

Where Strategy Meets Passion

An Interview with Taryn Brandes, Founder, Brand Urban

EDITORS' NOTE Taryn Brandes founded Brand Urban to bring a specialized and thoughtful approach to her real estate tenant representation and landlord advisory business. Prior to launching Brand Urban in 2019, she worked at SCG Retail, an urban division of The Shopping Center Group based in New York City. Brandes has been awarded The Rising Star Award in the Commercial Observer's Power 100 issue. She sits on the Board of Directors for Maman. Active in the community, she is a member of the New York City Hospitality Group (NYCHG) and the UJA Federation REX Planning Committee. Brandes earned a BS degree from Tufts University.



Taryn Brandes

How do you describe Brand Urban's culture and values?

What differentiates the Brand Urban company culture is our unparalleled passion and authentic expertise. We prioritize and value partnership, transparency, thoughtful strategy, analysis, and creativity. We approach our business with an entrepreneurial spirit and prioritize collaboration and teamwork above everything else. Our office is motivated by, immersed in, and excited by what we do, the brands we touch and the markets we work in.

Our work in essence extends outside the workplace – when we travel, dine out with friends, and experience new brands in our daily lives.

Will you provide an overview of Brand Urban's services and solutions?

Our platform provides national consulting and brokerage services for both tenants and

landlords, focused on hospitality and lifestyle retail. Our services include strategic planning, detailed-analyses, and a disciplined dealmaking process given our unique national perspective and knowledge base.

On the tenant-advisory side of the business, we develop and execute multi-unit expansion strategies for growth stage companies both locally and nationally – with services ranging from strategic development, market analysis, site selection and deal negotiation.

On the landlord-advisory side of the business, we essentially help turn real estate assets into brands, through thoughtful retail curation, programming, and leasing strategy – with a large focus on hospitality. Over the past year, we integrated placemaking-consulting into our landlord-advisory platform. We expanded our team's expertise with marketing and public activation know-how to provide innovative leasing, placemaking, and

COMPANY BRIEF Working with both tenants and landlords, Brand Urban (brandurbanre.com) has become a strategic consultant and leasing advisor by leveraging its team's deep understanding of brands, their businesses, and their core customer. Its team specializes in real estate expansion strategies for growth stage companies, and partners with like-minded landlords to shape communities through thoughtful placemaking and leasing of their assets. Clients include Planta Restaurants, Shake Shack, Maman, WTHN Acupuncture, ICONIQ Capital, Prudential and RXR. Brand Urban is passionate about hospitality, retail, and the vibrancy of the brands it works with. The company has a unique approach to the brokerage business and values partnership, honesty, and creativity as the basis for the results it achieves.

What was your vision for creating Brand Urban and how do you define its mission?

The vision and driving force behind building Brand Urban's business was to work with like-minded consumer brands, restaurant operators, and real estate developers on projects where we are the core consumers. I wanted to develop a retail real estate advisory platform that was focused on "strategy" before "brokerage;" brokerage just being one of the services we provide for our clients.

We are excited about hospitality, lifestyle retail, the projects we help re-imagine and the markets we help shape – and we love partnering with growth-stage companies where we play an integral part in their success stories.

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related consulting solutions for developers. Our team’s differentiated expertise provides landlords with a full stack “marketing to lease” platform.

Will you highlight Brand Urban’s approach to the brokerage business?

Our team’s unique expertise, knowledge base, and strategic analysis differentiates us in the business. We have become experts in all major metro lifestyle corridors nationwide – both urban and suburban, in part because of the strategic roll-out work we have done for our tenants in all these markets. As a result, we bring tremendous knowledge and value on the landlord-side of the business when working on projects in these cities.

We approach growth-strategy for our tenants, merchandising-strategy for our landlords, and ultimately the dealmaking process for our clients with the foundation of understanding these brands and their business models in a unique way. We spend a great deal of time analyzing the brands, their businesses, and the markets that we study both personally and professionally – which sets us apart from most – allowing for the most thoughtful real estate positioning and most advantageous deal terms to be negotiated for our clients.

We deeply consider the long-term goals and business strategies of the clients we work with. We are invested as brand ambassadors and value-add thought-partners for the life of each brand – and similarly on the landlord-advisory side. Our advisory is prudent and deeply considered because these are brands that we and our peers touch and experience

daily. That depth of knowledge and understanding is a big part of our motivation and excitement, ultimately setting us apart from our competitors with a genuine and personal touch.

Where do you see growth opportunities for Brand Urban as you look to the future?

We’re extremely energized by the strategic expansion work we’ve done for brands like Planta and Maman. Maman, for example, we took from six to thirty units, and Planta from five to twenty units open and under development in just over three years. We’re honored to be a part of these long-term success stories that now are nationally recognized lifestyle brands and leaders in their categories. Looking ahead, we’re focused on building upon this momentum and broadening the types of clients we service outside of food and beverage, and into complementary use-groups in lifestyle retail, beauty and wellness that cater to the clientele we know so well.

Further opportunity for Brand Urban is expanding our strategic growth and development work on the brand-side by broadening our services and tapping into the private equity companies themselves by advising these firms as they analyze potential investments in the consumer, brick and mortar-space. Similarly, we are excited to pursue expanding our current landlord advisory platform and take on greater placemaking opportunities that include ground-up and major redevelopments – combining and enhancing the various services that Brand Urban currently offers.

Will you discuss the talent and expertise of the Brand Urban team?

We work differently. Brand Urban works in a team-based environment, with strategy and collaboration as the foundation of our platform. At many traditional brokerages, most brokers effectively work on their own individual books of business. At Brand Urban, we work as one integrated, multifaceted consultancy – providing services that range from strategic planning and development to real estate marketing, leasing, and placemaking strategy, all the way to brokerage services in site selection and deal negotiation. We all specialize in different aspects of the business, and work collaboratively as a team to execute on each project.

Everyone at Brand Urban has a breadth of knowledge that supports our mission. Some are data-driven, some are highly experienced brokers, and others are incredible marketers and storytellers who really understand brand positioning. Plus, we have those experienced in pop-ups and short-term activations. Our collective backgrounds in food and beverage, fashion, and lifestyle catered to the next generation-consumer allow us to service clients in a holistic way.

Did you always know that you had an entrepreneurial spirit and desire to build your own company?

Yes, I’ve always had an entrepreneurial spark, which I am told is immediately evident by the passion and excitement in my voice when I talk about the business I have built and the space I am creating within the industry. I realized early on that entrepreneurship was the path I wanted to pursue, and both my father and father-in-law have played a big role in this as they are successful entrepreneurs and creative business-people in the real estate world. Growing up under my dad’s influence instilled in me his entrepreneurial curiosity and core values: a strong work ethic and drive to think outside the box, pushing the boundaries of what my business could look like – with the guiding principle of doing something that excites me. By surrounding myself with a great team, embracing guidance from influential people in my life and having confidence in my intuition, I feel empowered to forge my own path and lean into my own concept of what a brokerage and advisory company can be.

What advice do you offer to young people interested in building a career in the commercial brokerage business?

I have one key piece of advice. The most important thing to remember is that it is not about what you are working on, but who you’re working with. Having proper mentorship is everything when you enter the industry. You want to be working with people who are willing to put in the time to train you, giving you the utmost exposure and experience you need to learn and confirm your interests, skillset, and passion for the business. The people who are willing to invest in you and want to see you grow are far more pivotal to your career than what you are working on when you’re getting started. I have incredible respect, admiration, and appreciation for my mentors and teachers over the years in this business. I would not be where I am today without them. ●