

# New year, new firm for Joel, Granot

By Douglas Sams  
STAFF WRITER

Two veteran Atlanta commercial real estate brokers have merged their firms to create a new company — and potentially fill a void.

Alan Joel, president of the **Atlanta Commercial Board of Realtors**, and Dan Granot, a top producer at the former Atlanta office of **GVA Advantis** with more than 20 years in the market, have launched **Joel & Granot Commercial Real Estate**.

The merger marks an attempt to seize an opportunity in Atlanta commercial real estate created in the wake of growth within the city's largest firms, such as **CB Richard Ellis Inc.** and **Jones Lang LaSalle Inc.**, during the boom years. As those firms expanded with notable mergers and acquisitions that included Insignia Financial Corp., The Staubach Co. and Trammell Crow Co., mid-sized firms branched out into development and other service lines.

The trends have created a potential niche for small or "boutique" firms that specialize in leasing.

"There is a void, and we're going to jump into that void," Joel said. "We've got 45 years of experience between us. You can't usually get that in a one-man shop."

Sam Holmes, who teamed up with John Shlesinger more than 20 years ago to form the city's most prolific commercial real estate brokerage team, said in today's market "your two best options are either to be very large or very small."

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**Dan Granot, left, and Alan Joel:** "There is a void, and we're going to jump into that void," Joel said.



BYRON E. SMALL

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As U.S. companies continue to cut operating costs in the weak economy, top executives are more involved in real estate decisions.

They want ideas to make their real estate footprints more economical, often through downsizing, and they want plans to make their warehouse and distribution networks more efficient, most recently through huge consolidations.

Big real estate service firms can handle corporate America. But there will always be a need for the boutique firm that focuses on the smaller, entrepreneurial companies — the backbone of any local real estate market, Holmes said.

"It doesn't matter how sophisticated some of these giant real estate firms get, there is a great niche for the local market expert, and I think Alan and Dan can be successful in taking that angle," said

Holmes, a vice chairman with CB Richard Ellis.

Joel & Granot Commercial Real Estate opened Jan. 4 on Howell Mill Road in West Midtown. It will be a full-service firm, focusing on investment sales, land sales and property management, but its highest producing service line — at least in the early going — will likely be tenant representation, where both Joel and Granot have the most experience.

The new firm has 11 employees.

Joel said the new firm wants to do on the commercial side what **King Industrial Realty Inc.** has accomplished in the industrial market.

Granot said, "We want to be known in this market as its most solid local group."

Joel started Alan Joel Partners, a commercial real estate brokerage and investment firm, 14 years ago.

It closed more than 100 transactions in

the past two years totaling more than 200,000 square feet.

Late last year, Joel took over as president of the Atlanta Commercial Board of Realtors — the largest Commercial Realtor organization in the country with almost 3,000 members.

Granot began his career in commercial real estate in 1989 with a focus on tenant representation.

After leaving Advantis, he founded Dan Granot & Co., a full-service commercial real estate firm specializing in tenant rep.

Ed Milton, a senior managing director with CB Richard Ellis, worked with Joel at Rubloff, a Chicago real estate firm purchased by Koll more than 15 years ago. "Dan is creative, fun-loving, a natural salesperson," Milton said.

"Alan goes about real estate deals in a forensic manner. He sees things the normal broker might not."

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