

## Investors Seek More Asset Managers

Demand for asset-management pros at real estate investment firms is high, but convincing them to take new jobs could be challenging.

In a survey of mid- to senior-level asset-management specialists set for release this week, 73% of respondents told executive-search firm **RETS Associates** that their employers were placing higher or much higher priorities on their work.

That corresponds with other down cycles in the market, when investment firms typically shift emphasis from portfolio expansion to improvement of existing holdings. "It's a fundamental shift, that asset management goes into the spotlight in order to maximize value and cashflows in existing investments," said **Kent Elliott**, a principal at RETS. That means "the asset manager is king or queen right now."

Many are not inspired to take advantage of the situation by switching employers, however. Just 46% said they are more willing to leave their jobs compared with the period before the pandemic, when the market was more stable.

That's not for a lack of opportunities. RETS is fielding triple the assignments to recruit asset-management pros than it was a year ago. "Candidates, it might be time to put your periscope up and see what's out there," Elliott said.

Against that backdrop, the Newport Beach, Calif.-based firm said employers aiming to retain existing staff need to make sure they are offering ample pay. And those in hiring mode need to be aware that the landscape is highly competitive.

Among reasons asset managers would be willing to move, potential increases in base salary and bonuses ranked at the top, followed by promotions and additional responsibilities, and more flexibility in work location and hours.

All respondents said they receive base salaries, with the vast majority also receiving bonuses. But less than a quarter said they had received promotions or other long-term incentives.

Some 39% of respondents said they earn annual base salaries of \$150,000 to \$199,000, with 28% at \$200,000 to \$249,000, almost 20% at \$250,000 to \$299,000 and the remaining 13% above that.

When it comes to bonuses, 32% reported receiving amounts of up to 24% of their base salaries, followed by 28% at 25% to 39% and 21% at 40% to 59%. The other 19% got more.

The survey also showed that most asset managers were back



in their offices at least part of the time, with 28% reporting in person five days per week, 25% four days per week, 15% three days per week and 15% two days per week. Only 17% said they work remotely four or five days per week.

The respondents also reported taking on responsibilities beyond asset management. Slightly less than half said they spend 15% or more of their time on dispositions and/or portfolio management. As one respondent to the survey surmised, "In a downturn it's always asset managers who have to put out fires and keep the lights on and tenants happy."

RETS' survey encompasses responses from 73 people at shops including private investment firms, larger investment managers and operators of properties. The respondents handle tasks such as oversight of strategy and operations for real estate portfolios. ❖

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