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From the Houston Business Journal:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/houston/news/2017/06/08/houston-restaurant-broker-on-starting-his.html>

Houston restaurant broker on starting his own company: 'It was absolutely terrifying'

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Before building a local empire of clients from popular Tex-Mex restaurants to high-end steakhouses, Houston commercial real estate broker [David Littwitz](#) made cold calls.

Those conversations led Littwitz, 58, to his biggest restaurant deal yet — landing restaurateur [Benjamin Berg](#) a new eatery a few weeks ago on the ground floor of downtown luxury apartment building The Star. Littwitz's company, Littwitz Investments Inc., recently hired a second broker, Samantha Walter, to assist with clients from El Tiempo Cantina to Gr8 Plate Hospitality.

All of this success occurred in the first 20 months of starting his company.

Littwitz broke into commercial real estate working for various companies, including then-called Mobil Oil and 7-Eleven before landing in the restaurant scene at Houston-based Chodrow Realty Advisors and Edge Realty Partners. Those experiences led him to setting out on his own in fall 2015.

How did you end up as a restaurant broker? I lost my job as the national real estate manager at 7-Eleven in 2006 after (Japan-based Seven & I Holdings) bought the rest of the company. That job gave me national exposure and a lot of retail and shopping center experience. I gravitated to restaurants after that job because they seemed liked fun.

What was it like to start your company? I started Littwitz Investments in fall 2015. It was absolutely terrifying. My office was at my house, and, when my wife left for work, I stared at my computer screen wondering what I'd do that day. The scariest part was knowing everyone else in the industry was out there working, and I was still trying to figure it out.

How did you find success? Cold calling was my salvation. I'd set up meetings with owners at their restaurants. In the case of El Tiempo, I went over there many afternoons and sat at the bar. I don't drink, but I'd just talk and listen. I built rapport over time with the owner. It was patience.



SCOTT ANGLE/HBJ

David Littwitz and Samantha Walter of Littwitz Investments Inc. at Houston steakhouse B&B Butchers. The company recently helped Benjamin Berg, owner of B&B Butchers, with a deal to open a restaurant inside luxury downtown apartment building The Star.

Good restaurant owners are in their businesses 60-70 hours a week, and they don't fully appreciate what's going on outside their restaurant. They need someone like us to represent them who knows the larger business world of landlords, available spaces, etc.

How did you land the deal with Benjamin Berg to open Benjamin's downtown? B&B Butchers on Washington Avenue, his first restaurant, had been a success. I set up an appointment in the butcher shop to see him in February 2016. We're both from New York, so we could relate to each other. We spoke for two hours.

You have to ask for the business, so finally I said, "I would like to be your broker." He told me he was looking for an old, unique building to expand into — not a shopping center. I heard about The Star downtown, and I took Ben there in March 2016. We looked at it, and in 20 minutes he said, "OK, I want to do this." He never faltered.

Why was that deal important for your company? I'm not a high-profile broker, but this 16,700-square-foot deal has gotten me exposure.

What's one thing people don't know about you? I'm a huge baseball fan. I grew up in Queens, New York, when the 1969 Mets won the World Series. I had "MET FAN" as my license plate down here for years. When I met my wife, that was the license plate on my car.

What's next for Littwitz Investments? We're looking to become the go-to brokers in town for restaurateurs.

What keeps you up at night? Worrying about not getting that phone call.

David Littwitz

Broker/Owner of Littwitz Investments Inc.

Age: 58

Education: Bachelor's from University of Texas, master's from Columbia University

Family: Wife, Iris

Favorite TV show: "House of Cards"

Favorite Houston restaurant: B&B Butchers

Littwitz Investments Inc.

HQ: Houston

Founded: Fall 2015

Employees: 2

Revenue: Anticipating growth toward \$1 million in 2018

Clients include: El Tiempo Cantina, B&B Butchers, Niko Niko's, Gr8 Plate Hospitality, El Rey, Panera Bread

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