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Equity Union Expands in Brentwood Market

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Equity Union Real Estate's Brentwood location is one of five leases the new commercial real estate brokerage has signed across five Southern California markets in the last six months.

Sherman Oaks-based Lee & Associates L.A. North/Ventura's Principal/Managing Director Scott Romick negotiated the transactions, which totaled approximately 21,000 square feet, with other properties located in Woodland Hills, Toluca Lake and Valencia as well as in Palm Desert.

Equity Union may be new, but principal Harma Hartouni has been working in the real estate industry for 20 years, previously as an owner of Keller Williams offices in Encino and Sherman Oaks. Hartouni founded Equity Union Real Estate in March.

"In the ever-changing market, opportunity arises for talented people and hard working companies," said Hartouni, chief executive officer of Sherman Oaks-based Equity Union. "Time and time again that has proven to be true in climates such as this one. Equity Union has been a beacon for success and I could

not be more proud of our team. We're grateful for Scott and his expertise, and glad to be working with such a visionary."

Equity Union also purchased a building in Palm Springs.

In choosing locations for his offices, Hartouni said he selected communities where commercial real estate representation wasn't as strong as places such as Beverly Hills.

Brentwood, Woodland Hills, Toluca Lake and Valencia were all carefully chosen, he added.

"These were communities that he thought he could do well in," Romick said. "There were no requirements other than signage. The bigger, the better. And ease to move in. He wanted to be up and running as fast as possible."

Two of the sites were prior real estate companies' offices.

"It took a while because he had a certain vision," Romick said. "We started in March and the last one we signed in Santa Clarita last month."

Hartouni and Romick have worked together before and have a relationship dating back almost seven years, during which time Romick helped Hartouni purchase a Studio City building at 3349 Cahuenga Blvd. in 2018 and then with the sale of that building a year later. Romick also assisted Hartouni in purchasing 13412 Ventura Blvd. to serve as Equity Union's corporate headquarters.

"He's extremely responsive and knowledgeable," Hartouni said of Romick. "I have a thick accent, I'm a complicated man and he gets me. He goes there and hunts and he gets it done."

Hartouni said he needed to grow because his business was growing quickly.

"We had agents knocking at our door asking if we'll have an office for them," Hartouni said. "In Brentwood, I was on the street looking with my agent and Scott. We want to have agents be part of the process, we include them. They chose the Toluca Lake location. My team has been extremely important and they were part of (the process)."

Hartouni's agent base has grown to 600 and he has an additional support staff of 40 employees.

"Just the month of September, we recruited 51 people," Hartouni said. "In any changing market, opportunity rises for hardworking, talented people. It's been refreshing. I have been preparing for a changing market."

Hartouni felt that this was the right time to open more offices. "We're not just opening anywhere, we're opening where we have producers," Hartouni said.

He said that the possibility of a recession doesn't make him flinch.

"Because most people withdraw, they get scared," Hartouni said. "It creates more opportunity. Being a higher interest rate doesn't scare me but allows me to pick the right building in the right location."

Thanks to Romick's services helping identify the right buildings, Hartouni is able to create the infrastructure for his company.

"What agents need is support," Hartouni said. "We're focusing on what skill set we can offer to our agents."

The link to the original article can be found [here](#)