

# [Austin real estate brokerage SkylesBayne taps innovation-focused female exec as first CEO](#)

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Staff report

[SkylesBayne](#), a fast-growing commercial real estate broker, has snapped up a high-profile Austinite as president and CEO.

[Michele Skelding](#), [who stepped down](#) as senior vice president of technology and innovation with the Austin Chamber of Commerce in December, has been tapped as the firm's first chief executive.

“Michele has earned status as a highly respected economic growth leader in our great city, with exemplary aptitude, character and ability,” said [Chris Skyles](#), principal partner of SkylesBayne, in a statement. “We are excited to incorporate her talents and leadership into our company.”

Skelding will lead the execution of the organization’s vision for accelerated growth, Skyles said. The firm was founded in 2006 by [Chris Skyles](#) and partner [Justin Bayne](#). The firm is ranked No. 21 on Austin Business Journal's list of the largest commercial real estate brokerages with total transaction value of sales and leases worth \$74.3 million in 2016, up from No. 27 a year earlier.

“SkylesBayne is at a defining moment given our growth and increasing role within the technology, innovation and capital landscape,” according to Skyles. “In our 11-year history we have achieved consistent year-over-year revenue growth; and now, in the first two months of 2017, we have already achieved revenue matching our 2016 fiscal year end gross revenue. We firmly believe it is the optimal time to invest heavily in the leadership of our company.”

Skelding spent more than three years with the Chamber, directing efforts to boost the city's reputation as an incubator of technological advancement. Her tenure coincided with Austin basking in recognition [from the Kauffman Foundation](#), [the Milken Institute](#) and others for its ability to grow startups as well as attract and retain forward-thinking companies.

“We are at a pivotal point in our region’s growth; SkylesBayne is well poised to take a major thought leadership and strategic role in Austin’s growing and diverse economic landscape,” Skelding said in a statement. “I am excited to lead the next level of growth with such an innovative, creative and sophisticated firm.”