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# Social Capital interview with Scott Mazo of University Place Associates

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## Scott Mazo

Company: University Place Associates (UPA)

Company description: Commercial real estate developer committed to building to the highest level of sustainability, LEED Platinum, in the University City section of Philadelphia.

Company HQ location: 2.0 University Place, 30 N. 41st St., Suite 500, Philadelphia

Title: Founder and CEO, University Place Associates

Number of employees: Five

Age: 66

Original hometown: Huntington, W.Va.

Education: BA in philosophy/psychology, University of Miami, 1973.

Family: Married



JEFF FUSCO

Scott Mazo of University Place Associates.

**What's your essential business philosophy?** Commitment to excellence; and the golden rule.

**What are the smartest and dumbest business decisions you've made?** Smartest decision was partnering with Jim Levin to create Neighborhood Restorations. Ultimately, we built or rehabbed over 1,000 affordable single-family properties or

duplexes in West Philadelphia, working closely with the community in doing so. I know I've made many mistakes but nothing qualifies as the 'dumbest.'

**What's the best way to keep a competitive edge?** Be open to new ideas and to change, and to what I don't know. Be flexible and read, read, read ...

**What goal have you yet to achieve?** My vision is to create a corridor of state-of-the-art LEED Platinum buildings that speak to and for planet Earth and humanity along Market Street between 39th and 42nd streets. My first building was 2.0 University Place and I plan to break ground on 3.0 University Place, at 41st and Market later this year. Stay tuned!

**What do you think your employees say about you when you're not in the room?** You'd have to ask them, but I hope that my team would say that we have built an energetic and creative work environment.

**What three words best describe you?** Again, my colleagues and business associates would know best, but the words that come to mind are: "He is different!"

**What was your first job?** I was a gofer at my father's women's clothing retail store in Huntington, W.Va. I worked on Saturdays and one day during the week after school and sports activities. I also worked summers.

**As a child, did you know what you wanted to be when you grew up?** I did not. I took pride in knowing that I wanted to grow up and then explore the world. I loved my family, but I knew I wanted to get away and find my own way.

**What's your first choice for a new career?** I love what I do ... right now!

**What's something about you that people wouldn't expect?** That I was on my way to a career as a professor of philosophy.

**Do you have an exercise routine?** Yes! I have had one for my whole life. Over the last 16 years, I work out three times a week with a personal trainer. In addition to aerobic conditioning and strength/weight training, we do sparring generally once a week. Not so easy considering that he is a former Pan-American wrestling champion, has two black belts and is a pretty darn good boxer.

**What car do you drive and why?** Acura MDX. Utility and comfort is most important.

**What's your best vacation?** Having no agenda! I read, hang out with myself, and give my brain and "being" time off from any pressures of everyday life. It's like purging unnecessary files.

**If you could have been present at any moment in history, a world event, etc., what would it be?** Being alive right now is the greatest thing I could imagine. Otherwise, I would have wanted to be alive with a living teacher, such as Buddha, Jesus, Krishna or others who have been written about in scriptures of the world.

**When you were a teenager, did you have a band or singer whose CD or LP you just wore out?** No, I didn't but I did in college. The Moody Blues' *A Question of Balance* album.

**If you were on a cross-country bus trip, which famous person would you like to sit with?** To tell you the truth, there's no one I can imagine that I would like to have sitting next to me. Give me an open seat, anonymity and peace.

**Conversely, who would you NOT enjoy spending time with?** Most people. I enjoy most people in small doses.

**What's your favorite place in Greater Philadelphia?** There are many, many wonderful places I enjoy in Philly. I enjoy neighborhoods that are vibrant and diverse like the Headhouse Square area on 2nd Street between Lombard and South. I have spent a career in West Philadelphia, and I love it too!