Ascentris

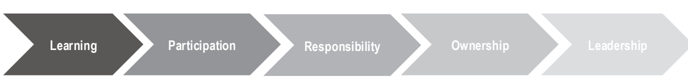
Part II: The strategic advantages of the cradle-to-grave staffing model in real estate private equity

INTRODUCTION

While Part I of this series examined how the Cradle-to-Grave staffing model strengthens investment execution, its broader organizational benefits are equally significant. By assigning full lifecycle responsibility to investment teams, the model enhances accountability and decision-making while creating a strong framework for developing versatile, collaborative professionals and sustaining the firm's investment philosophy and culture.

Real estate private equity is a long-duration business. Investments often span multiple market cycles and require consistency in judgment, disciplined execution, and continuity of leadership. For firms managing institutional capital, sustaining these qualities across generations is essential.

The Cradle-to-Grave model helps address this challenge by aligning the development of investment professionals with the lifecycle of the properties they manage. As professionals gain experience through sourcing, underwriting, asset management, and disposition, they develop a thorough understanding of both the investment process and the operational realities of real estate investment management.



At Ascentris, this structure has proven instrumental in reinforcing a culture of accountability, mentorship, and long-term stewardship of capital.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Real estate investment management requires expertise across many disciplines, and developing these capabilities typically takes years of experience across a range of investments.

In many organizations, however, professionals are exposed to only one stage of the investment lifecycle. Acquisition teams often focus on sourcing and executing transactions, asset management teams concentrate on operating properties after acquisition, while disposition teams are tasked with executing sales. The Cradle-to-Grave model creates a richer environment for personal growth and development as professionals gain exposure to every stage of the investment process.

This continuity creates continuous learning opportunities that allow junior professionals to see how underwriting assumptions translate into operating results, how business plans evolve as market conditions change, and how strategic decisions ultimately affect investment outcomes. Over time, this experience fosters a deeper understanding of the investment process and enables professionals to evaluate opportunities with broader perspective and realism.

LEARNING THROUGH ACCOUNTABILITY

The Cradle-to-Grave model also creates a powerful learning dynamic. Underwriting assumptions become operating plans that must be executed and refined over time, giving investment professionals direct insight into how their decisions perform under real market conditions.

Experiencing the full arc of an investment reinforces disciplined thinking and long-term decision making. Professionals gain a deeper understanding of how underwriting assumptions, operational execution, and changing market conditions ultimately shape investment outcomes.

By maintaining accountability throughout the investment lifecycle, the Cradle-to-Grave model strengthens investment judgment while fostering mentorship and collaborative learning within Ascentris' investment teams.

MENTORSHIP AND TEAM-BASED DEVELOPMENT

At Ascentris, investment teams are composed of professionals with varying levels of experience and backgrounds. Because real estate investments often span several years, these working relationships extend over long periods of time, creating natural opportunities for mentorship and team-based professional development.

Through repeated exposure to complex situations and decision-making processes, junior professionals gradually assume greater responsibility as their experience grows. This apprenticeship environment allows emerging investment professionals to build judgment and confidence while benefiting from the guidance and experience of the senior team.

CULTIVATING AN OWNERSHIP MINDSET

When professionals remain responsible for properties throughout their lifecycle, they develop a deeper sense of ownership of those investments. The property is not simply a transaction that has been completed or an assignment that has been inherited, it is an investment for which the team bears enduring responsibility, both internally and externally.

This structure encourages thoughtful long-term planning and sustained engagement. It also aligns individual motivation with the firm's broader objective of generating durable value for its clients.

Over time, this ownership mentality contributes to a culture in which professionals view themselves as stewards of capital rather than participants in isolated transactions.

ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY AND CONTINUITY

Because professionals gain experience across the full lifecycle of investments, they develop the breadth of knowledge required to assume leadership roles within the firm. Exposure to sourcing, underwriting, asset management, and disposition decisions provides a foundation for future leadership.

It also helps preserve institutional knowledge. Teams retain familiarity with the operating history of investments, the strategic rationale behind business plans, and the relationships that support successful execution.

This reduces the risk that critical insights are lost through internal transitions and helps ensure that the firm's investment philosophy remains consistently applied over time.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession planning represents one of the most significant long-term challenges facing investment organizations and clients alike. Institutional investors expect the investment philosophy and discipline of a firm to persist beyond any single generation of leadership. The Cradle-to-Grave model provides a natural framework for addressing this challenge by embedding succession planning directly within the investment process.

Because junior professionals participate alongside senior team members, they gain direct exposure to the decision-making frameworks, investment philosophy, lessons learned, and operational discipline that define the firm's approach. Over time, this structure allows culture, knowledge and experience to transfer organically from one generation to the next.

This continuity creates what might be described as investment lineage; a clear progression in which younger professionals develop within the same responsibilities that senior professionals have historically held. As their experience grows, they assume increasing responsibility for ultimately becoming stewards of the firm's capital and culture.

For institutional investors with long-term capital commitments, this continuity provides an important measure of confidence in the durability of the investment platform.

CONCLUSION

The Cradle-to-Grave staffing model is often discussed primarily in the context of investment execution, but its benefits extend well beyond the mechanics of the investment process. By aligning lifecycle responsibility with professional development, the model fosters accountability, ownership, and long-term learning while strengthening mentorship, succession planning, and institutional continuity.

For investment managers serving long-term institutional capital, the ability to develop experienced professionals and sustain an investment philosophy across generations is essential. In this way, we believe the Cradle-to-Grave model supports not only stronger investment outcomes, but also the long-term resilience of the organization itself.

CONTRIBUTOR

Denis Curran

Chief Operating Officer, Partner, Portfolio Manager

Denis Curran serves as Chief Operating Officer, Partner, Portfolio Manager at Ascentris and focuses on investing and managing the company's real estate investments across the U.S., with a particular focus on investments in the Central and Pacific Northwest regions of the U.S. Prior to joining Ascentris, Mr. Curran was a derivatives trader with Infinium Capital Management, a Chicago-based hedge fund. Mr. Curran graduated with a BBA in Real Estate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and earned an MBA with Honors from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. Mr. Curran resides in Denver, Colorado with his wife and three sons.

COMPANY OVERVIEW

Ascentris is a Denver-based real estate private equity firm that manages a series of fully discretionary institutional investment vehicles focused on value-add, core-plus, and core strategies across major property types and markets throughout the United States. Since 2003, the Ascentris management team has followed an investment philosophy and organizational structure designed to identify opportunities ahead of the market while delivering a high-level of service, transparency, and accountability to investors. Ascentris is a privately held, management-owned, SEC-registered investment adviser* committed to putting investors' interests first.

*Registration does not imply any level of skill or training

CORPORATE CONTACT

Patrick Kendall

Managing Director and Partner, Ascentris

pat.kendall@ascentris.com

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