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July 12, 2017 – DOUGLASTON DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEWS

How Instagram And Retail Created The Perfect Recipe For Restaurant Anchors

Butler has worked closely with developers, even developing an asset himself into a food hall in New York City's Crown Heights. Every developer he talks to wants a food hall in its building, because that is what their tenants want and what people who live nearby want. Butler said developers are starting to see food halls and restaurants as a big driver of traffic and desirability, and in an era of e-commerce and experiential retail, restaurants are safe bets. He is so confident in food's ability to drive traffic he is trying to convince developers to see it as a marketing expense.



Butler's Smorgasburg is the perfect example. In late 2010, Douglaston Development's Jeff Levine approached Butler. He was developing waterfront towers in Williamsburg, New York, but was having trouble leasing retail space in the underdeveloped area.

"No one was going to Kent Avenue, he couldn't give that retail space away," Butler said. Levine worked a deal with Butler for the food hall. The space was not free, but Douglaston did not charge much for it.

"We brought thousands and thousands [of customers]," Butler said. "We activated the area, then the market picked up on its own as well, and his condo sales kicked off. Now this area is so buzzing you wouldn't believe it. It's the most dramatic example of placemaking and activation."