cross in Greater New York and I co-chair the Tiffany Circle, which is a group of women philanthropists. We had a luncheon recently where the topic was the outlook for New York's recovery. Kathy Wylde, who leads the Partnership for New York City, spoke at the event and I was really enthused by the optimism that Kathy shared about New York's future. We had filmed messages from people across different industries and they too were quite optimistic about New York's recovery. We need to be realistic

because it will not be a quick recovery and it will take time for New York to turn around, but I feel that it is starting to get better and I am confident that New York will recover and come back even stronger in the future.

**How critical is it for Avison Young to build a diverse and inclusive workforce in order to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the table when serving clients?**

This has been a focus and priority for me throughout my career. There is an organization in real estate called the Urban Land Institute and I co-founded the Women's Leadership Initiative at the Institute. I also participate in WX, which is an organization that promotes the advancement of women in real estate, in addition to mentoring young women beginning their careers. I am impressed at the number of women at Avison Young who are in leadership positions. There is still a lot to do in the real estate industry in regard to diversity and inclusion, not just in regard to women, but across all areas of diversity. At Avison Young, we are committed to lead in this area since we are after the best talent and the best talent comes from diverse people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

**What do you see as Avison Young's responsibility to the communities it serves?**

This is very important to Avison Young. For example, our firm-wide annual day of giving is on October 6. In New York, we will close the

office and will gather in the Bronx, as long as we are able to based on the state of the variants. This year, we will spend the day devoting our time and efforts to Samaritan House. We select a different organization to support each year which shows the commitment Avison Young places on corporate responsibility and community engagement. Employees want to work for a company that has a purpose and is making a difference, and if you want to attract and retain the best talent, it is critical to be focused on more than just the bottom line.

**How do you think the people who have worked with you over the years would describe your management style?**

I think they would say that it is not about Dorothy, but is rather about the team. I played team sports in college and I am team player. I think they would also say that I am a low-maintenance partner.

**What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers during this uncertain time?**

I tell them to get engaged early and to be proactive. I would also tell them to find mentors.

**You did not take much time off between leaving Deloitte and joining Avison Young. Do you have the ability to slow down or are you always looking for the next challenge?**

I need intellectual stimulation and when this opportunity came along, it just felt right. ●

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