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October 9, 2014

What You Don't Know About CentreCourt's Shamez Virani

*Shamez Virani is part of Bisnow's Ascent community of up-and-coming commercial real estate leaders. The top developers and investors under the age of 40 descend on the Ritz Carlton in **South Beach Nov. 2-4**. See [who's attending](#) and apply to be considered for one of the few remaining [spots](#).*

He just turned 30, but CentreCourt Developments VP **Shamez Virani**—barely three years after earning a real estate MBA at **Columbia University**—is working on **\$1B** worth of development, or 2,500 units, in a portfolio that includes some of Toronto's most **high-profile condos**. (30 is the new 48.)



Peter Street Condos is nearing completion; Karma and Indx, Toronto's **top-selling condos** of 2011 and 2012 respectively, are under construction; and **Core Condos** (below), breaks ground this month. All projects are **100% sold**. And CentreCourt recently bought a **downtown site**, with plans for another high-rise condo, Shamez says. "I feel I've learned in three and a half years what a lot of people get exposed to in 10 because of the **volume and pace of activity** we've seen here," he told us at CentreCourt's **Adelaide Street** HQ. With the firm being a **lean** operation, "I get the benefit of being involved in **all aspects** of deals."



Born and raised in **Calgary**, Shamez's first involvement in real estate was cutting lawns and shovelling snow at an **investment property** owned by his parents, **Tanzanian immigrants** who had come to Canada in 1977 with almost nothing in their pockets. "I remember **how hard they worked to save** to buy the home, and how excited they were when they bought it." It **infused a passion** for real estate in Shamez, who notes his boyhood idol was **Donald Trump**. He earned an undergrad degree from Western University's Ivey School of Business, and after graduating in 2006 landed a job as an **investment banker at Goldman Sachs** in New York.



A **dream gig** for some, but Shamez says he came to realize investment banking wasn't the right fit. When the recession took hold, he headed to Columbia to pursue an MBA. Just before graduation, a friend introduced Shamez to CentreCourt founder **Andrew Hoffman**. The two hit it off and Hoffman brought young Jedi Shamez on board at his new firm, which had just launched **Peter Street Condos** (rendered above) and would go on to produce some of Toronto's fastest-selling condo projects in recent years. "We're in the **most exciting city in the world** right now in terms of the intensification and urbanization happening here," Shamez says. "And we've got a **front-row seat**."



Photo: On vacation in Hawaii.

What he does: Involved in most aspects of condo development: site acquisition, development, marketing, sales, and construction.

Hometown: Calgary.

First job: At age seven, bought 25-cent candy boxes from Costco and set up a candy stand on his driveway.

Greatest fear: Loss of loved ones.

Person (living or dead) you'd want to meet: He'd like to spend some time with business magnate Elon Musk.

Daily habit: Coffee in the morning and visiting at least one of the firm's sites each day at lunch.

Favourite music: Drake, Jay-Z.

Favourite movie: *Garden State*.

Favourite vacation: Savouring food and drink on Italy's Amalfi Coast.

Bucket list: Produce documentary films on topics he's passionate about.

Hobbies: Golf; huge Calgary Flames fan.