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Many commercial real estate firms are hunkering down because of a looming recession and market slowdown. But not all of them. Houston-based Transwestern Real Estate has quietly completed three acquisitions recently. The company says the purchases are part of a years-long plan coming to fruition, but it shows how challenging market conditions can create opportunities.

Transwestern recently announced the acquisition of Chicago's MB Real Estate. Days later, Transwestern acquired Washington, D.C.'s MGA Inc. The firm is also putting the finishing touches on an acquisition of West, Lane & Schlager, also based in D.C. Transwestern says its current strategy is "acquisitive," and it's looking to add new markets, especially in the Sun Belt and hot secondary markets like Charlotte and Nashville. 2023 will likely be a challenging year from the transactional perspective, but Transwestern is optimistic about the asset services and property management sides of its business.

Larger commercial real estate firms like JLL and Cushman & Wakefield have consolidated via mega-mergers to create powerhouses in the past decade. But giant mergers like this may not happen for the foreseeable future. Instead, it's expected that larger companies will scoop up smaller brokerage and management firms, like what Transwestern is doing. Global investors are increasingly favoring one-stop-shop service providers, so these "bolt-on" acquisitions of smaller real estate companies and brokerage teams could be a theme in 2023 and beyond.