

SlimFast gains weight in Palm Beach Gardens

Company will have 13,000 sf in a 10-year, \$4.5M lease

By [Dan Weil](#)

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SlimFast, the diet products company, is coming back to Palm Beach County — the Golden Bear Plaza in Palm Beach Gardens to be exact. The company, founded by billionaire Daniel Abraham, is taking a full floor with 13,000 square feet of space in the Class A commercial building. It will have a 10-year, \$4.5 million lease, with a starting rent of \$20-\$21 per square foot triple-net. The offices will serve as the company's national headquarters, with about 50 employees.



Under Abraham, the company was based in West Palm Beach until 2000, when it was sold to Unilever. Dallas-based Kainos Capital bought the company last year. “The Texas guys wanted to be on the East Coast,” Neil Merin, chairman of NAI/Merin Hunter Codman of West Palm Beach, which negotiated the lease on behalf of Golden Bear, told *The Real Deal*. “They looked around Florida, and saw that it’s easy to hire. They wanted a good corporate showcase facility for when they go public.” So Palm Beach Gardens was a natural, he said. “It’s a high-end community with a panache for corporate facilities similar to what Boca Raton had 20 years ago.” Golden Bear Plaza, named after golf legend Jack “Golden Bear” Nicklaus, whose companies are based there, is owned by Equus Capital Partners of Yardley, Pennsylvania.

Demand for Class A space in Palm Beach Gardens is soaring, Merin said, with the vacancy rate dropping to under 10 percent from 19 percent a year ago and rents rising. His firm and others are negotiating corporate headquarter deals for several private equity and hedge-fund firms from the Northeast. The problem is a shortage of Class A space in the area. “But what else is new?” Merin said. “Traditionally, developers in Florida won’t build on spec like other parts of the country. It’s a combination of the recession aftermath and lenders want more equity.” He’s not impressed with local government’s effort to boost Class A construction. “I love the fact that politicians and non-professionals are screaming ‘Please build more,’ but unless you will guarantee loans, developers won’t go for the risk.”

Rebel Cook, president of Rebel Cook Real Estate in Palm Beach Gardens, also said local officials must do more. “You need a fast-track permitting and development process, probably in all of Palm Beach County. Permitting and zoning takes so long,” she told TRD. So companies that want to relocate in less than a year are choosing locations that allow quicker construction. “Then we lose out,” Cook said.