

## **Offices Lure Employees to South Florida With High-End Amenities**

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**By Melea VanOstrand**

Having the option to work from home is a benefit many employees are looking for, and many prefer to work remotely. But now, both landlords and tenants are investing serious capital in their spaces to draw people to the office.

According to JLL’s Latest Q3 office report, Class-A rents in Miami-Dade have grown 8.1% year over year in the central business district. That’s nearly twice the growth rate of Class-B rents.

Veteran brokers such as managing director Steven Hurwitz of JLL Miami say this has been the first cycle where South Florida has seen anything like this.

“[There is] a lot of concentration on the Northeast and West Coast, and they’re really looking for the best quality we have here, so there’s been a concentration of demand in the top tier Class-A property, and I think that’s one reason why there’s been a run-up in the accelerated growth of the market,” said Hurwitz. “Also I think you’ve seen a real fight for talent, so not just getting people to come back to the office from COVID but also attracting and retaining the best talent. You’ve also seen people reinvesting in and wanting to be in that great space.”

830 Brickell Office Tower, which is currently under construction and set to open in 2022, is one of the most in-demand places for tech and financial firms and multinational office users who want to expand their footprint in South Florida.

“We’re going to bring a lot of hospitality-like features to the building. That means we’re effectively going to have the building concierge, the building tenant app that helps expedite screening into the building from a security perspective, and also the ability to call your car and have it ready to pick up when you’re ready to leave,” said Justin Oates, vice president of Cain International, one of the building’s developers. “We’re trying to make it a high-touch, hospitality-focused Class A+ office tower unlike anything in the market.”

Amenities at the tower that attract people who are willing to pay for top quality include an upscale rooftop restaurant and lounge, a world-class health and wellness center, an outdoor terrace, cafés and street-level retail.

“Technology is starting to change somewhat how buildings operate with regards to even access points to garages and flexible schedules, parking garages and Wi-Fi. Those are ever-evolving and I think those are trends that will continue,” said Hurwitz. “I think in a year or so we’ll see the traffic patterns coming back closer to normal. Some of the local tenants who have been kind of holding back on decision making in regards to the return to the office and releasing spaces and what their future plans are, I think we’re starting to see more of that activity as well, which is great for the office market.”

Not only are the amenities something companies hope will retain employees, but building quality has also become paramount. Some post-pandemic design features developers included consist of an enhanced HVAC system to improve the air quality, purification and circulation, touchless technology for fixtures and contactless entry and a sky gym.

“That does mean that some of the older buildings which can’t provide those services are going to struggle, but the newer buildings – and there’s very few like ours if any – are generating a premium because people understand they have to offer a different level of service to their employees,” said Cain CEO Jonathan Goldstein.

830 Brickell is also located in a transit-friendly location which is especially attractive to tenants.

“Even though South Floridians are used to being in their car, I think more and more people are opening their eyes and realizing this is really doable. That starts to affect how people are selecting their offices and where they’re going to be. That’s something we’re seeing more of, and I think it’s going to be a big trend.” said Hurwitz.

One CocoWalk, a remodeled, Class-A office and retail space that anchors a commercial village in Miami’s Coconut Grove area, is another example of a property with amenities that aims to bring and keep people in the area. CocoWalk features 150,000 square feet of retail space and an office building with a rooftop terrace.

The retail village, which is now 100% leased, is home to new-to-market businesses in the finance, wealth management, law, hospitality and cruise industries. Tenants include Spaces, a full service, co-working environment; private equity firm The Jordan Co.; and international law firm Weinberg, Wheeler, Hudgins, Gunn & Dial.

“It’s really a continuation of what preceded the pandemic. Landlords are really in partnership with their tenants and delivering a more experiential and kind of cool officing environment. That takes place within the tenant space, but also within the office building,” said Hurwitz.