



FOR THE EXCLUSIVE

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## Avison Young taps leading JLL researcher for global post

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Avison Young has recruited commercial real estate researcher [John Sikaitis](#) to oversee its global innovation practice after 15 years at JLL (NYSE: JLL), a prominent pick-up for the Toronto-based firm as technology continues to play a larger role in the industry.

While he will continue to be based in D.C. as a principal and chief innovation officer at Avison Young, Sikaitis will interact with teams and offices across the globe. The newly created chief innovation officer position is part of a larger effort by the commercial real estate services firm to seek out and embrace "best-in class innovation and disruption to the commercial real estate industry," Avison Young Chair and CEO [Mark Rose](#) said.

Sikaitis will report to [Martin Dockrill](#), a principal and chief operating officer of global operations. Joining him in the move from JLL are [Nick Guglietta](#), named global practice lead of product development, and [Carl Caputo](#), named global practice lead of data science. Their recruitment comes just a week after Avison Young tapped Nick Axford, formerly a leading, London-based property markets analyst for CBRE, to serve as a principal and global director of research.



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Avison Young has recruited longtime researcher John Sikaitis from JLL to lead its global innovation practice.

"In this newly created role of CIO, John will be responsible for building strategy, enhancing processes and introducing new products that position our clients effectively in the real estate market and drive our firm and its people to be more efficient and productive in their every day efforts," Rose said in a statement. "Nick and Carl are also assuming new roles that cater to both our clients' and advisors' evolving business."

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This new role is a departure from what Sikaitis has done for the past 17 years in the industry. As managing director of research, advisory and business development at JLL, he focused on arming brokers and clients with the intel they need to decide whether to buy, lease or build. That won't directly be part of his new job, though his role will be to better equip those teams to make those calls. That's what ultimately convinced him to make the move after turning down other offers from Avison Young over the past few months, Sikaitis said in an interview.

"They finally asked me point blank: What's your ideal role, and I said it's the coupling together of data and analytics," Sikaitis said. "The beauty of this is it's so open ended. When people think of innovation, they think of the products, but the key parts of innovation are the ideas that lead to the products. No idea is off the table."

Over the past 15 years at JLL, Sikaitis has been part of teams advising investors on more than \$10 billion in capital investments, and tenants on more than 12 million square feet of executed leases. He is one of a handful of researchers based in the D.C. region that have been elevated to more prominent posts, among them Newmark Knight Frank's Sandy Paul and Cushman & Wakefield's [Kevin Thorpe](#). CBRE's [Melina Cordero](#) was recently elevated from global head of retail research to managing director and leader of CBRE's retail capital markets business for the Americas.

They're part of a larger pool of researchers sought out for their take on Greater Washington's real estate market, with Cushman & Wakefield's Nate Edwards and CBRE's Wei Xie, among them.

That's in part a reflection of how much more data there is out there and how much more technology there is to analyze and interpret that information. Avison Young isn't necessarily looking to Sikaitis and his team to start churning out apps or other tangible products to revolutionize the industry. Rather, it's their experience working with clients and brokers and knowing what they need that Avison Young hopes to leverage.

"As we have grown this company, it's really been methodical in that there's a new way of doing business, there's a new way of approaching the client base," Rose said in an interview. "We have the advantage to hire and look to the future and take a long term approach to how we're going to service our client base."

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