

MIAMI TODAY

May 6, 2009

Circulation: 71,750

UBS Financial re-signs with Bank of America Tower

By ZACHARY S. FAGENSON

While landlord reps at the Bank of America Tower at International Place wrapped up six transactions ensuring the continued occupation of 65,000 square feet, they've also begun a search to replace the tower's anchor tenant, slated to vacate its 50,000 square feet early next year.

The most notable of the new leases is the five-year, \$7.5-million renewal lease UBS Financial Services signed for more than 34,500 square feet in the 47-story tower.

Although UBS, which has been a tenant since 1994, is to return 3,000 square feet to landlord Wealth Capital Management Inc., the overall move puts the occupancy of the tower at 92%, well above the market average of 85%.

The remaining 30,000 square feet will be held by management consulting firm McKinsey & Co., immigration law firm Leaf & Associates, The Peacock Foundation and others.

As the tower enjoys its signature status in Miami, Tony Puente, senior vice president of landlord representatives Fairchild Partners, said even the three-stepped monolith has had to make some concessions to keep tenants from seeking greener pastures.

Full-service rental rates, Mr.



Photo by Scott E. Pacheco

The search at Bank of America Tower for an anchor tenant to replace Bank of America, which is to condense to existing offices on Brickell.

Puente said, have remained stable at \$38 to \$44 per square foot.

"Our asking price has not moved too much," he said. "I

think what we're doing is expanding our concessions in trying to keep existing tenants and attract new ones."

And while he wouldn't say

what the concessions to UBS added up to, the renovations were "more than just a paint and carpet."

Added Mr. Puente: "As a landlord, we contributed in terms of tenant-improvement allowances to the renovation of the space." Now "they'll be able to have better use and more efficiency in their space."

Meanwhile, the new leases give Fairchild Partners room to begin marketing Bank of America's 50,000 square feet.

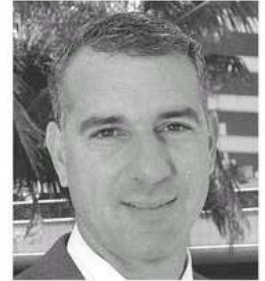
The bank is expected to leave the tower in the first half of 2010 and condense its operations at its Brickell Avenue offices.

For future tenants, Mr. Puente said, Bank of America's former offices could be expanded to 65,000 contiguous square feet.

But for a company to get its name atop the building will require a five- to ten-year lease for 85,000 square feet.

"We see it as a tremendous opportunity for another company to come in and instantly create credibility in Miami," he said. "It depends on what kind of tenants we end up leasing [the space] to but we feel it's an opportunity for a business that wants to brand itself in Miami."

The space isn't reserved for potential anchor tenants, either. "We are going to push hard



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Tony Puente

to find a tenant that's attracted to this opportunity, but along the way we'll lease to smaller users that make sense," he added.

Mr. Puente said it could be split up and built out to accommodate smaller users ranging from 2,000 to 10,000 square feet.

What the tower would be called if that were to transpire, however, would depend on what tenants fill the space and other considerations on which Mr. Puente declined to comment.