

**THE NEXT WAVE OF  
INFLUENCE  
IN REAL ESTATE**

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*THE NEXT WAVE OF INFLUENCE IN REAL ESTATE*

The Best Marketing, Sales, and Industry Secrets Shared by  
the Top Millennial Real Estate Agents in the Country

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# **THE NEXT WAVE OF INFLUENCE IN REAL ESTATE**

**The Best Marketing, Sales, & Industry  
Secrets Shared By The Top Millennial  
Agents In The Country**

**JIMMY REX**



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*When I first got into real estate, I decided very quickly that I wanted to be in a spot in my career in two years that it takes most people twenty to get to. I knew I could have success quickly, and I was willing to put in the time, effort, and money to make that happen. While my sales were there twenty-four months later, financially I was a mess. I was blowing so much money on so many things that I didn't need to be doing. I look back now and I realize that I had no road map to help me become that top-producing agent.*

*As I thought about this, I realized that I needed to share what I had learned with the world. I wanted to provide a handbook of sorts that I would have treasured as my greatest gift had I received it my first year in real estate all those years ago. That is why I am dedicating this book to my younger self because he inspires me even to this day. So hungry and so eager to learn. This book is the one I wish you had found all those years ago, and it is now your gift to all of the young men and women that are coming up now and will be coming up over the next several years that can thank you and your efforts for this great guide on how to become a top-selling millennial real estate agent.*

*I also wanted to dedicate this book to my mentors. In the history of real estate, I don't know if anyone has ever had the caliber of one-on-one mentorship that I have. Bob Fitzgerald for teaching me the skills I needed to become a great agent. Mike Ferry for teaching me work ethic and for allowing me to double down on myself and my own efforts to create massive success. You were the perfect person I needed at that time in my life. To Tom Ferry for all the work you have done over the years to make sure you were always on the cutting edge of upcoming technologies and marketing methods. It was your training that got me out of the rat race, working smarter and not harder, yet producing amazing results. And lastly to my coauthor of this book, Bill Pipes, for all the hundreds of hours we have worked together discussing real estate and my business. You are not only my coach and mentor but one of my closest friends.*

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# INTRODUCTION

I'll never forget my first day as a real estate agent, way back in 2005. I was so excited to get started, feeling like an adult for the first time. I approached the owner/broker of the little ma-and-pop shop I had chosen to hang my license with. I only had one question: "Where do I get started?!"

The broker looked at me like I was the first person to ever have such a question. He was running a flip business, a mortgage company, and a real estate company, and I don't think he had ever taken on a brand-new agent before. I was less than a minute into my real estate career, and immediately I knew one thing: my broker had no idea what to tell me. After stumbling around, he told me to find a white page and just start calling anyone I could get ahold of to buy real estate.

I knew this was less than effective, so instead I spent the next three days typing up and hand addressing letters to everyone I had ever come across: my mom and dad's friends, my neighbors growing up, and all of my high school friends' parents. That took me three days until I was once again out of things to do. I picked up the local *REALTOR Magazine*. In the back I found an ad for an audio program that would teach you how to acquire "endless leads." I bought it and listened to it every day for a month. The ideas weren't great, but they were all I had.

Six months later, with very little training and no real idea where my next deal would come from, I was about to get out of the business. I had entered real estate with high hopes but no idea what to expect. I had chosen a company based off of a relationship and not a training program. I was broke, exhausted, and looking for the next chapter of my life.

Thankfully, I found a mentor shortly after that, a man named Bill Pipes. Bill is not only the coauthor of this book, but he has been my mentor since that day and my personal real estate coach since 2010. After attending a seminar that Bill was hosting, I went on a rampage, selling home after home. At the end of my first full year, I had closed sixty properties. The next year I went on to sell another ninety-eight, and my career took off.

I was one of the lucky ones. I found my mentor and somebody to help me succeed in the business. But over 80 percent of real estate agents who get their license don't end up renewing it two years later. This is an astounding number considering the months of classes and studying it takes to get your license in the first place. What I wouldn't

have given to have this book when I first started out as a realtor at age twenty-three, all those years ago. For this reason, I decided to put together this book. I wanted to create a resource, a real estate agent's bible so to speak, that any new agent could look at and have to give themselves endless ideas and expectations of what it takes to succeed in this business. Who better to deliver the information than one hundred of your peers? Not twenty-year veterans of the business who have Rolodexes with half the town. Young millennials, hustling just like you are.

The agents in this book were carefully recruited to be a part of the project. We wanted millennials (born in 1980 or later), and we wanted agents that were dominating in their marketplace. This project took a little over a year to complete, mostly because I was running my own real estate team at the same time. Rather than making a training manual with just my own experiences, I decided that it would be much more useful to gather information from different areas of the country.

I got this idea from one of my first mentors, Mike Ferry. When I met Bill Pipes at that seminar all those years ago, he was working for Mike. Because of my quick success, I was given opportunities that most agents could never dream of. I was personally mentored by Mike, and he invited me to be on panels in front of thousands of agents to share how I went about calling For Sale by Owners. But the most invaluable thing I was ever involved in was a group that Mike put together called The Top Producers.

This special group was about one hundred agents from all over the country who would come together once a quarter in a different city and share all of their knowledge and expertise with the rest of the group. To qualify to even be a part of the group, you had to sell more than seventy-five homes per year. The reason the group was so powerful is because everybody came with an abundance mindset. They shared the real information that was causing them to succeed. Getting outside of our own markets, we weren't afraid to open up and share different ideas and marketing techniques that we used to become top agents.

I used to walk away from those meetings feeling like the luckiest person alive. I used many of their ideas and information as I started to grow my team and as I continued to improve as a realtor. I used to always think about how valuable the information would have been if I or someone else had been smart enough to record the information. As I began to think about this book and what I wanted it to be about, I realized that I wanted to create a written version of The Top Producers.

I chose the seven questions that I asked each agent because I thought about the seven questions I would have wanted answered when I was starting out. How do we get this thing going? What was the first deal you ever did? This is so helpful to agents who are starting out because a typical experience is much like mine, where you have no idea where to even start.

From there I wanted to see how successful agents plan out their day. I believe success leaves clues, so I wanted to see what the best in the industry did to plan their day. I also wanted to know how many of these agents were buying their own real estate and how often they were doing it. Too often we assume everyone else has it all figured out; we feel like we are behind. What this question showed me and what it will hopefully show you is that slow and steady wins the race. Most agents don't have fifty investment properties. Most buy one and sometimes two per year and steadily grow their portfolio over a long career.

One of the hardest things as a newer agent is feeling like everyone is succeeding but you. Because of this, I wanted to know how these other agents were failing. I think it is important for new agents to see that it isn't all roses for the veteran agents either. I know a lot of new agents see how I work now, and all the vacations I go on, and they think that is normal. I want them to see what it took to get to this place: the decade of pain and suffering and calling prospects every single morning for hour after hour; the ability to get rejected forty times in a morning, knowing that each no eventually would lead to that one yes.

This book wouldn't be complete and wouldn't serve the purpose I want it to without a section on marketing and social media. This is the part of the book that reminds me of those Top Producer seminars a decade ago, when I would learn from Chris Heller how to attract hundreds of leads per month, or from Joan Pate, a legend in the industry for the past forty years. What I hope you get from this section of the book is realizing that there are so many avenues to attract leads. There is no silver bullet; you simply find a method that works to get ahold of a lot of people, and then do it over and over again.

I really hope this book can create a place for you to go to get inspired, to learn new methods and habits of success, and ultimately to set you on a path so that you can have a job worth having, a business worth owning, and a life worth living. Thanks for letting me be your millennial mentor. I look forward to hearing from all of you as you sit down and digest the information in the book.

Much love and success,  
*Jimmy Rex, "The Social Realtor"*



# AARIN CHUNG

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty

**Age:** 38

**Location:** Rancho Cucamonga, California

**Years in Business:** 3

**Best Production Year:** 2018

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My very first real estate deal was a \$763,000 luxury home. I was at an open house, struck up a conversation with a visitor, and before I knew it, I was helping him buy the house I was holding open—and also selling the house he listed on the market.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I time block every minute of my day. It's the only way to stay in my zone of genius and out of distractions.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

Other than the home I own, I don't have any real estate investments—I'm the daughter of a stockbroker, so that's my preferred portfolio.

## **Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I have too many failures to count. In fact, I probably fail at something every single day—because if you're not failing, then you're not moving fast enough. But I don't dwell on any of these failures. I learn from all of them and see them merely as consulting fees. If I paid six figures for a fancy college degree that I rarely use, then surely I can pay much less for a powerful life lesson that will serve me daily.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Video.

We **will** be a camera-first society in five years...And if you still plan on being in business, then you **will** have to get used to being on video. I think that most agents have accepted this reality, but most agents aren't doing anything about it because they're afraid to put themselves out there.

They're afraid to film because they think people will judge them.

They're afraid to edit because they don't like the way they look.

They're afraid to post because they think trolls will write mean comments.

But what other people think doesn't matter.

Seriously, if someone you don't even know, who will never hire you, and who you wouldn't even want to work with, leaves a negative comment—it doesn't matter.

We only care what people think because we're making it all about us. This is a debilitating, high-stakes game that you will NEVER win.

If you ever feel scared, nervous, or uncomfortable about putting yourself out there, just remember that you're doing it for your community, and serving your community is the highest honor for a realtor.

It's not about us—it's about serving them.

When you make that subtle mindset shift, it really takes all the pressure off.

If you remove yourself from the equation, you'll never feel any of these nervous emotions again.

It's uncomfortable for me to do almost EVERYTHING in my business.

But it's not about me.

The moment I realized that it's more important for me to serve my community than it is for me to stay in my comfort zone and hoard all of my knowledge, resources, and tools to myself, everything changed.

Stop being afraid.

Stop playing small.

And start spreading your message...And your community will respond.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

The only people who are entitled to an opinion about my business are the people who are paying me. If you're not a future, current, or past client, then your opinion doesn't matter. This keeps me on track and in focus when others criticize, judge, or dole out unsolicited opinions.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Learn to become a local leader, community influencer, and digital mayor. If you do, you will be able to dominate any local market and generate leads on demand.

**Coach's Notes:**

Aarin's advice on video is spot on! People are afraid of all these outcomes that don't exist, and it keeps them from trying video. To me, doing video marketing like Facebook live and Instagram stories is like dancing. We think everyone is watching us, but really, they aren't. They appreciate that you are having fun, and are trying, and it leads to key conversations that lead to dates on the dance floor and closed deals in real estate.

# AJ MIDA

**Brokerage:** EXP Realty

**Age:** 32

**Location:** Charlotte, North Carolina

**Years in Business:** 6

**Best Production Year:** 2017—20 Million Volume—603,000 GCI—86 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My very first real estate deal was an expired listing. I was consistent and followed up with the person for a few weeks, finally got to sit down with them, listed it on the spot, sold it relatively quickly. It had expired with three other agents over about a year-and-a-half period, and we ended up selling it. I believe that the value on that one was \$350,000. Which was awesome, because my average that year was only about \$186,000.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I moved to a new market in North Carolina from California, didn't know anybody, so I didn't have a lot to work off of. It was outbound prospecting. It was kind of expired, For Sale by Owners prospecting. So, when I was really hitting on all cylinders, at 7:45, I'd be on the phone with a roleplay partner, and by eight o'clock I'd be on the phone with my first expired listing. From eight to ten it would be only outbound prospecting to expired listings. At ten o'clock I would do my lead follow up from the calls that I was just on. That would typically take half an hour to an hour, returning emails, things like that, and during that time I would also call any fellow agents that I had in my system. I used Mojo, so it would prompt me who I should call from previous conversations. That would take me till about eleven, eleven-thirty, then I would go to the gym, or if I had worked out that morning, I would take a quick lunch and start prepping for appointments for that afternoon. Afternoons were reserved for appointments. If I was behind



on my goals, I'd prospect in the afternoon. If I was happy with what my production was for the month or the week, I would go home early, around three or four.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

We liquidated all of our real estate investments, and we're in the stock market. Our current strategy with investing is investing in low-cost index funds, like the Vanguard 500. As we're building this company, EXP, we wanted to be extremely liquid and also passive with our income. If you follow Tony Robbins, he teaches a 6 percent rule, where you can pretty much live off your income for your retirement. We're following that, and I recommend this blog called Financial Samurai. We're following a very simple model where, say, if you have \$10 million invested in a, for example Vanguard 500, you can live on 4 percent to be a little more frugal. So our ultimate goal is that \$100 million in that mutual fund, which will earn us \$4 million a year. We're not currently looking to really invest super heavy in real estate. We don't even own our own home. We've sold it and we're traveling the country now.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I'll share a little bit of how I got into real estate because it leads up to that. I had moved to California from Michigan for a different business opportunity that fizzled out. I started a division of a company called Student Painters, which taught other college students how to run their own painting company in their hometown over the course of the summer. My job was to go to these college campuses, recruit, train, and hire these college students to run their own painting company in their hometown. I was part owner of that division for the company based out of Michigan, and our first year in California, after an entire year of working, I lost \$10,000. My wife and I thought it was a good opportunity to either say, "Hey, we're going to try this for another year and see if it gets off the ground" or get a little closer to family, so we decided to move to the East Coast—to North Carolina. Six months later I had my real estate license and never looked back.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

We use a sixty-touch program for our sphere of past clients. We have a marketing calendar that consists of two client appreciation parties a year, two client giveaways, which was pies during Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day chocolates for Valentine's Day. What's really cool about scheduling that out for the year is it becomes a system, so you're not really thinking about it.

We're able to call and reach out to a sphere of past clients, inviting them to something, offering value, as opposed to, say, just calling for a referral. So it helped myself and my team reach out to our past clients in the sphere. We know that a lot of agents don't want to call those people. Leading up to those events, we mail direct mail postcards. So for the four events that we get a year we had two direct mail pieces going out for it, and a phone call, and it was always just offering value. Because of that, over half of our business, in my fourth year, came from past clients in the sphere. Which for me was pretty cool because I moved to North Carolina not knowing anybody.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I had a basketball coach in seventh grade, and he provided us with a quote sheet, and there's two quotes I remember, the first one relates to adversity the other one doesn't, but I'll use both of them. The first one is, "Obstacles are what you see when you take your eyes off the goal." So that's just the reality of it. You're going to face adversity. I was just sharing with my inner circle earlier today, and in the message, what I heard one presenter say was, "You have to experience the crap, basically, to get to the success." You have to experience the adversity to get to the success. There is zero percent chance of being successful without the adversity. So that's kind of an overarching concept. The other quote, just for fun is, "If the cows don't get fed, they don't get fed." In other words, there's just no excuses.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Set a proper expectation that it's going be hard at first and it's going take a lot of effort. I think a lot of agents just get into the business from what they've seen on TV or they bought a house with an agent and saw the commission check and think that it's just going be easy. So just know that upfront, the work's going be hard. However, if you condition yourself right, and do the right things, and use the right mentors, it is going to become easier. You're going to struggle, and embrace the suck, like the Navy SEALs say, and just get at it. I highly recommend that any new agent get on the phone and start making the outbound calls because it builds a great habit. What I see a lot of agents try to do is, they'll go buy Zillow or Realtor.com Pay Per Clicks to try to avoid the prospecting calls, and they just waste their money because they don't build the skillset to actually convert those leads. So right off the bat, start calling expired listings and For Sale by Owners, and really build that skillset, that sales skillset, that you need to succeed because it's just going to carry over into all other aspects of your business.

**Coach's Notes:**

The thing I love about this interview with AJ is to learn how he has created systems and structure that give him flexibility in his life. His sixty-touch program for his past clients is incredible. He is 100 percent right when he says, “Because it is all automated, I don’t have to worry about it.” This is the first thing I make sure is in place before I start a new year: when and how I am going to be reaching out and marketing to my past clients and sphere of influence.

# ALEJANDRA CHAREST

**Brokerage:** Guarantee Real Estate

**Age:** 29

**Location:** Central Valley, California

**Years in Business:** 6

**Best Production Year:** 2017—92 Sales

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first deal was when I was at an open house for a coworker, and the buyers walked right in. Believe it or not, I sold the house that I happened to be at.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I organize my days in advance. My appointments are usually made days in advance. If something comes up last minute, I'll just put it on my schedule. Every day is different because I have two children under two.

If I have appointments, I'm fortunate enough to have family members who live in town. My mom is retired, so I can drop them off at her home.

My mother-in-law takes care of my kids every Thursday. Every Thursday, I try to pack in as much as possible because I know that I am covered all day. If anything comes up last minute, I take them to my mom's house and I'll either show a house or do a listing presentation.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I invest in real estate, and I believe in rentals. When there is a good opportunity for a little rental house, I take advantage and buy it, and then rent it out. I may not get my money back right away; it will probably take thirty to forty years. I'm leaving an empire

for my children in the future, so they'll have recurring income. I'm also planning ahead. When I'm a senior, I won't be getting Social Security back with real estate. As realtors, we don't have that benefit. We're all independent contractors, which means if we don't invest our money carefully, and we stop real estate, our income literally stops. This is why I'm trying to build rentals—at least ten to twelve homes. This is assuming I get \$1,000 rent every month. I can live comfortably off that. Right now I own one house, free and clear, that I'm renting at \$1,400 a month. I have a beach house as well, which is what I'm living in now. It technically is not a rental, but it is worth half a million and it is paid off free and clear as of this year.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I remember completely forgetting about an appointment, and the buyers were outside the house waiting for me. They called me and said, "Hey, we're here, where are you?" I was shopping at Lowes or Home Depot. I've never felt more horrible than in that moment. Forgetting someone when they're waiting outside in 100-degree weather, I just felt my stomach turn to knots. I felt horrible that I completely forgot. That is something I failed on tremendously. I've never made that mistake again because as soon as I make that phone call or plan an appointment, I immediately stick it in my calendar. That was a very hard lesson for me, but I've learned from that because I wouldn't want it to happen to me on the other side.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

The one marketing effort that actually went well was simply reaching out to past clients, and asking them to write a review on me. I had them review me either on Zillow or Realtor.com, or a social media platform. When they did write reviews about me online, I noticed that my phone started to ring frequently from people online.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I would say don't give up. You are going to get a lot of rejection. People are going to take advantage of your time and your effort. They are going to want you to show them ten houses, and then at the end of the day, say, "You know, I've decided to rent," or "I forgot to tell you, my aunt's a realtor, so I'll be writing the offer with her." It is going to happen, and it has happened to all of us realtors. Do not let those people bring you down. It is very stressful and it can mentally and physically drain you. It is very exhausting to put in so many hours with individuals and not have a payoff in return. Not every client you meet is going to convert into an actual sale. I think that is the biggest difficulty realtors have, and my advice would be to not give up. Don't take it personally, just move on to the next.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Don't give up. Most realtors fail within the first few years because they can't get past failure. I read a statistic the other day about realtors having a bigger failing rate than new restaurants opening up, which is very sad. A lot of realtors fail within the first two years, and restaurants usually make it within the first two years. They will fail later, but being a realtor is one of the highest turnover careers. My advice is to stick with it and don't give up. Keep trying. Don't just sit still and twiddle your thumbs. The clients and sales are not going to come to you, you have to go out and get them.

**Coach's Notes:**

Alejandra keeps this business so simple that it almost feels like it is too simple. She is spot-on, though, about just pushing through the adversity. If you focus on the problem in front of you, it seems huge; it seems overwhelming. To help myself out, I never focus on any one deal. I try to never attach dollar amounts to houses or clients; it helps take away the emotion. I have convinced myself internally that if I just go to work every single day, regardless of outcome, the money always comes in.

# AMANDA BELL

**Brokerage:** At Home Realty

**Age:** 42

**Location:** Nashville, Tennessee

**Years in Business:** 15

**Best Production Year:** 2016—370 Sales

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My second deal had a buyer that was coming in and was PCSing from the military, so I had the buyer on it, and that was in 2003. I am actually working with the sellers of that property now to help them find a home. Even though I didn't represent them, I get to work with them now on helping them find a home.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I use Google calendar first and foremost. I like to get to the office at five-thirty in the morning.

Everybody else gets there at about 8:00 a.m., but I like to get here at 5:30 a.m. That gives me time to think about what I need to do. When my alarm clock goes off, I have a second alarm set for fifteen minutes later, so I think about things that I need to do. I will make a list, sometimes the night before, a to-do list, and bring it to work with me. I coordinate the two schedules, check emails, see if anything else has popped up that needs to be added to the list, and work through my lists throughout the day.

I usually get home around 7:00 p.m., but then I will take a shower, eat supper, and spend about thirty minutes talking to my husband. I then will get right back on the computer, so ultimately until I go to bed—somewhere between 10:00 p.m. and midnight—I'm still working.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I have one commercial property that my husband and I own. We purchased it because the building that I'm living in right now is rented. I've always rented it. So we purchased another building just in case the person that owns this building ever wants to take it back and do something different. That way, we would have a place to go in the downtown area. It is just right across the street from where I am.

The renovation cost to get the house the way I wanted it didn't make sense, so I rent it out. It has three commercial places and four loft apartments that we rent out. It just made a better rental property than to spend the money on converting it to what I needed. Other than that, we have a few other business ventures, but as far as other real estate, I don't own anything else. I don't flip properties because I feel like with flipping, you are competing with your clients. Although I do property management for a few of my clients, I don't like property management as much, so I don't have any other rental properties of my own.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I don't know that I look at things as failures because I really feel like those turn out to be blessings.

I think that you learn that you don't always end up where you think you're supposed to be. You just have to learn everything that you can about the current situation or the current job. If you've learned everything you can about the circumstance, then it helps you complete another task that much better. I just think it's a journey. One thing might end, but you're taking with you something from it to build better on.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Professional photos and a virtual walkthrough are very beneficial. Spending the time that it needs to make sure the home is portrayed in the best light is crucial. It's that old saying, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." I don't put properties on the market without good photos. I think that you're doing a disservice to your client without good photos, and you're sometimes wasting your own time to not make it shine in its best light upfront.

Don't make anything personal. A lot of people will mix their business pages with their personal pages, and I'm just not one to put a whole lot of personal information out there. People throw their personal life in between homes that they just listed. I think you can be fun with a cute little video, but I think you have to keep things professional at all times. Facebook is a reflection of the company that you work for. I don't care who it is



you are working for, whether you are a real estate agent that is working independently or if you work for the third largest hospital in the country, Facebook is a reflection of the company you work for. I know a lot of employers, myself included, that look to recruit somebody and head straight to your Facebook page. I do this to see what you have going on in your life and how you handle things. That can make or break you. Even though I'm self-employed, ultimately I'm working for my clients, and if my clients are going on Facebook and they see a bunch of drama, why would they want to hire me? Keep it professional at all times, do what you're supposed to do, do your job, and do it well. That's going to keep bringing you more business.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Pray. I don't tend to make a lot of big decisions without it. It took me three years to decide when to open my own company, but I think that's the first thing that you have to do. You have to pray and ask for direction on what you are supposed to do. I think real estate is taking a little bit of a turn to where we are becoming counselors and psychologists. There is a lot that goes into the art of negotiation, and to me, the key is understanding how people feel. They are making emotional responses these days, whereas a year ago we were making business decisions. I think you have to really listen these days to what people are saying in order to overcome a lot of adversity that is out there.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Don't give up. Being a real estate agent, regardless of which point you're entering in your life, is like being a politician. There is a lot of working for free.

There is a lot of shaking hands. There is a lot of kissing babies, and that is how I built my business. I would come in nights, weekends, and holidays and just wait for the phone to ring or wait for somebody to walk in the door. If there was a fair, I had a booth at it. A lot of that stuff does cost money and it takes time, but you are at a point in your career in the beginning where you have a lot of time to make those things happen. I think if you prove to people upfront that you are willing to work hard and not always reap an immediate benefit, then that brings you more business in the long run. It is exhausting, and it is frustrating. It is hard to keep pushing forward and to keep finding the motivation, but you just have to keep going. I'm fifteen years into it. I'm not going to say there aren't times where I feel like I'm losing my motivation. You just have to regroup, rethink, and do it all over again and just push through it.

I have learned that what motivates me is not what is going to motivate somebody else. There are agents out there that are just happy with one sale a year, or they just want to go on vacation, or they have a child they have to put through college or whatever.

Find that motivation, set your goals at the beginning of the year, and keep track of where you're at. I'm a very statistical person, so I have a spreadsheet that is broken down by what percentage of my clients are buyers and what percentage of my clients are sellers. Is it a traditional sale? A short sale? Is it land? Is it a house? Is it a foreclosure? I keep my statistics so that I know exactly where I am at all times because I feel like if you don't know where you're at, then you don't know where you're going.

**Coach's Notes:**

I wanted to include a few nonmillennial realtors because they have had enough time in the business to appreciate all the little things that make a big difference over time. For Amanda, she spent countless hours going out and meeting people, being social, so that when the day came that those people needed a realtor, they already knew exactly who they wanted to hire. I have spent thousands of hours in social settings and being a part of the community with no guarantee that it would bring me any business. What has happened though, is after fifteen years of being social and creating value for the community, my name is the first one everyone thinks of when they think of real estate.

# AMBER ANDERSON

**Brokerage:** Pacific Sotheby's International Realty

**Age:** 39

**Location:** La Jolla, California

**Years in Business:** 9

**Best Production Year:** 2017—38 Million in Sales

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I was doing an open house. It was the lowest property in Santa Fe. The clients walked in; it was a Saturday. I was taught early to hold them on Saturdays so I can hop into my car on Sunday. I had never sold anything, but I memorized at least the lowest property.

Anyhow, I showed the client four properties the next day. They ended up picking a \$2 million house that wasn't on their list. I had gone two hours before I showed them the houses and previewed those properties at the guard gate so that when I did show up, they knew who I was and I didn't fumble around. It was one of those "fake it till you make it." But it was a \$2 million house.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I typically try to organize the night before, or very early in the morning before the day starts just because in our business, from the night before to the morning, our schedule could have changed based on a showing. This gives me time to delegate, which has been one of the biggest things that I've been working on. If I have the tasks written down, then it's just a matter of implementing them.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

Right now we are actually out of the real estate market. We've got our assets in some

other areas. That's what we've been saving for. So in the next six months, probably sooner, we will acquire some properties. We were just getting all of our taxes lined up so that we can pull the trigger. My husband and I both own homes, but we've just been out of the market for the last two years.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

Recently, we lost an \$8 million listing. We failed because we did not ask the right questions. My husband and I (he is my business partner) had in our mind that we had been following up accordingly.

I will give you some context on the situation. There was a trust involving four siblings, I had sold two of the siblings' houses. The brother who was the trustee was the decision maker, and I had not sold a house to him. All of the communications and listing contracts were being sent to one of our clients, Terry. We thought we had it in the bag.

The mistake was that we weren't talking to the right person. Gary, who is the trustee, is over here in Arizona asking his agents for a recommendation. And we don't realize that's even happening. The other unfortunate scenario that happened is the trustee sent me an email and I never saw it. I get about 250 emails a day and I truly did not happen to see it. It was even shown unopened. He had a couple of final questions. He wanted to give us the deal. He let me know he was interviewing other people, but we never got that.

We learned that you're ready to score and then you fumble big time. The number one priority is that you always have to know who the decision maker is, and regardless of who we're following up with, it has got to be the right one who has the ability to sign. You're talking to the husband and the wife of the decision maker, which is rule number one. We also had to put things in place to never allow something to fall through the cracks. I now have an assistant who checks my email. Brandon checks it pretty much three times a day. I've unsubscribed from junk mail.

We have taken actions to rectify the situation.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Video marketing. We really started focusing heavily on video in 2012. It started with community videos first because I didn't have listings. It evolved into property listings, which then sold my home. Over time, in terms of getting the business and the credibility for the new listings, I started doing videos that showcased what I did as an agent. I would cover the types of events that people would want to see, or film a broker caravan or film a sunset surge. I then transitioned from there into actual content, which was based around seller tips or buyer tips. This transitioned into vlogging in the more recent years as I sprinkled in true content creation.

We have a schedule of an agent tip of the month, a success story which is basically a seller tip.

We do a vlog, and then have at least one property video every month. This is four videos a month, fifty-two videos a year. Most people can find me via the internet through video marketing.

We use all of those videos we create in our trip campaigns, in our Facebook campaigns, and in all of the marketing that we do.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Be persistent and be determined. And most importantly, have a positive mindset. If I were to choose one, it would be having the ability to—no matter what has happened, especially in a business that can be very stressful—change your state and focus on being positive. For me, that is the best way to overcome adversity. Just to take what you can.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Create a database and focus on building your database from the standpoint of your network, whether it be a buyer or seller. I know agents that have been in the business twenty-five years and they don't have a database. Ultimately, it is anybody who can potentially influence your business and build from that. There is also the compounding interest perspective, so stay consistent with your marketing and your mail. Most agents don't start running their real estate career as a business until they feel like they start getting business. If they did that from day one, their conversion rates just on their own network alone would give them so much more business. They would catapult out of the gate versus having that slow start.

**Coach's Notes:**

I love the focus on video marketing that Amber started using in her business back in 2012. Week to week, one video doesn't seem like a lot, but then you look back over the course of a full year and you have over fifty new marketing videos! Content is king these days, and Amber shows a great game plan to do something that is very attainable yet very effective in terms of video marketing.

# ANGIE COLE

**Brokerage:** A Cole Realty

**Age:** 33

**Location:** Raleigh, North Carolina

**Years in Business:** 11

**Best Production Year:** 2017—62 Million in Sales

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I was an assistant to the sales manager. I would be assisting her, and it was at a neighborhood that was an active adult neighborhood, people aged fifty-five and older. As far as the exact client, I do not remember, but it definitely would have been one of those transactions.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I recently just got out of production, so as far as organizing my day, it's drop off my daughter, get my Starbucks, and I come into the office. I'm in the office by 8:30 a.m. every day. I always make a point to be in the office instead of working from home. As far as first tasks go, I normally get on my computer, knock out all my emails, any tasks I have set for myself in my CRM, and then go from there. So every day can be a little bit different.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

We currently own a commercial condo, which is my business as well. We have our primary residence, and we have a beach vacation home. We don't have anything beyond that. We've talked about maybe getting into rentals, but it just hasn't been something that we've dove into quite yet. We haven't because of time. I think it's more important to

build your inventory and your portfolio of real estate. We actually will probably be looking to buy some beach houses in Carolina Beach and rent them through Airbnb. The rent amount you can get on those is insane, and they just pay for themselves throughout the summer.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

Planning too late. At any point someone can leave, or it might be time to let someone go. At that point you are stepping backward, and I always need to be thinking one step ahead and continuously hiring to make sure that I always have agents in place and that team structure will move forward no matter what happens with the current employees and agents on the team.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Social media, by far. In the very beginning when I entered into general brokerage, I didn't spend a dime on marketing, and all of my business came strictly from social media. My first year in the business on my own, I did seventy-nine transactions.

I would also say Facebook. Becoming friends with all my clients and making sure that I was present on social media daily is important. I would do 50/50—50 personal, 50 business. I posted on Facebook daily, talking about my day. Even if I wasn't busy, I would act like I was busy. Make it a point to tag my clients, especially whenever it comes to closing time. Take a picture with them at their home or at the closing table. Tag them. From there, you're getting all of the traffic of all the friends that they have, liking and commenting. It was great when they were like, "Angie's wonderful. She's the best real estate agent." They would sell you. So definitely advertising yourself on social media.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Keep pushing forward. You always, as real estate agents, should be competitive. I'll check my numbers versus others. But in the grand scheme of things your biggest competitor is yourself. There's enough business for everyone. I'm my biggest competitor and I always need to remember that, and I'm only going to be as good as I allow myself to be. I personally just have to keep moving forward and pushing, and strive to do my best.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

It is all about networking. I very quickly found this, especially in general brokerage versus new home sales. In general brokerage, it's all about who you know and it's selling yourself. If they like you, they're going to work with you. You don't have to sell them on

a home. You are just selling yourself and picking up the clients for business. Be quick to network and ask for business as well. I know I went through KW where they have the gold training. I went through gold and I remember calling my daughter's father and saying, "Hey, are you still looking to invest in real estate?" He was like, "Actually, I know two people." I'm like, "Wait a minute, why didn't you tell me before this?" I didn't ask. If you make it a point to ask for the business, you'll stay at top of mind.

**Coach's Notes:**

Having known Angie for several years, I have had the chance to follow her career, and I think she is the queen of social media when it comes to real estate agents. She posts multiple times per day on multiple platforms, and she is always smiling and establishing herself as someone you would enjoy doing business with. This is so important with your social media strategy: be somebody that others want to be around. Angie did seventy-nine transactions in her first year using this strategy—amazing!



# ARI HARKOV

**Brokerage:** Harkov Lewis Team at Halstead Real Estate

**Age:** 36

**City:** New York, New York

**Years in Business:** 12

**Best Production Year:** 2017—161 Million, 118 Sales, 112 Leases

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

In New York City, it's extremely common that agents, particularly when they're younger, start out doing rentals.

I did a handful of rentals in the beginning when I first started, and I got into sales by cold-calling For Sale by Owners. I was twenty-four when I got started in the business, turning twenty-five, and I didn't have any contacts. I was young and new to the city.

I picked up a list of owners who were trying to sell on their own, and I went through and I called and called. I would meet with some of them, and a few liked me because I was young and aggressive. It was a very challenging way to generate business and gain traction but eventually, I was able to get my first listing. Essentially the seller said to me, "I like you, I think you'll do a good job, but you're young and you're at this small rental shop that I haven't heard of. I'm not going to give you the listing unless you're at a firm that I feel has more resources and backing." That spurred my move to Halstead, my current brokerage, which was in the spring of 2007, and the rest is history. I moved there, she gave me the listing in the first week that I was here, and then I sold it. She had another property she had to sell, which I was aware of, and I sold that too. I picked up some buyers from those listings, picked up another listing, and the business grew from there.

**How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I'm a big believer that mornings set up your day. If you set up your day properly, it's similar to building a house with the proper foundation. I get up in the morning and I clean up my emails from the night before. I receive a lot of listing alerts in various neighborhoods that I track, both for active buyers as well as neighborhoods where we do business. It's part of my job to be extremely up-to-date on all the inventory. I skim through those and look at my list of tasks for the day. Everything I need to get done is in my calendar or tasks as I have far too much to keep track of in my head. After that, morning time is family time. I have two young children, and I help them get ready and try to spend breakfast with them, off the email, off of my phone. Then I head to the office, and I use my commute time and the first part of the day at the office, focusing on cleaning up some recurring morning tasks, getting my day outlined, confirming appointments, etc. I always confirm all my appointments to avoid last-minute cancellations or wasted travel time if someone's schedule has changed.

After that, my director of operations for our team and I have a morning huddle, which lasts anywhere from a couple minutes to ten minutes, depending on what we have going on for the day. We go through various tasks, projects, listings we're getting on the market, issues we're having, and anything that needs to be addressed. It's always in person. I don't believe in virtual communication for team huddles. If she's traveling or I'm traveling, we'll do it over the phone, but the idea is to do it in person, face-to-face. It saves a huge amount of emails and back and forth.

We do that huddle every morning. Thereafter the bulk of my time is spent prospecting for new business: making calls, reaching out to past clients and leads, going on listing presentations for potential new listings, meeting potential new buyers, meeting developers for new construction, and meeting referral partners for lunch or coffee. Finally, my time is spent negotiating and working on the transactions that we have going on.

With our sales agents, I do individual one-on-one huddles with them every week. We meet once a week and again, they're about five to fifteen minutes depending on what's going on. We essentially go through where they are with various clients, where they are with deals, and issues that they're having. The goal is to try to make the process as efficient as possible so that I can cut back on the number of emails and calls we need to have. We try to compress as much as we can into those huddles that isn't urgent and pressing.

The remainder of my time is spent managing the team from team finances and books, marketing plans and strategy, addressing any internal issues or challenges, reviewing team performance, etc.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I believe in real estate as a significant chunk of anyone's portfolio, and particularly for me, given that I'm in the business, I understand it and I can manage it. I always tell our clients who are thinking about investing about my simple strategy, which has been fool-proof for me. If you're looking to obtain a tenant, undercharge on the rent. I take the rent down maybe five to ten percent below the market value. Because I undercharge, I receive a lot more interest, I can handpick my tenants, and because I've handpicked my tenant, I get a better tenant. In turn, they're paying a lower rent, they're happy, and when they have minor issues they generally leave me alone.

My attitude is that the incremental financial gain I might get by squeezing a bit more out of them versus the headache in day-to-day issues and turnover is simply not worth it. All you need is a one-month vacancy combined with the cost of painting and cleaning and the time and energy associated with sourcing a new tenant, negotiating the deal, working on the lease and paperwork, etc., and whatever incremental gain you've obtained is wiped out.

I've tied some of those investments to my own personal real estate. For example, the first condo that I bought that we lived in, we turned into a rental property when we moved out. We already put down quite a bit of the mortgage and so that worked out really well. The next property that I bought, which I live in now, is a two-family. We live in one portion and we rent out the other portion, offsetting our monthly expenses. The plan is to purchase more investment units as time goes on.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

The big picture answer here is that we fail all the time. Not every day maybe, but almost every day. The big thing for me is that whenever we do fail, whether we lose a listing opportunity or we mess something up internally, I'm not upset with the failure. I'm only upset if we don't learn from it and avoid it happening the next time.

As an example, very early on before we started the team, I had been doing all of the administrative work for myself. Most agents do this before they build out some sort of structure. One of the first deals that we did, we had a transaction with a 5 percent commission. Somehow, I missed it, but my assistant at the time, my very first assistant ever, put the listing into our database as a 6 percent commission, and put that we would be paying 3 percent to the buyer's broker. And then, when we had an accepted offer, we sent out a deal sheet to both attorneys with the 6 percent commission, and I missed it again. Once we'd advertised it as 3 percent and put the deal sheet out, we had to pay the buyer's broker 3 percent, even though we were only getting 5 percent. Instead of us receiving 2.5 percent, we took 2 percent, and then to make matters worse, we actually

had a referral fee on our side, so we had to pay the referral fee as if we were getting paid the full amount. We ended up getting paid very little on that transaction. It was a very, very expensive error. What we learned was that there needs to be a series of checks and balances to make sure these things don't happen. You must make sure that there is proper communication and proper checks and balances between employees. From then on, every time a listing has gone into the system and every time a deal sheet has gone out to attorneys, I've checked it over first.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

One thing we really like to do, which we do on our middle- to upper-end range of our listings, is HD videos. High definition videos, and narration on camera as well as off-camera audio is great. We've found that these are really helpful both in terms of marketing the property and giving the property a sense of luxury and another kind of dimension, as opposed to just the photos and the floor plan. Videos also create facial recognition, establishing us as experts. Buyers remember our videos and can recognize us from them, tying us to the real estate, which helps us advertise the listings and advertise ourselves.

We also like to be old-school. What I mean by that is that we pick up the phone and we send handwritten cards. There is so much digital communication and clutter in the world today. A simple handwritten card or a phone call can really cut through the noise.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I had a business coach when I started my team and he said something very wise: "As you build your business, you have a percentage of your deals or your transactions that are problematic, and let's just say to pick a number that's 10 percent. The absolute number of issues you have grows as your business grows. The percentage of issues that you have remains the same, but you just have more issues because you have more deals." It is wrapping your mind around the fact that if you're doing ten transactions a year and 10 percent of them are problematic, you have one difficult deal every year. But if you're doing one hundred transactions every year, now you have ten difficult transactions, which is one every month. So it's about kind of accepting the fact that with growth comes challenges, and that's part of how you build a business, and it's unavoidable.

You have to think big picture. Put every issue that you have in the context of the bigger picture. It's the forest, it's not the tree. It's the war, not the battle. I think what happens with a lot of newer, younger, less experienced agents is that they have issues, and then they get bogged down with those issues. They become frustrated or depressed and they can't get out of it. They can't see the forest for the trees, and then they're stuck in a

negative loop. When you're negative, people don't want to be around you. This leads to them doing less business, and it becomes more problematic. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. I think if you keep your chin up and accept the fact that, "Okay, I just lost that really big deal and that is rough," or, "Oh, I just went on five pitches in the last month and I got zero of them, and that is really frustrating but life goes on," you'll have a much healthier approach to your business. If you look at the bigger picture, you can keep moving forward in a positive fashion. Not in a fake way, but in an optimistic way. And optimism is attractive.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Prospecting and marketing are your business. If you don't have leads or business opportunities, you have no business. You can be the most talented, the most sophisticated, the most knowledgeable, the most skilled agent or broker in the world. But if you don't have leads, opportunities, and business to work on, then none of that matters. Vice versa, if you do have leads and business opportunities but you aren't as skilled, there are ways to find that skillset and help and assistance. It's much easier to find execution assistance than it is to find a source of leads. The hardest thing in our business by far is bringing in business. I think a lot of people, myself included, make the mistake early on in their career of not consistently having a plan for bringing in business and do it in a more haphazard way. If you're not systematically doing it day in and day out, you won't systematically have a flow of leads coming in.

**Coach's Notes:**

Ari is a great example of an agent that had a lot of success over time scaling her business. By knowing upfront that she is going to have headaches and growing pains, she is able to power through it when those issues arise. I think this is so important; knowing that you are going to have adversity so that it doesn't affect you negatively when it happens. I always say to embrace the challenges, knowing that you need them to grow, knowing that each one helps you to grow and become a better agent.

# AVI DAN-GOOR

**Brokerage:** Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Nevada Properties

**Age:** 36

**Location:** Las Vegas, Nevada

**Years in Business:** 11

**Best Production Year:** 2017—29 Million in Sales—58 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I expected a few months without making any money. On my second month in the business, I was holding my very first open house. I was a little nervous going into it.

I was sitting on the stairs and I had everything on the kitchen island, and a wonderful couple walked in and started walking around. I did my spiel as best as I could. The couple had no agent, and they showed some interest. I followed up the next day with a personal thank you note—I used to send them to everybody who came to an open house, trying to get my name out there. They said, “Well, we actually kept thinking about this house all night, and we don’t have an agent, and we want to purchase it.” I ended up writing an offer for them on the property and closing on it.

It was my first open house, my first client, my first sale. Everything all rolled into one, and it was a blessing because a lot of agents truly hate open houses. It was a blessing in the sense that I realized that these things work. Maybe not every time. But I believed in them since day one and they’ve been really good to me.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I’m a pretty regimented type of person. My morning starts with a workout. I feel it clears my head for the day, and I’m not one of those task-oriented types of people. I like to have some flexibility. I have an amazing assistant in the office who has things on my desk for the day that are organized, and things that are pressing. I usually take a few

minutes to write some notes. I write gratitude, that's really every morning as well. My assistant also gives me a number of people to call to follow up with.

I always make a point to have time for a coffee meeting with a client or a lunch with a client because that's a great way for me to keep in touch with my current clients and my past clients. What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?

I'm a very instinctual person when it comes to stuff for myself. I can be very analytical when it comes to clients, which I think is part of my job. But, when it comes to my personal investments, I operate on gut feelings. The last few properties that I fixed up were purely gut instincts that just felt right.

I have five properties, and I'm not your typical investor, I would say. I would take higher-end rentals, and I don't go for the typical investor price points. Because of the fact that I manage them myself, I'm very particular about the area. I invest in areas that I personally like.

My approach to investing is buying properties that, looking in that price point, I would buy for myself to live in.

### **Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I feel that I'm my own worst critic. So if a transaction doesn't work out, if a transaction cancels, if a client is unhappy, I see it as a failure. I'm a pleaser and I want everyone to be happy and successful, and make the best, most educated decision. Last year I had a transaction that kind of went south and we had to have attorneys involved. One of the things that I always tell new agents is that I have never seen it all, and I will never see it all. You learn new things every day in this business. I'm never better than anyone, and I have both the broker and the corporate broker on speed dial. When I don't know something, I don't try to guess, and if I have the remotest doubt, I call them. I failed because I felt that a client wasn't happy at the end with the transaction that canceled. My failure was an unhappy client, and it got to a point where we had to have attorneys involved.

My lesson was to never take anything for granted. Never take a relationship with a client for granted. Never take your knowledge for granted. Always have extra careful eyes looking at everything.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Personal time in front of clients. If you look at my website, the coffee with Avi link started with a joke that I made in an interview, saying that if I could be in front of clients six hours a day drinking coffee and chitchatting, then my business would blow up. I stand by it. As a beginning agent, I used to think that going to coffee with a client was

a waste of time. Now it's probably the best investment that I could make in my business. I think keeping in touch with my clients, my prospective clients, and my past clients has been the best growth tactic for my business.

I feel like every time I meet with clients, even though I don't make it about the business, the question comes up, "How's the market doing?" or "What do you think my house is worth?" I've realized that every time I sit down for coffee or lunch with a client, and it ends up coming up in conversation, then a deal comes out of it. I want to be the first thing that people think when they think real estate. I have very loyal clients, and I feel that coffee time is my most effective marketing strategy.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I'm a huge believer in coaching and therapy sessions. I'm a pretty spiritual person. I believe that things happen for a reason and they always end up working out. But it takes taking action. It is my mantra to always be intentional about things. My philosophy is the customer is always right and I will always take care of it, that's my job. I always remember that clients hire me for this so I don't take it for granted. At the end, everything passes. Whether you like it, hate it, or love it, it's going to go away. Everything will work out.

At the end of the day it's real estate, and there's always a solution.

### **What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

It's relationships, relationships, and relationships.

Millennials in particular are not great at communicating. They are all about texting and the impersonal relationships. I think that one of the things that will never, ever change, and I learned this from my dad, is, every business begins and ends with relationships. If you don't have good relationships with clients, your business is not going to succeed. You may be successful for a period of time. But, if you're seeking longevity in any business, it's the relationship. That's the only thing that we will never lose as human beings. Technology will never have an advantage over us and our connection with other human beings. I urge millennials to step out of their comfort zone. Pick up the phone and call. There is nothing they dislike more than getting on the phone, even with people they know. It's not about cold calling.



**Coach's Notes:**

Going to lunch or grabbing coffee with your friends and past clients is a must in this business. I like how Avi described it; at first, he thought it was a waste of time but now he considers it his most important aspect of the business. I set at least one lunch appointment every single day, and most days I have two. It's also important to say no to lunch appointments with title reps and loan officers and focus instead on seeing potential clients.

As top agents, we can go to lunch every single day with a vendor, but pick your affiliates and remain loyal to them while saving your lunches for friends and potential clients.

# BARAK SKY

**Brokerage:** Long & Foster Real Estate

**Age:** 32

**Location:** Washington, DC

**Years in Business:** 10

**Best Production Year:** 2017—94 Million in Sales—140 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

A condo that I sold to a college friend of mine. I went to college at American University in DC, and I'm from Bethesda, so I've been local my whole life. The first condo was owned by an acquaintance from college whose dad, for a graduation present, bought him a condo, all cash. It was pretty rough in regard to the process, but we got there, and luckily, he was very understanding and very relaxed with the rocky road to closing compared to what it's like working with us now. All of my deals got a little bit smoother as time went on, but the first three deals of my career were definitely huge learning curves.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I try to be able to manipulate my schedule because in this business, anything can come up that you need to attend to right away, whether it's a big deal or it's a client. So I try not to have a strict schedule. There's lots of new megateam leaders and team leaders and individual agents that get really structured multiple days out. I'm much more unstructured in regard to my day-to-day process. Ninety-five percent of the time, I do start my day at my office. So I'll get to my office in between 7:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and I'll start from there, whether I have a 9:00 a.m. appointment. I don't really ever book appointments before 9:00 a.m. So I just get really organized, usually the day of, for the current day. I rarely, unless it's buyer appointments or something, plan that far ahead.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I own four houses, four investment properties, and then I have my primary residence.

I wanted to start off with investing where I know, which is the DC marketplace. Unfortunately, real estate here is so expensive that one individual purchase ties up so many funds. If I want to buy an investment property, the down payment needed for that property is a lot.

When I got this 30 under 30 honor from the real estate magazine, that connected me to a bunch of top agents all over the country that I've grown my business with. We became friends, a few of us, and one actually happens to be not too far away in a submarket called Salisbury. It's three hours from the city, so I can drive there in a day if I have to, but their "investing in" property is \$100,000. I can buy five a year and spread it out rather than buy one every two years in the District. Actually, in Salisbury, the cash flow numbers are much better than if I were to buy in DC. I might not have the best cash flow, but maybe I'll have more appreciation.

I'm spreading the investments out over different areas where I can spread the wealth and get positive cash flow and eventually, the goal will be to buy some multiunits here in the District of Columbia.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

The challenge with us a lot of the time is everybody knows at least three or four people that are real estate agents. Out of the people they knew, I had the most successful track record. They chose to work with me because they understood that this is one of the largest investments of their lifetime and they wanted to be in the best-equipped hands that they could be in. So everything was great. I found all these off-market properties, things that they would only find while working with me, and wrote a few offers that they didn't get. They didn't take all my advice. They took the advice they wanted to take and did things the way they wanted to do them. The way they wanted to do them lost us some deals.

Finally, out of nowhere, they went radio silent. I finally got the husband on the phone and I'm like, "What's going on, man?" He's like, "Oh, we went under contract on the place." I was like, "Excuse me? I'm not sure I quite understand." They worked with the listing agent directly and went under contract with the place that they currently live in right now.

I was so frustrated. I couldn't understand why. After I cooled off a few days later, I really tried to figure out what I could have done to make them do that, right? And to not even call me and ask my advice, I just couldn't understand. I tried to backtrack what it could have been, and maybe it was lack of communication. I knew what was

going on and why they weren't getting places, but maybe I didn't communicate that to my clients enough.

When they don't understand, obviously the blame gets placed on me. So I'm swallowing my pride and trying to learn from that and learn that communication is one of the most important aspects of maintaining a client base and building the client base up for referrals.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I really followed Gary Vaynerchuk. My wife follows him, and she got me into him. We flew to Miami for his first ever Agent 2021 conference. We got to meet with him for forty-five minutes or so in his suite to try to pick his brain.

He really just kept it simple. It was really about creating a media brand around yourself, and that's the direction that initially he is going in. If you look at Instagram and Facebook, relatively speaking, impressions and views are super cheap. To build a following and a database is still very cheap. It won't be that cheap for long, once all these major corporations start buying up the impressions. It will start getting more expensive if you go AdWords or whatever, but for now, it's a really good place to invest your time and money.

Instagram is really something special that the younger agents should be taking advantage of. All agents should be, but if you haven't grown up with social media, it's hard to just jump into it. I've been investing heavily in the content creation to use on my social media platforms.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

The sun will always rise tomorrow.

The simplest thing to think about. Simple as that. What could be so bad? You have your health, and that's the most important thing. Tomorrow, the sun's going to rise. Nothing's going to stop that from happening.

### **What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring, millennial real estate agents?**

Don't be a part-time agent. This is one of the hardest jobs out there that I know to be successful at. It's so hard. I've had friends from high school that see what I've done in my success as an agent. I don't know what they thought of me in high school, but they're like, "Oh, if Barak can do it, then how hard can it be?" Then they get into it and after three months, they're like, "This is horrible."

**Coach's Notes:**

Fewer than 20 percent of the people who get licensed are still around two years later. If you think you can beat the odds part-time, then you are probably in for a wake-up call. I only take full-time agents on my team now, and it isn't even so much for me as it is for my clients. It isn't fair to them if they want to go see a home or meet to sell a place and you can't do it because you are out driving for Uber or putting in hours at a second job.

# BEN NEMEC

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty

**Age:** 32

**Location:** Huntsville, Alabama

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2018—48 Units—GCI \$300,000.

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was a first-time home buyer. A young couple, recently married with one kid. This one fell in my lap, and it was, as you might imagine, a learning experience. It went well, all in all. They've been ongoing, repeat customers since then. They bought a 3/2 ranch in south Huntsville, and it is your quintessential home in our area for people that are first-time home buyers. It has served them very well.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

We go to conferences and training events and classes, and we hear a lot about time blocking and how important that is. It is, but it's very hard to stick to that and so ideally, what I do is block the morning up until eleven or noon to make calls. That typically means keeping in touch with past clients because most of my clients are referral-based. I do almost zero cold calling or things of a similar nature. I haven't done the math this year but it will probably be 80 percent referral and repeat clients, if I had to guess.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I have yet to get into investing in real estate myself aside from my own personal home. So, we bought a home five years ago, sold it, and made a good return on it recently. We then bought another home that I think we will also see a good return on as well. Some

people like to have their hands in a lot of things. I like to focus on one thing and develop that and hone the skills for that. Once I feel like I have my real estate business at a point where it doesn't require me so much, that's the point at which I think I will get involved in investing in real estate.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I had a cash transaction where I was the listing agent, and I failed to see on the offer that they had marked that the seller was responsible for all of the settlement charges. I was representing the seller and we got to the closing table and I saw it. I immediately realized that was on me, and it was a situation where I was busy with a lot of transactions and had a lot of things going on at home, and I obviously didn't take the time I should have to review that offer on the front end. At the end of the day, it didn't cost my client a ton of money, but it was a mistake, and that will stick with me forever. One of my faults is, and I think a lot of people in real estate can relate to this, we have a lot of moving parts, a lot of things going on at once. If you don't finish what you start on each thing, it is easy to drop the ball along the way. You lose track of things. If you don't write things down, commit it to memory, whatever it is, you'll be running around like a chicken with your head cut off. I learned from this and intend for this to not happen again.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

One-on-one relationship development, client follow-up, and just getting to know people and really caring about what's going on in their lives and what they're doing.

I really like endurance sports. I enjoy running and riding bikes with groups of people. When you share that bond of struggling through something, you can get to know somebody well. A lot of my business comes from other "weekend warriors." I recently completed Mountain Mist Trail Run, a 50K race. The people I trained and raced with are some of my closest friends, and some of them clients.

I do my best to get to know my clients well, deeper than just the transactions because there's so much more going on in everybody's life than that. Buying a house is a big deal, so in walking through that with someone, you build a relationship. Staying in touch after the transaction is over is so important. "You moved to Huntsville for the job—How's that going?" This goes against everything I have been taught, but I rarely specifically ask for business. I make sure people know what I do, come from a point of contribution every time I have an opportunity, and past clients send their family and friends to me when there is a real estate need.

I keep in mind who might like to hear from me. Not everyone wants to be bothered. Not everyone wants to get a call from their real estate agent from three or four years ago.

So, if I see any way at all I can contribute and come from contribution to that person, I do that. And if I can't contribute anything to them or help them with anything, I don't bother them. Or I try not to.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

My mother-in-law got me into the business and was my business partner when I started in 2013. She taught me the principle of saying “next” after shortcomings or missed opportunities. In this business, you truly have to be able to move on. Dwelling on stuff, failures or shortcomings, or just bad luck is going to drag you down. Thick skin is either a prerequisite or an acquired attribute in real estate.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Millennials can get a bad name. I have been to many closings with empty nesters and older or even middle-aged people that joke about millennials. I don't think they realize that technically I'm considered a millennial. We have this broad-spectrum reputation that we want to make money but don't want to work. Like any stereotype, there may be some truth to that. Don't jump to that conclusion on every thirty-something you meet.

This brings to mind a particular quote by a famous bodybuilder, Ronnie Coleman: “Everybody wants to be a bodybuilder, but nobody wants to lift this heavy-ass weight.” There's a lot of truth to that; to reap the rewards, you have to do the work. It's not just going to come while you sit around and wait for the phone to ring. Pick one thing you want to focus on, e.g., cold calling, withdrawals, expireds, FSBOs, and do the work. It really is a grind every single day, and it's not easy. We don't just wake up and go to the bank and cash checks. It is hard work, so buckle down because there's going to be some really high highs and some really low lows. And you have to lift the weight.

If you have a family, treasure them. My wife and three kids are my support system. It is hard to be available to both clients and family at nights and on weekends, so figure out a way to give each enough time. I wouldn't be where I am today without my family.

**Coach's Notes:**

Something that Ben does that I can really appreciate is incorporating his normal hobbies and what he enjoys doing into his real estate business. He looks for chances to network and expand his sphere of influence through running and doing the things he enjoys. I have acquired more clients in my life through going on big group vacations and by joining random groups and clubs than anything else I have done. Live your life in a way that you can do what you love to do and grow your business all at the same time!



# BETH MCCLOSKEY

**Brokerage:** First Team Real Estate

**Age:** 32

**Location:** Huntington Beach, California

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2018—30 Units—Volume in Sales 30 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first transaction was a short sale with a super nice couple. I met them at an open house, and they were buying in a community that they both were raised in. It was a short sale and needed a lot of work; it had a lot of major issues. But a super nice couple. I don't really remember many hiccups, but I also had a mentor that helped me get through the transaction. I remember my paycheck was wonderful. That was the biggest paycheck I'd ever gotten in my life.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I try to prioritize getting all my calls in. Prospecting calls are in the morning, and then in the afternoon I try to make appointments. I always start my day off with some sort of devotional or something to help me with my mindset, then I try to get to the gym or at least just outside for a walk. I try to get a lot of my emails flushed out in the morning. If something needs attention right away, I get that done so I have my emails kind of cleaned out, and then I try to schedule most of my appointments midday to early afternoon so that I can get on the phone again in the later evening, but it doesn't always work that way. You learn to just go with the flow. I always try to at least block out a certain number of hours a week for dialing, and touching base with new prospects.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I just closed on my first home, which is pretty exciting, but future-wise, one of my really close friends who's in the industry is actually a lender. My goal is to follow his lead with what he's recommended for a strategy. He stops paying on the principal once he reaches twenty percent equity. Then he does interest only on those properties. Everything above that he starts saving for the next investment property and pays into that until he has twenty percent equity, so he always has at least twenty percent equity in all of his homes, but takes the cash flow from there and invests it into the next.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I got an opportunity to list a home here in Huntington Harbor, right on the water. I was up against a few other big-time agents, and I got the listing after a month of negotiating and interviewing with four different people that owned the home.

I was super excited about getting that listing and opportunity. They asked for a referral for staging companies and cleaners and everything else. I gave them multiple referrals so they could choose and review.

The one stager that they chose was actually a stager that I've never personally used. The other two I have, and they've done an incredible job. The third stager was somebody that many agents in my office used. She gave the best price and so they went with her, and it literally ended up being, for lack of better words, such a shit show. My clients didn't like her stuff right off the bat. They asked her to remove her items from the home and she didn't. She kept on going in the middle of the night, bringing in more furniture.

Long story short, even though it was a third-party situation where she's not directly part of my team, the referral did come from me. They trusted in me. The stager ended up just not having the right inventory for this multimillion-dollar home. It was terrible. She was threatening lawsuits. She wouldn't remove her furniture. My clients were super upset. It turns out that on the contract that they had signed with her between them, not even between me, so again, not my responsibility, but again, of course as an agent, everything falls back on you. On her contract she doesn't have the cancellation; a way out for the client. They have to pay in full. There was nothing on there stating that they could cancel if they didn't like it. For me, I learned in such a hard way. I missed my brother's wedding rehearsal dinner because I was on the phone with the clients and the stager.

Then my grandmother passed. During these crucial life moments that I can never get back, I was dealing with upset clients and an insane stager.

They paid her in full and she's gone. They weren't so upset with me that they fired me, but it was rough for a little bit. They're all awesome and they all tell me how much

they love me, but at the end of the day, they did say they trusted in me and my referral. It was a nightmare.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I would set up shop at open houses anywhere from six to seven days a week. I did that for the first six months in my business, and I was able to close one transaction within those first two months. I probably spent 99 percent of my weekend, both days, doing open houses. For me, meeting the people face-to-face, building that rapport and getting to know them more on a personal level, works for me, versus cold calling and stuff like that. That's my main source.

My other source would be buyer letter. When I have a client and they're looking at a specific neighborhood, I have five different versions depending on the neighborhood. I have a buyer letter that I send out based on that. I've done a few off-market deals from that and I have also gotten a few listings out of it.

A lot of my social media on my actual personal page, even on my business page, is me posting a lot of real things. Life things. So people know who I am. I post about my family, my dog. Everything that just keeps it down to earth. I always do Facebook ads and different things for people to register and they get taken over to a speed page and I get their information. I have different minipages and things like that that clients can see.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

To take yourself out of the equation. I find that a lot of people take things so personally, which can be a benefit in that you can actually empathize and want to be a decent human being in making things right. I feel that personally, when I'm dealing with another agent and they're defensive, I take the time to actually listen to the concern, whether it's right or wrong. Whether it's based off of emotion or facts. Just slow down and listen and repeat their concerns or whatever the situation is. Just acknowledge the other person's thoughts in regard to their perspective.

I always find that coming from that perspective—versus being defensive, on guard, and quick to react instead of just responding—just helps keep things even-keeled. I always try to stay super neutral. I've been told often that I'm very diplomatic with my approach.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Becoming an agent is no joke. It's not an easy career. We cannot be part-time. You cannot half-ass it.

It is a serious commitment. You have to be self-motivated and adaptable and open to adversity, open to criticism, open to being eaten alive by people that you thought were close colleagues or friends. At the end of the day, this is a commission-based industry and unfortunately, a lot of people are out there for themselves. But as long as you can stay focused on the positives of what this career can actually be and what you can create in this career, you'll succeed. Holding true to your core ethics and morale regardless of what everyone else might be doing or saying around you. Just stay true to yourself in working hard. It does come back to work in your benefit. Honestly, clients will come to you if you have that raw, genuine care for putting the clients first, versus yourself, or already calculating your paycheck before you have them in escrow.

**Coach's Notes:**

The advice that Beth gives at the end of her interview is something that I can't stress enough. People will want to do business with you if they trust you. That trust is found in two ways: 1. If they trust that you will truly have their best interest in mind 2. They trust that you know what you are doing. With all of your marketing and everything that you do, keep those two things top of mind and figure out ways to share that with your client. That is the key word—trust.

# BLAKE BALTOS

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty

**Age:** 28

**Location:** Port St. Lucie, Florida

**Years in Business:** 7.5

**Best Production Year:** 2017—52 Units—Volume in Sales 8.5 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

That was back in 2011. The market was just terrible. I mean things were just statistically at the bottom of the barrel. I was working with an investor. At twenty-one, obviously, I looked like a child, and I was showing him properties. It's funny, he even asked me, he goes, "So, how many houses have you sold?" And I looked at him with the biggest smile on my face, I actually said, "None! You're going to be my first one!" Man, he just ran me ragged, and I showed him a bunch of investments. He ended up buying this little, cute property for \$34,000 back in 2011.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I time block everything that I possibly can because without it, your day just takes off in a million different directions, and it's hard to keep up. So I time block my morning activities, from waking up and getting my coffee together, to stretching, and then head into my office to do my prospecting for a couple hours.

Usually after that I set any appointments I have coming up for the afternoon, and then each one of my workdays, I have specific tasks that I time block for that day of the week. Tuesdays are my coaching days for my team, so I have mandatory coaching meetings with all of my team members individually. And then I work coaching with other agents on Tuesdays. Wednesdays, I primarily time block profit-share building for Keller Williams.

I take that time to network with other agents in my own profit share or agents outside of the company, or new recruits that I'm trying to build my profit share on to then increase my residual income. Thursdays, we focus on really just getting out there, marketing properties heavily. Mondays, we touch base with all of our clients. We give them a personal phone call to follow up and say, "Hey, here's what's happening over the weekend. Here's a market update for you." Just so they have that constant line of communication with us.

Fridays, we try to network with any affiliate members, people that are in the business or related to it, but aren't actual licensed realtors like home inspectors, insurance agents, title companies, cleaning companies, general contractors, anybody who we feel could help grow our network. We try to do that on Friday because it's more of a lax day and going into the weekend. But other than that, we schedule out everything that we possibly can and we live by our calendar.

### **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I do the buy and hold strategy. I buy them. Try to get a good deal, nonetheless, and we buy and hold right now, cash flow properties. When the market goes down and then comes back up, like it does every eight to ten years, historically, we'll consider off-load-ing them and then reinvesting or possibly holding them if the numbers make sense.

I currently have one cash flow property right now. I own my own property.

### **Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I fail as much as I possibly can because that's really the only way that you learn. Gary Keller is a huge proponent of fail fast and fail often. For me, I don't really consider something a huge failure. I consider it a learning experience. I've had to break the habit of wanting to do something and wanting it to be perfect before I do it.

It's like paralysis by analysis. I've tried to get over that, and if I have something that I want to do, I just do it. And I learn better ways to do it. I don't necessarily consider them failures. How do I improve upon it, and we do it. Just like in any business, we run across challenges, whether it be a listing that's got a huge challenge or a negotiation that's challenging or an investment where maybe you didn't make as much money as you hoped to.

Frankly, I've never lost a big amount of money on a real estate investment. Lost a few bucks in stocks here and there, but it's just how it goes. We fail quite a bit. But for us, it's just taking that, turning it into a learning experience, and figuring out how to do it better, and pushing forward.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I wouldn't say this one necessarily has worked best in a profit sense, dollar wise, but I'm a huge fan of social media marketing, simply because the numbers don't lie. I mean, more people get their news and their daily screen time from social media platforms than pretty much anything else.

That's how we've been able to leverage a huge local network in my area in particular. One, because I was born and raised here, but, two, it allows us to get our face out there and allows us to get our properties out there. Our social media posts are something that I really enjoy doing. It's something I don't leverage out. I like to do that myself.

We also run targeted Facebook ads. That's just something I love to do and the people love to see them. You can make them engaging. You can make it exciting, fun to look at, and fun to be a part of. I get responses from people out in our community all the time about, "Hey, I see your face all over Facebook." Or "I see that property you posted. It's beautiful." We incorporate a lot of emojis in our posts, and we want to keep them exciting to look at and fun. I mean, that's what social media is for.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

For me in particular, anytime I face adversity I just think of a podcast called *Never Quit*. Before I got into real estate, my dream was to be a Navy SEAL. I enlisted in the Navy. I did their pretesting to change my job to spec-ops contract, which I did, and my new job was SEALs. While I was in DEP—which is the delayed entry program, it was either six or eight months at the time—I think I was nineteen. It was a really long time to be in DEP waiting to leave. I ended up blowing out my knee.

But being in that community and that type of atmosphere, you learn this "never quit" mental fortitude and attitude, which I've carried along with me my whole life in everything that I do. So real estate for me is no different from that. I'm a very competitive person, so no matter what's on the line, if it's me against anything else, I'm there to win. I feel like that's what's helped me in my success and helped me drive my business.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

In everything that you do with your business, be consistent and be relentless because without that type of mindset, you're just not going to succeed. Real estate's a hard business to be in, period. So you go through ups and downs, and you deal with a lot of adversity and you deal with a lot of people and personality types. You just have to be relentless and be consistent. I tell all my team members, "Listen, think of your best fruit-bearing plant. That is your real estate business. You have to feed it every single day

for it to bear fruit. If you quit feeding your real estate business, it will quit providing you money. If you quit feeding it, it's going shrivel up and die. You have to feed the beast every single day. Continue to feed your business every single day, and it will continue to bear fruit for you." That's as simple as I can put it.

**Coach's Notes:**

"Fail fast and fail often!" Such great advice. I remember when I wanted to start my podcast and I felt like it had to be perfect before I could actually release it. What happened instead was, well, nothing. Then I was listening to Gary V, and he talked about the true failure of a project being only if you never start it. He basically said, "It's going to suck when you start, who cares, start anyways!" So I did. Fast forward a year later, and I had between 20,000–150,000 listeners per episode, and prominent members of the community were calling me to see if I could help them start their own podcasts! Sometimes you have to just jump into it knowing you will fall short and fail, but that is how you learn and get great at it!



# BRADY BRIDGES

**Brokerage:** Chisholm Realtors

**Age:** 31

**Location:** Fort Worth, Texas

**Years in Business:** 2.5

**Best Production Year:** 2017—Volume in Sales 11 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was exciting. I've done a lot of different sales jobs. It's nice whenever you do something and you can immediately, or within thirty days, see the fruits of your labor. It was a \$93,000 little bitty house in south Fort Worth. It went smoothly. I mean, it's just the first time you do something, it's kind of scary, and everything's such a big deal. Once you do it enough times, it's not that big of a deal anymore.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I manage marketing for my family's business. We're a large manufacturer of drilling equipment out of Odessa, Texas, so I handle our international sales and marketing. So I handle that up until usually 11:00 a.m. And then I come over to my real estate office and do real estate for the remainder of the day. I wouldn't say I'm the most structured person.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

Between my dad and me, we've got nine rental properties here in Fort Worth. They're single-family. There's a little neighborhood in Fort Worth that we really like, and I can buy them between the \$150,000 to the \$180,000 mark, and we can rent them out and make 14 percent a year in return. That, and we get good-quality tenants. They're nice

houses and the appreciation, it's just a really good area for appreciation. I manage the properties.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I wouldn't say I've had a huge failure. In real estate, when you lose a deal, it is what it is. You can't let it get you down because it is going to happen. But I think some of the learning curves, things like when you have a listing where you let your clients down because you didn't let them know that certain things were supposed to stay, that you didn't exclude. It was your fault. Those are the things that I learned early on. I know that's nothing big, but you learn from it. Know what you're doing.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I'm heavy in pay-per-click in organic SEO online (like Google).

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

The one thing that I've noticed that has helped me be so successful is just recognizing my opportunity. Two, you can't care what people think when you're calling. These leads come in, and you just have to call, and if they say no, it's fine. You have to have thick skin and you can't be afraid to call.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

I've noticed that these kids that are twenty-six and younger, they're just in the world of texting and talking on the computer, that they don't know how to call and talk to people. Have conversations and talk to people and try to cultivate relationships. You want to find something to keep them in the back of your mind. You need to invest in your business. I know a lot of people. I've never worked for a big firm. If you rely on other company leads coming in to make a living, you're never going to make it in real estate. You have to go out and find something that works, invest in it and commit to it for at least three months because that's how long it takes to see if something works or not.

**Coach's Notes:**

Not caring what the person on the other end of a prospecting call thinks is such an important piece of advice. When I was calling thirty to fifty FSBO's per day, I would often have new agents come in and shadow me while I did it. I remember one time a seller got upset and yelled at me and hung up. The new agent was terrified and said he didn't think he'd be able to call any more in a day if something like that happened to him. I wanted to show him an important point so I said, "You have to remember that it isn't personal. They don't even know who I am and they aren't rejecting me, they are just rejecting the idea of a realtor." To prove the point I called right back and said, "That agent that you just yelled at, what was his name?" The seller had no idea. I said thanks, hung up, and got back to my call sheet.

# BRANDON PREWITT

**Brokerage:** RE/MAX Metro Plus

**Age:** 32

**Location:** Columbus, Ohio

**Years in Business:** 10

**Best Production Year:** 2017—84 Units—Volume in Sales 17.3 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I sold a young couple a property that was probably about forty minutes outside where my target markets were. It took me about six and a half months, I think, to find them the house, it was a lower price point, I think it was around \$70,000 to \$80,000.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

Having control over my time is probably one of the most important things, and it's been one of the biggest shifts that I've made in my business from my early days. Before, I would just be very reactive to what would come to me in a given day. Now I try to be a little more planned. So I get up in the morning, I go to the gym, I eat breakfast, and I usually check my email. In the morning hours, I do as much prospecting as I possibly can, following up on old lead opportunities or diving into our database and reaching out to folks. Typically, the afternoon is appointments or following up on things that have been procured during the morning hours.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

We have six rental properties, five residential and one commercial. I own a commercial building.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

Hiring my first assistant was a pretty big fail. I hired this person out of necessity. I was so busy, and I didn't do as much screening as I should have. We were growing fast and I brought them into total chaos, and it ended up being a really frustrating experience for all involved, and it cost a lot of money. I don't think I failed. I think it was just a stepping stone to show me, okay, this needs to be done differently and better.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I built my business on repeat referrals and people that I know. I put together a twenty-eight- to thirty-two-touch process where every year I'm reaching out to these folks to constantly remind them that I'm still active in real estate; that it is my full-time job. That has rewarded me in spades with just the number of people that have come back to use me again or people that have referred me.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

One of my favorite words is endurance. Having the ability to endure. I constantly think about that because in our world of real estate, things are ever changing. You could have good months, bad months, great clients, horrible clients, but I think it's your ability to endure and weather the different patterns that is what really makes you a great real estate agent.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

This is still a relationship business. It is still face-to-face. Technology has revolutionized the way that we do real estate, but it should not take over the real estate transaction. I have to look someone in the eye, and I have been able to connect with them on a level that is outside of a phone screen or a computer screen.

**Coach's Notes:**

I love the twenty-eight to thirty-two touches that Brandon has built in to his repeat and referral business. Too many agents try and be "secret agents" where half the people they know don't even know that they are realtors. When I first got in the business, I wanted anyone that thought of me to think of real estate. As time went on, I realized I had this backward and now anytime a client or friend of mine in my market thinks of real estate, I want them to think of me!

# BRETT BOONE

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty Elite

**Age:** 35

**Location:** Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

**Years in Business:** 10

**Best Production Year:** 2018—200 Units

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## What was your very first real estate deal?

I was still waiting tables at Sushi Neko in the evening, and I had my license. I was doing real estate in the daytime, and I had my first listing appointment with a For Sale by Owner who was a mortgage lender. I knew I was probably a little outdone because I didn't know all the ins and outs. I was hoping for an easier person to meet with than a mortgage lender. I was very, very nervous, and when I got over to the house, I sat across the street in a church parking lot and tried to get all my scripts and the flow and everything in order. As soon as I walked into the house, I honestly had a panic attack. I turned bright red. All my scripts and dialogue went completely out the window.

I actually almost forgot to breathe and I was so anxious I didn't know what to say, and he had so many questions that I lasted about five minutes in the house before he said he wasn't interested in doing business with me. I went out to my car, and when I got in the car I was gasping for air, and I didn't realize I'd almost completely stopped breathing. Because of that, I almost got out of the business. That was my first listing appointment and I said, "If this is the way real estate is going to be, this is not for me." I went to go wait tables that night. I had another listing appointment the next day, and I just kept going back and back.

It took me about a year to get my confidence up to be able to list properties. I thought I was going to be done after that first listing appointment. If that's the way real estate was, I didn't want to be a part of it. That was my first encounter with real estate.

**How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I wake up at 4:30 in the morning. I have an appointment with my trainer at 5:00 a.m. From 5:00 to 5:30 a.m., I do a workout with him. I leave the gym at 6:15 a.m. I get home at 6:30 a.m., take a shower, get ready, and I eat breakfast, and I leave my house at 7:10 a.m. I get to the office at about 7:20 a.m., and from there, I check my email and prepare for my day. I do any market analysis that I need.

From 8:00 to 8:30 a.m. is when the rest of the team shows up, the sales team, and we get the day going. From 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. we do script practice every morning. From 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., we do outbound sales calls where we're lead generating and prospecting. From 11:30 a.m. to noon is when we do our follow-up calls for past clients and people who have returned our calls during early generation time, and then from noon until about 5:00 p.m. is for appointments. I do listing appointments, team meetings, and coaching during my one-on-ones, so the afternoon is mostly listing appointments. I get home at 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. if I don't have any appointments, and then I go to bed at 8:30 p.m.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

When investing, I always like to use the 1 percent rule when identifying properties. Say there is a home that is \$100,000. I need to be collecting 1 percent of that in rent, which is \$1,000. From that, I like to structure my loans so that I am making a profit between \$500 and \$600 per month on that price point, which is in my pocket. On the average property on the low end, each one of my rental properties produces about \$6,000 a year and some of them go up to about \$10,000. It's all about how I buy it. As long as the rent is 1 percent of the purchase price, that is the highest threshold. If it's better than that, great, but I never go below that. I always want to be 1 percent or higher for my rate of return.

I have five properties in my portfolio currently.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

The biggest thing with work would be my leadership. When developing the team, I use a DISC assessment for all of our people on our team.

I'm a 100 percent "D," so I'm very direct. I'm very aggressive. I rush to aggressiveness or anger when things don't go very well, and that really got in the way of my leadership. I had people on the team whom I was trying to lead and motivate, and my natural way of being really pushed them away because they didn't identify in the way that I did when it comes to performance.

It's taken seven years of being stuck in this cycle of hiring people and letting them go, hiring them and letting them go, and not really getting a tremendous amount of growth. Even though our company grew every year in production, we were always rotating

people in and out, and so that was probably the biggest lesson. I'm the one who has to change in order to get results out of the people that I want. It's about how I react and about how I influence and lead my team.

That was a very long, painful process that I had to learn and go through to get it right. Now we are on the other end. We have great people who have been here for quite some time. That's been my biggest hurdle with the team; developing myself to be the right person to lead the people.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

For Sale by Owner and expired listings.

Those expired listings are what I based my business off of originally. Now we don't do them near as much, but before that was my number one go-to. I would set five, six, seven, eight, sometimes ten appointments a week every week for the first five or six years in real estate that were expired listings and For Sale by Owners.

The biggest social media strategy that I have is just connecting with my people on Facebook and social media and being responsive to people's questions. One of the things that we will do is go through our Facebook page and look at all of our friends and you can actually contact these people, so we are able to communicate and call people that aren't in our database that we are just friends with on social media.

So we call these people and just introduce ourselves, and let them know we're here to help and have them be a bit more aware of who we are and our brand. That's been very successful for us.

Everything that we do is proactive. What I mean by proactive is us picking up the phone and starting conversations. That's where almost all of our business comes from. We do very little with paying for business, paying for leads, and paying for things like that.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Slow things down. That really has served me. Meaning, to collect all the information and to be able to process it and then think of the strategy that is a win-win for everybody. When things get troublesome, I slow down, think about it, look at all angles, listen to all parties, and gather all the information before I move forward and make a decision on the best way to solve the problem.

That has served me the best and gotten me the best results when dealing with anything in real estate, whether it's a transaction or an employee or an agent who is having trouble with something. Slow down, listen to all parties, gather all the information, ask a lot of powerful questions. That easily reveals an answer that I never would've gotten if I had just reacted in my natural aggressive way.



**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

The number one thing that I see in real estate is agents relying too much on technology. It's a very reactive way of doing business. They are afraid of having tough conversations or developing their language and their scripts to get the results that they want. That is much more difficult than putting information up about a listing on Facebook and hoping that people pick up the phone and call you.

If I had to tell them one thing to do, it would be to lead generate every single day and it would be to work on their scripts and their dialogue. Really master their language and master themselves. Things will start naturally coming to them a lot better when they're very intentional about their language. A lot of people don't slow down and really think about what's going on in their head and their mind, why they said this. It gets them into a lot of trouble.

**Coach's Notes:**

Listening to Brett's morning routine, you start to realize why this guy is having such massive success! He not only wakes up at four-thirty, but the part that stood out to me is the fact that he has a trainer there waiting for him at five! Talk about ultimate accountability. If you want to make a massive change in your business, you need to make a massive change in your life. I love the idea of having that trainer first thing in the morning. You win the morning, you win the day!

# BRETT CAVINESS

**Brokerage:** Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

**Age:** 29

**Location:** Menlo Park, California

**Years in Business:** 9

**Best Production Year:** 2017—12 Units—GCI 400K

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first was when I was in college in Iowa. It was a nice single-family home in the college town where I went to school, three bedrooms, two baths, downtown.

That was sort of a bone that my office just threw me with leads, and I followed through.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

It's organized around lead follow up or client follow up servicing in the morning. Then I'm in the office by usually about 8:00 a.m. following up on anything that came in overnight. Then usually between about 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. I am processing, making phone calls, and then until about noon, paperwork, following-up with things. Afternoons can be visiting listings, going on appointments, marketing, making more calls, and things like that.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

My real estate portfolio is nonexistent. I live in one of the most expensive locations in the country, if not the world: Silicon Valley. And I've only been here for a couple of years. So it's going to be a little while before I can buy anything locally that I want to live in. My strategy right now is to generate as much cash as I can. Likely, what I will

be doing before buying locally will probably be buying investment property, either just outside the Bay Area, or back in Iowa where I'm from because I know those markets.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

Anytime that you don't take a listing, it certainly feels like a failure. I always just try to think about what I could have done differently, and I try to always ask the prospective clients for feedback on what I could have done differently. Sometimes you find out through that process that it was out of your hands, nothing you could have done, and other times you find out that there were just silly things that you missed, and you can add on so that you don't miss or forget them later.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Definitely video. I wanted to have something while I was still working full-time, not selling real estate full-time, that could be prospecting for me all of the time when I wasn't able to be out. I knew that having a great quality video online that was searchable would be a way to keep myself always networking with little effort from me. I did that in 2014 or '15, and since then I've just built up my video portfolio. Now it's a big source of business, and it's a big way that I secure listings and buyers. Because they have, you know, a kind of video resume of you that they can go and check out and really get to know you before they meet you.

I have an introduction video that has served me really well. That's always followed me everywhere. That's on every email footer, every profile that I have. Everything that I have has that video on it. So often, when I meet new clients they'll say, "Oh, no, I already know about you. I watched your video." It breaks the ice and gets a lot of things out of the way, which is great. So then on top of that, I do high-quality videos for pretty much all of my listings, no matter the price point. Where most agents would only do it on high-price properties, I really sell it as a value-add to all of my clients that, you know, regardless of your price, whether you are \$500,000 or \$5 million, you're going to get the same exact level of service from me no matter who you are, and I think people really appreciate that.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I always know that I'm doing the best that I can, and that I'm a great agent. I am great at marketing and great at what I do. So when you face professional challenges, or you get shot down, you're told no, you know clients question you, all those sorts of things, or things aren't going right, just to be able to look back and say, "I did everything I could have done. You know, I did a great job. I know I did better than anybody else would have done." And as long as I can look forward to saying that, then I can be happy. I can

sleep at night as long as I know that I did everything I could have done, which I don't think most agents do. That gives me comfort in facing adversity.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Do work. Set a schedule. Set goals. Treat it like a business. This is a nine to five job. I just see agents of all ages not understand, and everybody asks me, "How are you so successful?" I tell them, "I come to work every day. I do the work." And it's not that hard. You know, it's stressful. It is challenging, but if you just do what the job entails, you can be successful. I just find most people are not willing to put in the time and the hours and the energy.

**Coach's Notes:**

I love how he asks his clients and prospective clients for feedback so that he can always improve his business. Gary V talks all the time about having self-awareness so that you can improve all the time. Too many people want to be right. Those that are growing and learning, though, they are just trying to get it right.

# BRIAN ERHAHON

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty, North Tustin

**Age:** 29

**Location:** Tustin, California

**Years in Business:** 10

**Best Production Year:** 22 Units—GCI 200K

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was an ugly one, a property in Watts, California, not the best deal, not the best property. It was a mixed-use property. I want to say it was like two hundred grand.

You couldn't get a loan on it. At the time I was living in Orange County, so Orange County to Watts. It was taking me thirty-five to forty minutes to get to the property one way and then back, of course. And it was a pain driving it. But I didn't know any better. I found the buyer was not even the buyer, it was the son of the buyer, so I had to work with the son all the time for this property. It was probably a maybe seventy-five-day escrow, standard sale. It wasn't financed. And at that time I didn't know any better when it comes to doing all the due diligence for the buyer. You don't want to take on any of that liability. I was driving to the city. I was meeting with the people like twice or three times a week throughout the transaction.

Everybody kept giving me different answers about how the property wasn't conforming. It was a pain, to the point where it finally, the property didn't go through. It canceled.

At the end of it, when I finally closed, I got the check and it's like, "I did all of that for this?" I had to take a reduced commission because, you know, the seller couldn't pay a decent price. I think I got like \$1,500 or something stupid like that. It was ridiculous, but the lesson was learned, so that was a good experience.

**How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

When I was in production I was on the phones from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. I'd grab a half-hour lunch, and then appointments the rest of the day. It was very cut and dry. I start my mornings at 5:00 a.m. now. Before I was at 4:30 a.m., and I'd get in the gym. While I'm in the gym, I'm listening to a good book. Give myself a little bit of positive reinforcements and new ideas. And then by 6:30 a.m., I'm out of the gym. I'm getting ready, same thing, while I'm getting ready I'm listening to something positive—a book, whether it be a financial intelligence book, Robert Kiyosaki, to how to get energy and stay motivated. Thinking about different ways to do the same things.

By 7:30 a.m., I'm in the office. My first meetings typically are at 8:00 a.m. with my personal team. I have a team that's still running well. So I meet with my personal team at 8:00 a.m., from 8:00–8:30, and 8:30 a.m. every single day is my stand-up meeting. So just really quick for the team, from my personal business, getting everybody on the same page. By 8:45 a.m., we're breaking there, and then 9:00 a.m. we're doing scripts. The scripts are in my office. My team is in the same office that I run as well, so I'm kind of double-dipping there. Basically, it's opened up to everybody.

Everybody can come in and do scripts practice with us. And then from 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., I'm doing some calls. I'm catching up on some emails. Then back on the phones from 10:15 a.m. to about noon. If I'm having a meeting, it's rare, but I'll take it. Then after lunch I'm in appointments the rest of the day. Meeting with new recruits, meeting with our top agents, and troubleshooting.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

My personal investment strategy has been short-term. I've done about a dozen flips over the last three years. I'm going more long-term now, multiunits. I'm actually in the process of building out a syndicate, pulling together some investors and going after some larger-scale apartment complexes.

I was all short-term first doing the flips here. But then after awhile, I started looking at the long-term way because it takes less time to do the long-term, but it can build up longer while it's over the long haul. So I decided to do the long-term just because there's not as much time invested, and I can go out and sell one property and make the same if not more profit from a flip, potentially.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I'd say a leadership failure. That's probably one of my biggest learning opportunities. I was twenty-seven at the time when I took over the office. And at that time, I felt like I was a big deal. Of course you have some ego.

As a top producer in the office, of course I'm twenty-seven, and I'm hanging around with guys who are fifty. Talking smack. And that was just the style. And then also I could go and come as I please. Nobody needed to know where I was or what I was doing. It was all me. It was just me and my few other salespeople and an assistant. That was my business, and it was okay. I was doing great with that. But then after that, when I took on the leadership role, it was like a complete one-eighty. I didn't realize that at first when dealing with people who are twice my age, they have their own egos.

I didn't realize how much ego successful real estate people have. It's an ego-driven business. I didn't realize until I just started trying to rally people and get them in the same room. I would do certain things and I was a little bit too direct, or I just made a change without consulting anybody.

The agent leadership council and the top 20 percent in the office make decisions for the rest of the office. Consulting them is like the board of directors, and I hadn't done that. We were moving our agent leadership council and just changing it without talking to them first. We had their pictures on the wall, and I just removed certain people. I just took them down without talking to them about why they weren't on there anymore. That created move havoc and more pushback.

It was a big learning opportunity for me. Number one, it's servant leadership. Now that I'm out in front, I can't afford to have an ego. And I can't think that they're all working for me. If anything, I work for them. I work for the agents. I like to help them hit their goals, help them grow.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I was big on expired. Guys talked to a lot of people who weren't able to get their properties sold, and I would just see myself as the person or the agent that is offering a second opinion. So I would be the expired listing specialist. And so I reach out to someone and say, "Hey, your home just fell off the market, or came off the market recently, and I'm just reaching out to you when you're finally interviewing an agent like myself who can get the property sold. I actually specialize in expired listings, meaning that some of the best homes don't actually sell the first time, and all you really need is a new approach and new idea like I use to get your property sold. So when's a good time for us to meet so I can get you a second opinion?"

That's what I'll look for, and I will create a whole marketing campaign around that.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I would say just grow through it, learn through it. It was in the book *Millionaire Mind-set*, and the author was talking about if somebody's hitting a ceiling of achievement and

is not able to break through and/or is having difficulty progressing past a certain point, it's probably because there's something that they don't know and it's something that they're not aware of, and so you've got to gain some perspective to the level at which a problem or a challenge was created. You're just missing a piece. It could be a whole chunk, but you've got to learn through it and figure out what you don't know.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Get comfortable with being uncomfortable because things are changing so much. It's a high-demand industry. People need your time all the time, and if you want to do a great amount of business, you're going to always have irons in the fire. You're always going to be talking to people. You're going to probably be unorganized. It's just how well you deal with chaos and how much you accept it, and what you do moving forward.

**Coach's Notes:**

"Get comfortable with being uncomfortable." This is gold! One of my mentors used to say, "The level of success you will have in your life will be directly tied to the amount of discomfort you are willing to take on in your life." I love this. If you find yourself comfortable in life, look for opportunities to change that. David Goggins, in his book *Can't Hurt Me*, talks about running an extra mile when you are done already. Then stretch yourself to two miles and then four miles. Whatever you need to do to shock your system and keep it uncomfortable.



# BRITTANY PICOLO-RAMOS

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty, team leader of the Picolo-Ramos team

**Age:** 34

**Location:** New Orleans, Louisiana

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2017—122 Units—Volume in Sales 30 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was really hard. I was helping a gentleman, it was around \$80,000, and it was one of those programs where the government gives you grant money to buy your first home. He was the first person to own a home, ever, in his family. He didn't really know the process or anything. It took six months to get everything approved to get the grant money. It was hell, because I was on a team and they gave me all the stuff that nobody wanted.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I wake up and I pray, I meditate, I read my Bible, and I think about what matters.

I have to work on the calendar, or else I'll lose my freaking mind. Once you get to that type of volume production, you don't know what's going on. When you have thirty-plus listings, you don't know what you're doing. You kind of feel like you're insane. Literally, I have to schedule my grocery trip.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I have put my money back into my real estate business because I'm planning my team, so I've put a lot of money into my team. We're building a house of prayer, my husband and I. So we are putting all our funds toward that.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

Recently, I had a listing that I worked on for two freaking years, and he ended up going with another agent. And I had to stop and reevaluate everything and say, “What does it matter?”

I don’t really consider many things a failure. But that I did, because it was something I wanted for so long, and so bad. It was a moment where I had to sit back and say, “As long as I did everything right, it’s fine.” And I didn’t leave anything on the table. Some things are just out of your control, and you have to be okay with that.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

When you get behind other people’s visions, they’ll get behind you.

I think the biggest partnerships that I have that have worked are people that I really love, that really love me, who I’m doing life together with. I have a lender that I’m really good friends with, and I’ve been tempted to have my husband go into lending, but we always consider the bigger picture.

I’m addicted to social media. So it’s easy for me because I’m just obsessed with everybody’s life. My husband gets mad at me, but I get a ton of business from it because I don’t actually focus on my business page, I focus on my personal page. And building personal relationships with people that I love.

That’s a great way to connect with people that I couldn’t see every day. They still feel like I’m part of their life every day because I’m literally commenting and liking everything. And not because I’m trying to get business, but because I’m really interested in their life.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Just keep going, and forgive. Because people are going to hurt you, and they’re going to purposefully hurt you sometimes, and go after you. Lack of forgiveness will rot you from the inside out. You know, it’ll take your focus off of what really matters. Forgive people, even when they don’t deserve it.

**What’s one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

People that do it halfway, or do it part-time, make the industry look polluted. They don’t do it right, and they don’t do it fair, so it makes the agents look bad. Do it right, or leave.

**Coach's Notes:**

I love that Brittany unapologetically says that she is obsessed with social media. What she has been able to do is to use it as a tool to help her connect and sell over 120 homes in a single year. This shows you the power of social media, and when done correctly it can be and should be one of the main pillars of a successful real estate agent's business.

# BRUCE FOSTER

**Brokerage:** Coldwell Banker Hartung and Noblin

**Age:** 23

**Location:** Tallahassee, Florida

**Years in Business:** 2

**Best Production Year:** 2018—43 Units—Volume in Sales 8 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first deal in real estate was a couple that went under contract on the same property twice, so it was one to remember. One of the buyers thought that they were going to lose their job, so we ended up terminating that contract and lost their escrow deposit. When we went under contract the second time, everything was the same as the first contract, but then the appraisal came in—lower than the appraisal on the first contract.

Emotions were high. Since the property was a flip, the seller had left some of the construction materials in the trash can. My clients were very upset with that, so I personally went over and moved all of the construction debris from the trash can to the curb for pick up. I learned from that transaction that sometimes you just do what you have to do to get the deal done and to leave your clients happy. When it was all said and done, the buyers bought the property for \$5,500 less than they would've if they closed on the first contract. It's important to give them the customer service that they deserve because you never know what is going to happen. Ultimately, they were pleased enough that they called me a few months ago, I listed the property, and we just closed.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I organize my day by my calendar on my phone; it's my lifeline. I input everything into that thing and look at it as soon as I get up in the morning and right before I go to bed. It doesn't matter if it's an appointment, a home inspection, or a closing. I also input things

like pick up dinner, go to the gym, date night, etc. because real estate is so busy that it is easy to forget some of life's most simple things. My wife and I also share the same calendar, so we both know exactly what's on tap for the day and days in advance. Sometimes I'm booked out five to seven days, and to make sure everything goes smoothly, I invite every client to their specific meeting through the calendar app, so they are also on the same page. If the client is a buyer, I'll invite all my buyers to whatever showings we do, or if it's a listing appointment, I'll make sure the seller and I are on the same page. There's absolutely no reason that there should be any miscommunication, and it keeps everything very smooth.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I haven't personally invested anything in real estate, but it's not because I don't think it is a good investment. I see great buys every day, but in our town there are a lot of investors. I don't want to become their competition. If I'm their competition, then they're not going to want to use me as their agent because they know that I have passed the deal up since it isn't a good buy. Since I've put that model into place, I've acquired investors as part of my clientele.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

The only time that I feel like I have failed in my short time in real estate was a listing. Coldwell Banker has Global Luxury brand, which are homes that are listed in the top 5 percent of the market. It was my first Global Luxury property that I had been interviewed for, so I really wanted the listing. Because it was my first one, I was scared that the sellers wouldn't list with me if I told them my thoughts on the repairs that would need to be done to get it sold. After we listed it, I realized my mistake and told them what I thought needed to be done to get it sold. They didn't agree, and we ended up not selling it due to the property's condition. I think it's been almost a year and a half since the listing expired, and they recently called, agreeing with my suggestions, and we will be putting it back on the market soon.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Social media is definitely my favorite marketing strategy. In sales, you have to be in front of people 24/7. Real estate is different than most sales because of the fact that we don't have a storefront for people to come to; we are the store. In our town, we've got so many agents that everybody has a best friend who's a realtor. Social media gives me the opportunity to have people see my face 24/7, and they'll never forget that I'm an agent.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

The biggest type of adversity that I find right now is saying yes. It's because of the fact that my business is booming, so it's important to not tell people no, or they will find someone else to do it. I don't want to put myself in this corner where I'm only selling a certain type of property. That's the only type of adversity that I'm really seeing right now, and my biggest thing is just saying yes to anything and everything to keep the pipeline flowing.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Do not focus on one transaction but keep as many things as you can in play, so you're constantly working. You don't have to care about that one transaction that doesn't close because of an appraisal or an inspection. If you keep yourself busy enough by always saying yes, you won't have to worry about that transaction because you've gotten other closings that you're already buying closing gifts for.

**Coach's Notes:**

I love how organized Bruce is. I always say that the best system is the one that you will use, and Bruce has clearly figured out at a young age a very productive system that helps him maximize his time and energy. This allows him to balance multiple things at a time and really get the most out of each day.

# BRYAN BURNETT

**Brokerage:** Century 21 Everest

**Age:** 37

**Location:** St. George, Utah

**Years in Business:** 13

**Best Production Year:** 2017—130 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My very first real estate deal was a mobile home. It was my second day on the job. I went out prospecting newspaper ads. I came across a sell by owner. I went out there with a listing contract. I didn't even know how to fill it out and I just signed it. I took it back to the broker, and he changed everything on it. That one sold really quickly.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I wake up at 4:30 a.m. I'm at the gym at 5:00 a.m. I'm done at 6:00 a.m. 6:00 a.m.–6:30 a.m., I'm reading and studying. Out the door at 7:15 a.m. 7:30 a.m., I role-play scripts. At 7:50 a.m., I have an accountability call. By 8:00 a.m., I'm on the phones, all the way through noon. After lunch, I'll meet with staff for just a minute. Lead follow up, prep for listing appointments, afternoon listing appointments, negotiate offers, and then more prospecting if necessary.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

Right now I have thirteen units. I basically started from scratch again five years ago, and I had some hard money loans on the side. We're working on a small land deal.

I didn't start making a lot of money until probably I hit the million-dollar range a couple years ago. So one thing that helps is I take 25 percent of every check and put it toward investments.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I literally fail every single day. There's always something every single day. Most of my failures are I didn't take the listing or I just didn't follow up with a good lead. Or I was busy and for some reason I didn't feel comfortable, and the listing ended.

Usually failures have to do with something regarding my ego. Most of my failures are from me protecting myself from looking stupid, and then I actually end up hurting myself. What I've learned is to not take myself too seriously and just go for gold, don't hold anything back. Don't worry about what people are going to think of you.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Take a great listing at a great price, and get tons of marketing.

Number one, you get lots of buyer calls. Two, all the neighbors are stoked, wondering why it sold so well. And so that homeowner refers you to everyone they know.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I always go back to my roots, my faith, for all adversity. I go to my faith, and then I always look to other people who have been through worse, and then I turn to gratitude. I feel like gratitude conquers everything.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Focus on building a very good database. Very good meaning good people who have all the information. You know their personality styles, you communicate to them, and they want to be communicated to. Treat them like gold.

**Coach's Notes:**

Bryan and I started in the business at the same time, and I have had the chance to watch his career grow over the years. Bryan is truly a beast when it comes to prospecting and making the calls. I can vouch for his morning routine: he is literally on the phones every day from eight till noon finding new business. One of the most impressive things to me about Bryan and this interview is that even though he is thirteen years into the business, he is still role-playing pretty much every morning to get better and better at his skills.



# BRYAN CASELLA

**Brokerage:** EXP Realty

**Age:** 32

**Location:** West Covina, California

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2018—53 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

Cold call that turned into an investment opportunity (fix and flip), that we later relisted and sold as well.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

Time blocking to keep things simple. 5:30 a.m.–8:00 a.m., morning routine (gym, reading, meditation, role-play). 8:00 a.m.–noon, prospecting. Noon–1:00 p.m., lunch/follow-up. 1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m., admin time and more role-play. 3:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m., appointments/more prospecting.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I buy and hold for long-term wealth. Currently four properties in Houston, Texas, and one in Los Angeles. Texas properties were bought via tax deed auction.

## **Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

The one time I lowered my commission with a client, the escrow was a complete disaster and never closed...and I nearly lost my sanity. I learned to always hold to my standards, even if that means walking away from a potential deal.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Active prospecting. I still feel it is one of the best ways overall to not only get business but acquire crucial skills that will help you all around in life.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Everything is a test. “Am I going to pass this and overcome?” is the question that I ask myself.

**What’s one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Stick to the basics and remember there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Many people have succeeded previously, and all you need to do is model them.

**Coach’s Notes:**

My favorite part of this interview was when Bryan was talking about his commission. He has a standard that he doesn’t cut his commission, even if it means losing a deal. The one time he did it was a nightmare for him. I very much believe this is the best way to make sure you are profitable as an agent. If you just make the decision once, you don’t ever need to cut your commission. It is an agent with poor sales skills who cuts his commission. You really don’t need to if you take the time and learn the skills.

# CHASE RACKLEY

**Brokerage:** iRealty Arkansas

**Age:** 27

**Location:** Little Rock, Arkansas

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2017—GCI 411K

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I was recruited into the business to help with marketing for the top racing realtor in Little Rock. He and I met, as he came in to buy a car from me.

We ended up laughing because he was an ultimate negotiator and I was trying to be as well, and he won. He was just really good. I shared my passion with him and he shared his with me. He offered me an opportunity and asked if I was interested in getting into real estate to work with him.

I really don't remember a particular deal that was my first, but I remember doing four or five deals that I shadowed him on. I was learning as much as I could and writing as much as I could to create a log of memories of what he was doing well and what his process looked like. I was so focused on the process, I almost lost sight of focusing on the people.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

We organize our day to key tasks: five things. If I'm not doing one of these five things, I'm probably wasting time and wasting money. GTASC is Generate Leads, Train, Appointments, Showings, and Contracts. We have fifteen what we call Rackley Rules, and one of our Rackley Rules is schedule what you do and do what you schedule.

On our schedules we have each of those five things time slotted. Monday to Thursday we are in the office from 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. generating leads, and typically

from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., we are following up on those leads that are generated. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we do scripts and scripture, so we'll dive into doing scripture role-play and also we'll dive into God's word and try and learn from him too.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I've invested with a builder who has been interested enough to let me give him what felt like all my money just to have five tenants. So very minimal, but I have invested in the construction of one subdivision of about sixteen homes. I honestly made more money off the commission of selling the houses than I did on the equity because the equity was so minimal.

We got a couple of other technically commercial investments because it's buying the land, and we have another commercial investment that we're working on that we may end up converting into an age-restricted community for the baby boomer generation.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I had one client that was going through a divorce and I was primarily connected with the husband, but the wife was the one living at the house that I had listed. I went to this house to get all the marketing materials created. We had a few showings, and one of the things that we do to maximize exposure is do Zillow walk-throughs from the Zillow app. It's algorithm-based, and if you have a walkthrough, it's pretty great.

I did not like talking with this ex-wife because she was just difficult to talk to, so I just set up a showing through the showing service and did not communicate that that's what I was coming to do, so she cleaned up the house as if there was a showing coming. She texted me and said, "Hey, I hear you're coming to show the house." And I said, "Yes ma'am, hopefully we'll get a buyer." And she left, but didn't actually leave. She stayed by and saw that it was just me, and that no one else ever came, and I didn't know that. I didn't even want to have to talk to her about it, so I just went "Showing went great." And she was like "What?" So she thinks, "Who is this guy pretending to show this house like he had just communicated?" I could've just said, "Hey, I'm not really showing the house, I'm technically showing the house to everyone on Zillow...there's a Zillow app...I'm not really bringing a buyer."

I could have explained that. But I really just wanted to avoid having to talk to her. In my mind, it certainly wasn't worth the time. I was dishonest. I had communicated the truth to the husband at first, but she ended up documenting this and sending it to her divorce attorney.

Apparently, she wanted to choose a real estate agent and she didn't get the opportunity to choose, and I lost the listing. More importantly, I lost a sense of integrity and that

really crushed my spirit. The best thing ever happened—I called her and got permission to come back over. I apologized and was honest about what I did.

She was so gracious, she ended up being so understanding and forgiving, and it's actually been kind of a great relationship where now I'll text her and the ex-husband individually anytime I do anything stupid. They've become this source of encouragement. You'll never regret being honest.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

We've done some music videos that have gone semiviral: 160,000 views. To me that's viral. We've been able to do some parody music videos. We change the words to popular songs to make them relevant to real estate and people talk along and they love it. It's a fun way to connect with people.

We've got a few of them that we've done, and that's been super fun. We also do client testimonial videos, and that's a great thing that we've been able to do because we post it on the client's wall on Facebook so all their friends and family see them talking about how great their experience was. They're often excited to share that video.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Pride and integrity over profitability. Relationships above all else.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Relationships above all else. Create value. Be others-focused. Be successful by making others successful. The greatest way to be successful is by making your clients as successful as possible.

One of the things I did before I joined the real estate game was an aptitude test. It told me that I would be most energized and most profitable in one of two industry opportunities, commercial or residential real estate.

Being rocket launched with that encouragement makes that decision and daily grind much more durable and exciting. That's one of our Rackley Rules, to adapt efforts to attitudes. We do what we do well, and we outsource what we don't. That's my encouragement to other millennials as well. Do what you do well and outsource the rest out.

**Coach's Notes:**

I love Chase's energy and passion for being a real estate agent. One side nugget from this interview was how he was discovered by another top producing realtor. I always say that the best new agents for your team as you start to grow it will often be found in your everyday encounters with people in other jobs. Look for talent and then train the talent. I love the acronym GTASC, and that's Generate Leads, Train, Appointments, Showings, and Contracts. What a great way to stay on task and to remember where to put your focus. At one of the first seminars I ever attended as an agent, there was a leader from Century 21 on the stage and I'll never forget him saying, "If it doesn't directly bring in money and someone else can do it as well as you, let them!"

# CHRIS ERDMANN

**Brokerage:** Bellwether Real Estate

**Age:** 40

**Location:** Bellingham, Washington

**Years in Business:** 13

**Best Production Year:** 2016—GCI 700K

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

One of my first deals was selling my parents' house after my father passed away and my mom couldn't afford to keep the house.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I like to get up early, most of the time around 5:30 a.m. I feel like if I'm up before everybody else, I get a head start on the day. I have to drink twenty to forty ounces of water right after getting up. Take a shower, head to the gym. Listen to something inspirational. Go to the gym, and it's a mix between listening to inspirational podcasts to maybe not listening to anything at all and just already kind of doing my networking in one of the places I love to be. I usually start work at 8:00 a.m. from wherever I'm at. Sometimes I will work from my home office at 8:00 a.m. or a little sooner. Or I start at the office. It just depends on what's speaking to me, what area where I feel like I'm going to be the most productive. So, I'm okay with starting at either office. Four days a week, my first meeting starts at 7:45 a.m. and it's a Zoom conference call with my team and inspired by Bill Pike. We start off with gratitude and how would we rate yesterday on a scale of one to ten and why. And then how would we make today a ten.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I own a property management company and we have about a hundred units. We started at zero units this year, and we have about a hundred that we manage. So that's one strategy that I'm getting into, which will help me root into finding more real estate investment properties. I am also a co-founder of Bellwether Real Estate, where I have two full-blown offices and one satellite office.

I only own two properties right now, but my plan is now that I'm debt free, to start purchasing more this year. I'm open to whatever the universe brings to me, so whatever's confronting me, I'm looking at. Right now, I'm looking at a house to divide off another lot. If I get this, there's a three-year plan of having zero mortgage. Next year my plan is to build and sell up to six spec homes. Since I'm debt free, I'm starting to bank my money and basically everything I make is mostly profit. I can start just saving my down payments and start buying apartments.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I'm a high driver. I feel like I can accomplish a lot of things, and I do accomplish a lot of big things.

The downside to that is sometimes, you might know this too, you might fail at something and continue to move forward on the same objective.

I set out to build a big team, and I had a team of between twelve and fifteen people. We were making a lot of money. There were months that we were making close to \$100,000 a month.

On paper, it was a success, but I was just very unhappy with running a big team. I could do it but it just didn't feel right. I wasn't happy. I tried to do it for about three years. I really had to keep pumping a lot of energy into it, but it didn't feel like it was natural.

So after three years, the team crumbled and I'm just like, "This was not worth it, it's not where I wanted to spend my time." I had to reinvent myself again. After three years, I just had to come to terms with the fact that I'm not running the business the way I want, and I wasn't being true to myself and true to the life that I wanted to live.

Yet I still knew I loved real estate, I just didn't want to do it that way. I went on vacation to Asia. I went to Bali and Singapore. Just tried to center myself and came back and I realized, I still love real estate, and I still want to be a high driver. I just don't want to run a big team.

I want to grow my company as far as buying and selling real estate. I just want a small team of three, maybe four people. We're doing that now. After ninety days of getting back into it, we've been way more profitable than having a team of twelve or fifteen.



I think right now we're surpassing \$130,000 in a month. I'm just getting started. I feel like I'm happier, I'm doing business the way I want to do it. I'm able to talk to my clients. Most of my clients are my friends or become my friends. I get more referrals.

I feel like I'm doing the right thing. I feel like I'm going to live a longer, healthier, happier life, more fulfilling. I can go out and play more. Sometimes playing and working is all in one. I go mountain biking with a lot of my clients. Maybe vacation with some of them.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I was spending about six to ten thousand dollars a month on Zillow when I had the team, and I still continued that after. I just decided about three, four months ago to cancel it all.

My marketing budget's very low right now. What works for me in marketing is literally picking up your phone, calling your past clients, calling your friends, and just being genuine to everyone you're on a phone call with. Just finding your way of maintaining or excelling in your friendships and figuring out how to work business in there.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

There's something to learn. If you're facing adversity, I just know there's something to learn.

Last year in August, eleven days before my birthday, I got hit by a car on my motorcycle. Totaled my bike, broke bones, and ended up in the hospital. I had to choose, "What do I have to learn from here?" For me, it's that my life could have ended at that moment. So I spent the next thirty to forty-five days lying down in bed and just realizing that this adversity was here to slow me down to rethink how I want the rest of my life to be. I think when we're faced with adversity, there's obviously something to learn from it.

### **What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Work hard. You have to go in there and know that you get what you give. Going in there and making sure that you're getting up early enough, that you're spending enough hours.

You're making enough phone calls. You're doing enough open houses.

At the end of the day, there's very few deals in the past thirteen years that I've done where I didn't see the person. I would say 99 percent of the transactions that I've done, it's a face-to-face interaction at some point in time.

When I train millennials, a lot of them don't seem to have that battle of going out and having those face-to-face conversations. Or they want the face-to-face conversation and they didn't want to make the phone call. Make that phone call.

**Coach's Notes:**

I found it interesting that Chris was spending so much money on Zillow leads and then he just stopped. I actually did a similar thing a few years back. It sounds great to get these “hot leads,” but as I started to call them, I realized that I actually get more deals per number of calls when I’m simply calling my friends and past clients, or even For Sale By Owners. If Chris teaches us anything, it is to get out and have those face-to-face conversations.

# CHRISTINA ELLIOTT

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Legacy Metropolitan

**Age:** 36

**Location:** Baltimore, Maryland

**Years in Business:** 8

**Best Production Year:** 2017—Volume in Sales 54 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

Just a few weeks after I got my license. A nice young couple that gave me a shot, which I still thank them for, and they bought a townhome in a town called Columbia, Maryland. They definitely knew more than I did during the transaction.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I have two children, and I like to spend my mornings with them. They get out of the house around 9:30 a.m. I get my thoughts together, and I do some of my own personal things. I get into the office around 11:00 a.m. Then we usually have a meeting to start the day, and then usually between noon and 2:00 p.m., I do my lead generating and my tasks that have to get done. Then between 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., I tend to go on appointments and do things like home inspection repairs, client calls, and follow-ups. I try to be home most days by 5:30 p.m.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I own my personal residence, and then we have multiple investment properties. We're actually under contract right now on a short sale that will be an additional property for our portfolio. My husband and I are in business together, and we do feel that real estate is the best return on investment and a great place to invest money. However, we

do other things outside of real estate because we don't want to put all of our eggs in one basket. We don't want our livelihood, our salaries, plus our rental properties, plus our business and our team all heavily invested in real estate. So we do also have some investments outside of real estate and other things that we do. We also own a staging company. That's also very real estate heavy because if the real estate market changes, so will the staging business.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

Early on in building the team, we had a good buyers' agent that really did offer a lot of great qualities. We meshed really well and she was very well-liked. We were going through some growing pains. We were learning what it was like to grow a team, and I think there were certain things that maybe we could've done differently to show our value and prove our worth, and I don't think we were able to do that. So we parted ways. Now I feel like if she had walked into our life later on, we could have really formed a great partnership and really been able to prove our value and prove our culture, and it could have been a great situation. We weren't there yet. We were still learning and growing.

From that failure we have learned about really being able to prove our value to the team and really creating a culture around the team that everybody wants to be a part of so that they don't want to leave, they don't want to go elsewhere, and they want to be a part of what we're doing. Maybe that needed to happen in order for us to grow as leaders and to really realize what is important in growing the team properly.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

We are really, really, really client focused, and we are referral focused, and we put a lot of time and effort into our clients. We do bigger parties and events than anybody that I know. I mastermind and hang out with a lot of the top agents in the area and they will always say to me, "Wow, we saw that event on Facebook, that looked amazing, I wish I was there, that looked so cool." We always say we do it a little bit for us. I just enjoy that part of the business, and that is why I like to be in the business. I like the people aspect of it.

The events are huge, and our clients talk about them for months in advance and months after. This past year we did a VIP wine tour to Virginia wine country, where we took one hundred of our top clients and toured Virginia on a chartered coach. At one vineyard we had lunch, and they went to another vineyard. We provided music and nice takeaways, and they were just pampered all day long. They loved it. It was so much fun, it was our top clients. They told their friends, family, and coworkers about it before they went and after they got back.

I would say our biggest campaign that was our most successful was one of our admin staff, who's actually our director of marketing, was purchasing a home this year for the very first time, and she took advantage of a first-time Maryland home buyer program called SmartBuy 2.0, where the state of Maryland actually paid off all of her student loan debt plus gave her money toward her down payment and closing costs. So she essentially was able to buy a house for zero dollars.

We did a live video, and we have had so many people reach out to us from the live video. People wanted to learn more about it. It was very interactive, and then we did take that video and sponsored that on the team page. That got a lot of views, and a lot of comments, and a lot of reach out. That was our most effective ever. It is just a little harder to re-create when you don't have something that big and exciting happening all the time.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

A lot of the time, I just take a step back and try to be grateful for what I have and think, "I am going to be able to get through this, and I've been very blessed with the opportunities that I've had." I keep my self positive-thinking to get through things. It is very easy in real estate to get really caught up in the emotion of the hard negotiations and the difficult things that come up from time to time. It is really easy to get emotionally involved.

I just have to take a step back and say, "Okay, we are going to get through this, this is all going to be okay, but should this deal fall through or should this situation not work out, we're going to have another opportunity at it, and we are going to have learned from this and do something better with our next opportunity."

Sometimes you just need to think about the path moving forward.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

It's very easy in this industry to be distracted, to be sold things, to be told that technology is taking over. You have to remember the bread and butter of this business is people and they're emotional, and this is not just an investment for them, but where they're going to live, where they're going to raise their family, where they're going to bring a baby home from the hospital. It is so important to keep it relational and keep it client focused and not let all those other distractions try to pull you away from what's important. That's having strong relationships and keeping those clients happy so that it leads to other business.

**Coach's Notes:**

The thing I love about this interview is that Christina doesn't have a grinding early morning schedule like many of the other agents. What she does have is a singular focus on her clients and relationships with them. Because of this focus she is able to control her own schedule and do the important things every day so that her clients still think of her first and hire her as their agent.

# COLE EDWARDS

**Brokerage:** Realty Executives Associates

**Age:** 34

**Location:** Knoxville, Tennessee

**Years in Business:** 12

**Best Production Year:** 2018—72 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My very first real estate deal was one that another realtor didn't want to take the time to do because it was a tough client, and he gave him to me; and it was a \$159,000 house. I sold it in two weeks.

I think he made it out to be too hard, and I was thinking, "You know what, this is... We're going to make this work."

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I try to book out time to meet for lunch, coffee, or meetings, and on my physical meetings, I try to do either breakfast, midmorning, or midafternoon. I have those in place, and then I form my office time around that. I set my appointments first face-to-face, break bread kind of things, and then I'll be in the office around those appointments. I'll make calls in the afternoon. People are more optimistic and they have more time to talk in the afternoon than in the morning. They're usually getting their workday taken care of in the morning.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

The first eight or nine years of my career, I just invested any excess money and savings into the brand. And what did that mean? That was investing, whether it was T-shirts,

cups, or commercials. Any kind of branding is what I would reinvest in, and it just helped grow my business like a tree.

I used to flip homes, but it takes so much time, especially in this hot market. It's so competitive with low inventory, it's just not lucrative. In a down market, it would be more lucrative.

I've got one rental home, and I'm really picky. I almost got another one, but I started a moving company last year. That took a lot of time too. I have a constant pipeline of not only my clients, but I didn't realize all the other realtors that were thrilled to send our company business.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I was thinking about all the homes I've listed over the years, "How many homes did I fail at selling that I listed?" Only four or five, and it was all because I overpriced. Most of those times were because I knew the seller very well, and I was trying to allow them to list at the price they wanted to instead of what I felt was the market price. Which ended up being true, but after that, I don't ever overlist a property. At the end of the day, no one's going to be happy. You're not going to get the sale, and the seller is not going to be happy with you, and if you're friends, it's still not good. That's probably the failure that I would hate the most.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I don't do internet leads at all. What I do is: I fully invest in my client, my past broker business, to people that are already my walking and talking billboards. I invest in people that love the Cole Edwards brand, and know me and trust me, and want to send me business.

I invest in keeping those relationships close to me, that way I'm always top of mind for them because it's so easy for people to find a realtor. You don't have to stay involved too long, but I do because I care about them, and I want to be close to them. By default, they will stay close to you and they want your business. It's a beautiful thing. You get to have friendships and relationships, and then your friends will fill your pipeline for you.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I played sports growing up, I'm a committed person, and I love to rise up to a challenge. I don't like to back down, but I like to sit back and think about it, and not react to the emotion, but to think with wisdom and logic, and how can I go about solving this problem. There's almost always a way to solve a problem. I love to take on a challenge.



**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Your next lead or relationship could be right in front of you, anywhere you're at. I've sold houses to my dental hygienist, the people at the bank, to servers. You never know who you're talking with, and if you genuinely invest in the person right in front of you, a lot of times they'll pan out and you don't even realize it, even if it's years later.

**Coach's Notes:**

Cole's attitude toward problems is so valuable to his success. He talks about taking the emotion out of it and thinking logically for a solution. I always say, "There are two types of people in this world. Those that say 'I can't' and those that say 'How can I?' and I just always try to be the latter."

# DARREN LANGILLE

**Brokerage:** Redline Real Estate Group

**Age:** 37

**Location:** Calgary, Alberta, Canada

**Years in Business:** 11

**Best Production Year:** 2016—67 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I got into the business as an investor first. When I got into this, it was because I actually didn't trust realtors. My first deal would have been an acquisition for myself, as my business partner and I were building our portfolio.

It's probably a home we bought and put a basement suite into because we were vying for cash flow. This was back in the days when Calgary's market was doing well, and there were a lot of upsides to that.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

When I started in real estate, I needed some structure. I kind of ran the business in a very chaotic and random way. I now do a Sunday night business planning session. I get all of the key items that I need to hit for the week to make sure they are front and center. Then I will book my entire week out with time blocks for my most important things first. I start the morning with something that is going to energize me for the day and call it my "slingshot." Whatever is going to slingshot to pull back harder will get me fired up into the day.

I am very regimented around a power block for business development in the morning. A chunk of time is set aside for prospecting and following up with my leads, but I'm not doing as much sales personally anymore because of my role. That's kind of the structure I have on a daily basis, and then again, a little bit further into the day are things

that don't require my willpower as much. Such things as active client business, setting up CMAs, setting up the logistics and admin, all things that don't require as much brain and willpower I leave for further in the day.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I've been through it all now. We originally did a lot of buying and holding, this included single-family properties; we have owned half-duplexes with basement suites, side-by-side duplexes, four-plexes, the type of stuff that cashflows, including all the way up to multifamily apartments. Along the way we've done all of it. We've also gone into land assembly where we will buy something, strategically parcel a few together, either go through a rezoning or just now benefit from having stronger frontage to be able to sell back a bigger parcel to the developer, not risking the development side of things.

We have almost gotten rid of most of the original stuff that I started buying back in 2005, early in my career, and we've kept the multifamily stuff and strategic land assemblies. We just know better. We know how we can parcel a few things together that will be valuable to a developer and position it that way for sale.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I'm failing all the time. I run a real estate brokerage, I run a mortgage company, and I run a property management company. We also had our investment portfolio and a renovation company. We did this strategically to help our clients.

If they bought with us, sometimes they needed a mortgage, sometimes they needed a manager, sometimes they needed a renovator. That was the fifth arm of our company, and we did it just to position to help them. But what we realized was that this was a business that we had no place being in. Our leadership, our group of people. We wanted to service our clients but we got overstretched, went further down the rabbit hole than we should have and ended up losing a whole bunch of money as a result because we didn't have the right people in to provide an expertise that I didn't have. We thought we were invincible and we could pull it off. Not for cash but just because we wanted to serve clients.

That business failed hugely. I remember my biggest year in real estate, having to pay off the losses from that renovation company fail where we just overstretched and had the wrong people doing something. That was a nice lesson to learn because that year, I didn't take any of that profit home.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I think the best strategy that I've pulled together was the fact that we've been able to blend traditional marketing with the new age mindset. Take the best of the old and tweak it with today. We layer that in with strong social media and digital marketing. So you have this trifecta, a three-pronged approach between traditional, digital, and social. Each one of those alone can create amazing separation points between you and your competition, but when you pull the trifecta together, you have a blend that is your sophisticated marketing. It is really what is able to set us apart when I'm in presentations against top agents, and top agents from big brands, which we are not. We are an independent brand, and we have always had to fight harder because we are the David and not the Goliath.

We do a ton of social media. One of my partners is a social media expert, and as far as the specific strategies that have worked, right now we are all-in on video. We've taken on expenses that most agents haven't in terms of how much video content we'll put out there to create engagement.

We ended up getting our agents in front of the camera and coupling this with the client's message, this as a strategy to tell a success story rather than just the house and all the sales numbers, which is what most agents do—in my opinion, that kind of marketing is only relevant to two people: the seller and you.

So it's come from this value-based marketing inside a very technical solution like social. It has made the phone ring.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

When it gets hard, this is when I know my competition drops off. Every new hurdle that I've hit, I know others are hitting it also. It could be the market, it could be the government policy or rule changes. I get my fuel knowing that when I get past this point, figure out how to get past the hurdle, I've now left another 20 percent in the dust. And then I go again and I hit that next hurdle and it hurts, but now I've left more people behind that last wall because they couldn't get over it. It's the mindset to me to push through, knowing only so few will, that fires me up.

And then what happens is, when you part through those trees, or climb that big hurdle, you are in uncharted waters. You're in your own blue ocean. That's something I just see, almost physically. I mentally see myself climbing that ladder and others falling off. And it's so freeing because you're saying, "I'm moving ahead and I'm getting stuff done." Others haven't figured it out and gave up too easily.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

When you're into this business, you feel like you need to learn it all.

You feel like you've got so much ground to make up over those that have been in the business longer than you and already at the top of the field. We get stuck in this perpetual learning or perpetual business development mode, and you feel like you have to perfect it or get so confident before you get out there and actually do something.

I have so many agents in my brokerage that are young, and that are crushing it because they don't allow the fact that they don't know it all prevent them from getting into these luxury real estate conversations. They open their mouths rather than sitting behind a desk and overthinking it. They attack before they learn it all, and they don't get stuck watching endless YouTube videos on how to knock on doors.

They just go out and do it. I think that's one of the most important things. It's about getting into real estate conversations. The rest you will learn and pick up faster by doing.

**Coach's Notes:**

My favorite part of Darren's business is the three-pronged approach of digital, social, and traditional. I teach a lot of agents how to use Instagram and Facebook to get leads and close deals, but I still have more success using good old-fashioned methods to obtain clients and leads. It is important not to go too heavy on one at the expense of the others but to always be trying to grow and improve in all three areas.

# DIANA MATICHYN

**Brokerage:** Coldwell Banker

**Age:** 26

**Location:** Barrington, Illinois

**Years in Business:** 4

**Best Production Year:** 2017—62 Units—GCI 440K

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was an expired listing. I tried to get a client many different ways based on how an old-school brokerage thinks you should: do open houses, sit at the office (which never works), referrals from other agents (where it never panned out). They then mentioned calling expired listings. But they didn't mention how to do it, so I started watching a lot of people on YouTube. I ended up watching this guy, Deric Lipski, and how he handled the calls. English is not my first language, and I wasn't as good at English as I am now. I basically wrote down every single word he said and I just learned it, and from my prior calls, I said the exact same thing. That was my first call. I think I spent two hours on the phone. I got one appointment and I went to it and they signed right away and then I sold it in a month, so it was really awesome.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I have one-year-old twins, so organizing the day can be hard. No matter what I do during the day, in the morning I'm going to spend time on the phone and my goal is to reach at least ten people a day. Those ten people are usually expired listings.

Around 8:00 a.m., I start calling expired listings, then follow up with For Sale by Owners. Later on I go into appointments and have lunch, and the day is curved wherever it takes me. The main part of my workday that never changes is my phone calls in the morning.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

My portfolio. That's a funny question. It's a funny question to ask because I'm still a renter.

If I were an investor, I would be investing in multifamily buildings.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I take everything to heart. I'm a very expressive person, so everything that happens to me, I take it to heart and I feel like a failure. The big thing is when you make calls and nothing really comes after that. And you make calls and make calls and don't really schedule any appointments or it's very hard to reach people and I would just give up and say, "You know what? Today is not meant for me. Today is going to be a sucky day. I'm just going to leave it as is, and I'm going to take a day off." So I would just give up right away, and that was just me being scared that I'm going to feel like a failure.

If I put out this energy out there, if I put out the effort and the energy of me wanting the business, it will come. Not being desperate for it, but wanting the business. It's going to come to me either way. You can call for five days and not get anybody and then on the sixth day, you get all these people calling back.

So that was my big lesson that I learned. It helped me through my best times and my worst times.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Seventy percent of my business is expired listings. The rest, all I do is go and print out my own previews. I preview the listing to see if they match any of my buyers, and if they don't, I just stay in touch with the sellers. I convert a lot of those, but as far as marketing goes, I really don't believe in doing the billboards or spending a lot of money in the magazines. I don't believe it works. I was not born in this country, and I don't know a lot of people here, so I just don't think they would recognize me and call me up. I think the best strategies are just the easiest ones, and they don't take any money.

I started being more persistent in my advertising not just myself, but also video advertising. I do market updates, I do video drivebys of the areas. I post things here and there of what I see. I go live at unique, very cool houses to show my clients and show my friends. That's been through social media, and I do it myself.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

To keep on going because it's not always going to be like this. Everything is going to change. If it's a good time, it's going to change. If it's a bad time, it's also going to change.

Because there are many times when you feel like you're failing. After maternity leave, it was really hard to get back to business. My confidence was shaken and my communication skills weren't there. I just felt like a failure at that point.

I was just like, "You know what, I'm going to continue working and doing my calls. I don't even care how I sound. Even if it sounds terrible, somebody out there is going to like me and my business, and then I'll get better and better and better. Since then, I've done great and I'm back to where I was. Even better. So if you put your energy out there with an open heart, everything's going to happen. The universe is going to reward the effort that you put in. You are grateful to the universe and then the universe responds to that and gives more.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Anytime someone asks me how many years I've been in the business and I say four years, they're like, "Oh my gosh, you're so young!" I look very young. I say, "Listen, this is good! You can hire me because of that. I'm young. I'm energetic. I have all the strategies that can help you, and I also am on top of everything." Most local agents are very set in their own ways. They've been doing business the same way for twenty years and they still do that, and they're not as excited about the business.

Not all of them are as excited about a new property or a new client to help them because they've been doing it for so many years, so it's just another property to them. This is a good advantage that we have. It's your first year in the business and you haven't sold many houses yet, but you actually have a huge advantage over everybody else because you're just more excited. You're going to work your hardest for those buyers, and they will appreciate that.

**Coach's Notes:**

I love Diana's message about the energy you put into the universe. I strongly believe that if you just keep putting out positive energy, good things come and find you. But the opposite is also true; you really need to share gratitude for all of it, and the universe will respond and give you exactly what you need.



# DOUG EDRINGTON

**Brokerage:** Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices J Douglas Properties

**Age:** 34

**Location:** Chattanooga, Tennessee

**Years in Business:** 13

**Best Production Year:** 2017—491 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My very first real estate deal happened to be my own personal house. I say personal house because of the investment. At eighteen years old, I bought my first home for about \$40,000. It was a flip. I had early influence in high school, helping a buddy's dad that had a bunch of rental properties.

My grandma cosigned on a loan with me. My mom and dad helped me get a Lowe's credit card. And I bought my first house at eighteen and then sold it as a licensed agent. My parents decided to get their license after I bought a house. I sold it for, I want to say, \$87,000 and made a little bit of money on the flip.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I like to think of organizing my year first, for as far out as I can think. I like to work it backward. Vacation goes on my calendar first. Days off go on my calendar second. Date night, if you want to call it that. Evenings off go on my calendar third. I like to call it "cave time." Cave time is when you go to the cave and no one can reach you and you work on your business, not in your business. That goes on my calendar next. Then team commitments. Then prospecting, then appointments.

That's my order of importance annually. But on a day-to-day basis, I'm out of production. Even though I'm prospecting, I'm prospecting under a recruiting mindset. Monday through Thursday my day is full of meetings with our department heads. Our marketing

department, our client services department (which is like transaction), coordination, listing manager, our director of sales aka sales manager, and lead ISAs. I've got five ISAs on a team. This year I opened up our own brokerage, so Berkshire Hathaway J Douglas Properties is a brokerage that my family and I own, that I'm CEO over. I also work with our team leaders. So I'm running a team and a brokerage. I work those team leaders and individual agents from the brokerage. In addition to that, I'm a coach for Tom Ferry. All of that goes in Monday–Thursday. Fridays, no reoccurring schedules of any sort because that is there for me to have the random meetings that are important, to squeeze things in, or go have a three-day weekend.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I've had rental properties in the past, no more than three at a time. I liquidated everything so I could purchase the building that I'm in. I just bought a 12,000 square foot building in the heart of Chattanooga across from the most popular city park on the river. It's a \$3 million venture which is big for Chattanooga, Tennessee.

I did have one rental house that I kept. The goal is just to grow it back up again. There's no doubt about it.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I opened up an expansion team in Nashville, Tennessee, and had it open for one year. I guess the question is: define failure. I was determined to open up an expansion team because I wanted to chase the higher price point. I felt that the structure I built with our team in Chattanooga was a great hub and all we needed was salespeople in different places.

I built a good relationship with the Berkshire Hathaway in Nashville. I went up to them and said, "Hey, I want to plan an expansion team in Nashville." They said, "Cool, let's do it." We recruited four agents.

I got an apartment in Nashville. I traveled biweekly. I had my sales director travel biweekly. Each agent had a mentor from Chattanooga that also traveled, at some point in time, biweekly. So three to four people, biweekly, were going up there, and we set ourselves up via webinar style for all of our trainings from Chattanooga to try to connect it as one. I had an event in Nashville where I brought the whole Chattanooga team up to try to help bond the culture, which was an awesome event.

In the end, though, the challenge that I dealt with was having a culture of an expansion team and another brokerage that didn't support the culture of the home team. It was two different cultures. And the challenge that I really ran into was, I know that it worked because we produced, we made money. We sold thirty-one houses at an average

price point of \$470,000, which was pretty awesome compared to our \$200,000 price point in Chattanooga.

But it came down to one day where I had two of the four agents go run solo because they felt like they weren't getting enough attention from us. And the other two I had a heart-to-heart conversation with, and I knew that they were on the fence a little bit too. So I said, "Look, what is it that we've got to do?" And they wanted another leader.

At the same time, timing worked out really well. They just wanted more of me, or more of the leadership, let's put it that way. They wanted more leadership. And the truth was we were actually giving Nashville more attention than we were Chattanooga. We were overextending on it. But they just didn't see it that way. I didn't have anyone in Nashville that I felt was appropriate to be a leader, and I had nobody in Chattanooga willing to relocate to Nashville. This all just so happened to be around the same time that we were thinking about opening up our own brokerage. So I decided it's probably smart to call this one a lesson, back off of Nashville, and focus on Chattanooga while we grow our brokerage, which is our baby, and revisit the team later on.

The biggest lesson learned from it is you cannot have an expansion team unless you send a leader there.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

You know those recording info hotline signs that were becoming really popular? What I learned is that those types of signs were conditioning our consumers to not call the agent but to call the info sign. And if they liked the information that they heard, then maybe they would call you or call their own agent. I think that was doing damage to the art of the sale. Yes, for getting information out quickly because agents don't answer phone calls. But at the same time, we can't put them that close.

So what I decided to do was create my own sign. We're the Edrington team. And the Edrington team we shortened to the E-Team locally because the Edrington team was kind of hard to say at first. We created the E-Team info hotline, and I just got another cellphone, called the bat phone, and I put it in the ISA's in place. People would call it all day long. I always knew when they called off the info hotline sign because they would stutter. And they'd say, "Sorry, I think I got the wrong number." And I'd be like, "Nope. You got the info hotline. I'm your info guy. How can I help you?" We generated so much business from that. We always knew when it was seller opportunity because if it was after 8:00 p.m. at night, that was people coming home from work, curious about what their neighbor's house is priced at. I can't tell you how many houses we listed from phone calls that I answered at 10:00 p.m. because I was awake and I answered it, and it was the neighbor curious to see what it was.

That trick still works today. I still do that.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I can always go back and sell houses. When facing adversity, I think it's important to just think of: what's the worst thing that could happen? And I know that I'm capable of selling a lot of houses if I had to go be an agent on somebody else's team.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

I would hire a coach before you even choose the company or team that you're going to work for.

And I'd highly recommend that you go to a team. On top of that, remember that nobody cares where you work or what team you work for. They care about the service you can provide them. Stop worrying about the image and the brand you're going to build and hire a professional coach to help you join the right team so you can learn the basics. Then you have all the options in the world because you're now worth something because you came from the number one team in town, and everybody wants you.

**Coach's Notes:**

Doug has done it all, and he has some amazing insight that other agents just simply don't have yet. I love his advice to join a team or get a coach. When I first got into real estate, I was lost in terms of what to do and how to find business. My first six months I think I sold four or five houses, and I was dead broke. I hired a coach through Mike Ferry, and I learned everything my broker wasn't teaching me. By the end of the year I had closed over sixty properties, and I've never looked back. One of the reasons I co-produced this book with Bill Pipes is because Bill was the speaker in the first-ever Mike Ferry event I attended. He was so good at his job that he convinced me to pay \$12,000 that I didn't have to hire a full-time coach. It was the best decision I ever made.

# DWANNA STANLEY

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty

**Age:** 36

**Location:** Jackson, Mississippi

**Years in Business:** 4

**Best Production Year:** 2018—38 Units—Volume in Sales 5 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

September 2013 for \$80,000. I had just gotten my real estate license, and one of the ladies from my church told me that her son wanted to buy a house and she wanted to give me my first deal. It went actually too smoothly, because I was new at the time and I didn't know what I was doing, so I didn't really understand how to be a real estate agent. So it was kind of weird, and when I got to the end, I was like, "Wait a minute, what just happened?"

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

Before I leave my house, the first thing in the morning I make sure of is that I know exactly how my day is going to go. I time block everything—even if I have to go pick up my daughter, it's on my calendar. I'm a firm believer that if it isn't on my calendar, it doesn't exist. I just think it keeps me sane, for one, and it keeps me organized, and it keeps me from running around like a chicken with my head cut off.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I own a couple of rental homes. Right now I am looking into flipping homes. I get a lot of clients who are approved between the \$80,000 and \$100,000 range, and I really cannot find anything decent for them to purchase. So my ultimate goal with investing in

real estate is to find houses and flip those houses so that these people who get approved for low amounts actually have a nice, decent place to live. I'm hiring one of my contractors to do that.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

My second year, I sold two houses. I had so many people coming to me who literally could not get approved for mortgages.

I had this girl who wanted to get approved for a mortgage and I just sent her over to a lender, and she didn't get approved and she was devastated. "My credit score was 638; I don't understand, why not?" Wait a minute. What that prompted me to do was to learn as much as I could about credit approval and learn as much as I could about every single mortgage the state offers in Mississippi because she was two points off from being approved from this program that we have in the state. And the lender didn't tell her, "Okay, if you do this to get those two points, then you would qualify." It was a wake-up call for me, and I sat there and thought about how many people that I sent to a lender who didn't get approved. So I listed every single client that I had that year, called them back, and sat down with them in a buyer's consultation. I ended up finding this Credit Score Compass where they can get their credit scores for a dollar, and we went through their credit scores, and I let them know exactly what they needed to do in order to increase their scores to get approved for a mortgage.

It was a turning point in my business. I really don't have to do a lot of advertising because those people, people that I helped like that, they're my biggest cheerleaders. I get so many referrals. Those fifteen people, I feel like I failed them as an agent by just sending them to a lender, and I was able to turn it around and to really change my business.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Buyer's consultation. At my home buyer's seminars, there's not a lot to advertise and sell. This is not an event where you come to solicit business; we're here to simply educate. I'm always having twenty to thirty people attend them. Later they call me and say, "Hey, I just got approved for a mortgage; I'm going to go start looking." My next question is, "This your first time purchasing a home?" They say, "Yeah." I say, "Okay, come in, sit down, and have a buyer's consultation." People don't understand that even if you are prequalified for a mortgage, it's not worth the paper that it's printed on. And I learn everything I possibly can about my client. Make sure their taxes are filed right, that you have the W-2s or you're going to have these upfront fees that you're going to have to pay. I deal with a lot of lower income people, and they don't understand.

They don't understand you have to have earnest money, you still have to have appraiser's money, you still have to have home inspection money. Sometimes it takes me putting them on a budget for months and keeping up with them, making sure they have this money, and that they understand what you can't do during the home buying process.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I keep a social media class in our market center and I just turn it to my personal Instagram page.

I have over 13,000 followers. None of my pages are private. And you shouldn't put anything out there in social media, accessible to the world, where you have to have a private page and lose deals off this business. The second week of June, in five days, I closed on \$968,000 in real estate, and I ran the train from social media. I'm big on branding myself. I'm very positive with the content that I spit out and really hands-on with the marketing, and I approve every single thing before my admin puts it out. I only use professional photos.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I just have to bring myself back to the reason that I'm doing it. The reason why I'm doing it now, not the reason why I started, because I started out to get money. That kind of keeps me going because I get tired sometimes. I just bring myself back to this one: it's not about you; it's about these families, and that keeps me motivated.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Get with a company. The first question that you need to ask when you're interviewing brokerages is about their training. Don't focus too much on their commission slip because zero percent of zero closes is zero. I mean, deal with a company that at least focuses on training, and the money will come.

**Coach's Notes:**

I love the strategy here to do full buyer presentations and to hold seminars to educate the buyers. More and more real estate agents are going to become advisors and educators to help clients through the real estate process. On my team we have begun the process of setting up a one-on-one with all of our clients every six months to review their real estate investing strategy and to help them build their portfolios. I believe this is the future of the business in many regards.

# DYLAN HOFFMAN

**Brokerage:** Compass

**Age:** 48

**Location:** New York, New York

**Years in Business:** 17

**Best Production Year:** 2015—146 Units—Volume in Sales \$138 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

Everyone gets a start doing a rental. I convinced this owner to give me an open listing and I put it on Craigslist, and this person called me, I showed the property, and she wanted it. But she had one contingency: to paint a different mural over a mural that was in the alcove area of the studio. And that particular mural happened to be the owner's, and she didn't want to get rid of it. So, she's like, "No, I don't want to do that." It's my first week on the job, I'm kind of like, "I don't know what to do now, how do I rectify this, how do I bring these two people to an agreement?" I gave the phone over to my manager, thinking, "I'll learn something, right? I'll learn how to broker a deal." He talked to both sides and said, "Uh-huh, yeah, okay," and then put the phone back on hold and said, "Deal's dead, just show her something else." And I'm like, "What? What? No, no, no! It's my first deal! You know I can't, come on!" So I ran back to the phone, picked it up, and commenced to brokering \$100 off the asking price. It was a \$1,600 rental, and she agreed to take \$100 off the asking price, and the woman agreed to take the apartment and keep the mural.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I'm pretty methodical in my day, to be honest with you. Right when I get up in the morning, which is 5:00 a.m., I hit the snooze button until about 5:08 a.m. It's pretty precise. That gives me enough time to use the restroom and then lay down on a mat that



I've already laid out the night before. I lay on that with my legs up and do deep breathing and think about my day. I don't envision my day or anything, I do just the opposite. I empty out my brain, do deep breathing, and if I find myself thinking about something else, I just bring it back to my breathing. I have a set timer on my iPhone.

I head to the gym and I do thirty minutes on the elliptical. I hit the shower at the gym and then I'm at home around 6:30 a.m. or 6:40 a.m. My wife is still sleeping, but the kids are up. A two-year-old and four-year-old in their room playing, waiting for Daddy to get home. So I feed them and chill out with my kids, and then I go to the subway around 7:30 a.m. and get to the office around 8:00 a.m.

I plan my day out in half-hour increments. 8:00–8:30 a.m. every day is role-play. 8:30–10:00 a.m. every day, prospect. 10:00–11:00 a.m., I work on the deals I have pending. 11:00–11:30 a.m., I have a meeting with my assistant to go over his to-do list that's ongoing. 11:30–12:30 p.m., I answer emails and put out some fires. 12:30–1:00 p.m., I usually get lunch, and then the rest of the day, I have an appointment here, this there, that there.

I'm usually done by 5:30 p.m., maybe 6:30 p.m., and I'm home by 7:00 p.m. And that's it. I try to get everything done at work.

Like, when I get home, I like to unplug and just enjoy my family. Because the kids are asleep by 8:30–9:00 p.m., I only have a couple more hours with them. If I do need to reconnect, around 9:00 p.m. I'll hop back online, finish up, answer some emails.

### **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

My overall investment strategy is “would you live there?” And usually it's no, so I don't invest. If it's yes, then I invest, and maybe I live there for six months or longer between places.

I currently have two apartments, a one-bedroom in a fourth-floor walk-up in Hell's Kitchen—I'm keeping it until my kids go to college, so hopefully it's an up market and I can sell it and help pay for college—and then secondly, we have a two-bedroom, and my wife and I live there with my two kids.

### **Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I don't know if it was a failure, but I was having a pitch, everything was hunky-dory, and then we got the price and the seller and I were arguing about price. He had it on for \$690,000, and he didn't accept \$670,000. And then the old broker lowered to \$665,000. Had four offers at \$650,000. Didn't accept anything. He's like, “Where would you list it at?” I said \$650,000, and he's like, “What? I wouldn't accept \$650,000.” I was like, “Are you kidding me, dude? What do you think about the market value of this property?”

Sixty-five or greater, are you kidding me?”

“No, I’m not kidding you.”

“How many offers did you get at six-fifty?”

“Four.”

“What’s the market value of your property?”

“Six sixty-five.”

“Okay.”

So that was either a failure on my part because I didn’t take it at \$665,000, or a win on my part because I didn’t take a crazy seller. I don’t know. But I wonder.

Mistakes and setbacks are stepping stones to my success. And I say that to myself from 89th street on the 1 Train all the way down to 14th street. By the time I get to my office, I’ve said it a trillion times, and I say it with a big smile on my face. That’s some Dale Carnegie stuff for you right there.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Emails are for pussies. Pick up the phone and have a conversation. Do phone calls and meet some people on the phone, and go to their property and meet them. I mean, I understand it’s all about social media. But the only way real estate is going to stay relevant for brokers and not go the social media route is because of our personality. People want to be sold to. They want to be educated by human beings.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Adversity comes in clumps. Like when something goes wrong, it seems like a lot of things are going wrong—like, this deal falls through, or this thing falls through, I didn’t get that listing, or this person won’t reduce the price—they seem to come in clusters. So one thing I fall back on is a mantra, and I know it sounds really dumb, but they’re really helpful. And they put a big, big smile on your face when you say, “Every day and every way I’m more and more successful.”

You walk from your apartment to the gym and back, and you say that a lot of times with a big smile on your face, you feel so good about yourself and all the problems seem to just melt away. They’re still there, but you have a better frame of mind for solving them.

### **What’s one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

The person to person is a strong strategy to do, but if it makes you uncomfortable, you should do it more. Just to get out more and meet more people. In the setting of your choice. Whether you’re more comfortable with cold calls, or if you’re more comfortable

throwing parties for your clients, or you're more comfortable meeting people at the gym, just get out and meet people.

**Coach's Notes:**

So simple but so effective, pick up the phone and have a conversation! The one reason I have never worried about being replaced by technology or by a younger generation is because I love to pick up the phone and talk to people. I love to go out and talk to friends and strangers and sell them on real estate. Oftentimes I get asked by a buyer or seller why I am the best choice to work with. My answer is simple: "Real estate is the ultimate sales process, and I will help sell the home better than anyone else. I am a true salesman, and I can help keep this deal together and help a deal come together simply because I can sell better than others. Don't believe others when they say you don't need a salesperson to help you; you need the best salesperson out there." We can't forget that we are powerful salespeople and that is a huge advantage we bring to our clients.

# EDNA KIMBLE

**Brokerage:** Century 21 Wright Real Estate

**Age:** 50

**Location:** Tahlequah, Oklahoma

**Years in Business:** 16

**Best Production Year:** 2017—220 Units—Volume in Sales 30 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

A standard three-bedroom, two-bathroom home. I was working floor time and answering the phone; somebody randomly called.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I'm a "miracle morning" person. I start with the 5:00 a.m. club, and then I am a body, mind, soul person, so I like to do some yoga. I do the 5:00 a.m. call, read, and do a little bit of meditation. And then I try to be in the office by 7:30 a.m. and get all of the paperwork and the calls that I don't want to do out of the way first.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

My personal strategy would be to buy low and hang on to them. We have fifteen rentals. We are in a college town, so we feel like the prices will just increase.

## **Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I missed out on an opportunity to work with an investor simply because I was intimidated and failed to follow up with him. He took it more that I just was not that interested in working with him. Number one rule: Always follow up.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

My personal branding. “Edna Sells” is my tagline, and I have all of my clients take a photo with a sign that says, “Edna Sells.” Social media is huge in our market, but I would say that my spin on social media is getting the client to give me the social proofs. For example, when they take the photo with the “Edna Sells” sign, and then they post it and share it, and then people are saying, “Oh, that’s great, you bought a house,” and they’re like, “Yes, Edna’s fantastic.” That brings more clients than any other marketing you can do.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I have a mantra when I’m feeling kind of stressed, and it’s “Versatility is one of my outstanding traits.” I just try to work through the problem and know that every problem is just basically a new way to learn.

**What’s one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Take care of your clients, and they will take care of you. Ninety percent of my business is repeat and referral, so if you take the client’s needs above your own and then really take care of that client and make it a personal connection, then you’re going to get ten additional deals out of that, rather than turn and burn.

**Coach’s Notes:**

When I was still very young in the business, I was at a retreat with Top Producers, and one of them was giving a lesson on how to relate to your clients. He said, “The number one trait you can have in this business and in life is versatility.” I’ll never forget that. The ability to adapt to a variety of people in a variety of situations. I have worked hard ever since that day to try and put myself in situations where I have to be versatile. Instead of taking a date to the NBA game, I take her to the opera or symphony. Instead of watching the war movie, watch the documentary about farming or the history of Greece. This has allowed me to relate and adapt to so many more types of people, and to this day, it is some of the best advice I’ve ever received.

# ERIC CRUMBAKER

**Brokerage:** CG Realtors

**Age:** 35

**Location:** Claremont, California

**Years in Business:** 6

**Best Production Year:** 2014—125 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My best friend was looking to buy a house the moment I got my license. I ended up selling him his first property. My very next sale was his parents' property, and that was my first listing. It was all within a two-month period.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I organize my day the day before. Usually, my calendar is set up a month ahead of time, if not weeks ahead of time. I'll also fill in any last-minute appointments that I need to do.

When I start on a Monday, I know what my routine is. I wake up in the morning. I do a quick ten-minute meditation. I go to the gym. I listen to an Audible book on the way to the office. I've already known what I've had to set up for the day. I just tackle what's already in my calendar. I have prospecting at 9:30 a.m. I'm doing less on the sales side and more on the recruiting side. I meet with my team. Then lunch. Then I have meetings with other agents on my team to help them succeed where their voids are.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

Buy real estate. People think prices are high. But you know what? Rates are low. So, I would hate the alternative of rates being high with lower prices. That's going to hurt

people in the long run. We do a lot of Airbnbs right now. My fiancé and I manage seven to eight Airbnbs that she manages on a day-to-day basis. Buy and hold, buy and rent, and short-term leases are my strategies for my clients.

Personally, I own a property. I own my personal residence. I have two flips right now that are in my name that I'm flipping over in a city next to me. I like to do a lot of flips myself. I wouldn't say I'm like Jessie Rodriguez, but I like to do a flip every three months.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I fail on a daily basis. I fail forward. Last year I lost my entire team. My whole team imploded on me. I grew too fast in 2015, and I went from four really good producing agents that were the heart of my team, all doing about \$8 million in volume apiece. I really wanted to expand, so I brought on eight brand new agents at once. All brand new to the industry. Didn't really vet them well enough. I just wanted licensed agents, so that was probably my first mistake.

I was investing too much time on the eight new people, and I forgot about the other four people that were already producing business. And within three or four months, I lost the four agents that were on my team because they didn't feel they were valuable enough. And then, the other eight that I brought on eventually all dwindled off themselves, which left me with nobody.

And I went through, for three or four months, just an internal learning period trying to see what went wrong. I didn't really want to do it all over again yet because I really needed to figure out what I didn't see or what decisions I didn't do correctly. So this year, we're actually going full-fledged forward with a new team again, bringing on the right individuals. The right people to the team.

Really focusing all on culture, even though culture was what we focused on before. I just lost sight of what true culture meant.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I don't care what anyone says. I will mark my name down. I was the one that first found out about Facebook leads, Facebook online advertising, and used it that way. It was back in 2013. I was in Commissions Inc. It was right when they launched Commissions Inc. It was before Boomtown really got created, and I was just full-on with Commissions Inc. And they told me, "Hey, by the way, we have this new program. You can try to mess around with advertising." And Facebook advertising didn't really exist yet.

So what I did was I randomly took the link from Commissions Inc., and I posted it into my post on Facebook, and I hit enter. And what that did, it popped up a field where you could put your address in. It was like, "Do you want to know the price of

your property?” And I hit send, put it on my Facebook. And within twenty-four hours, we had two hundred addresses inserted into our database. And within the weekend, we had like three hundred, four hundred, or it was even close to five hundred addresses, and we only had three people on the team, so it was just way too much. It was too much of an overload. I didn’t even know what to do. In all reality, I don’t even think I converted any of them because it was just so much. We didn’t even know what to do.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

In the case of adversity, just step away from the problem and readdress it at another time, so you can think about different avenues to tackle it. Patience is a really big one with adversity. I think all things work out in the end if you have patience and if you make the right decisions.

**What’s one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

You just need to be in it for the long haul. Do not get into real estate for the quick buck. Get into real estate for the career to help people and to inspire others and to build yourself up and realize it’s a real business. Maintain consistency over a long period of time, knowing that you’re going to sell a million times over.

And at the end of the day, realty is not for everybody. And that’s for every person to decide when they face that moment in time when they question whether they should be in the business.

**Coach’s Notes:**

Eric uses ones of my favorite terms in this interview: “fail forward.” This is probably the number one thing you can do to expedite your success in life. We are so afraid to fail and take chances that most people never truly live and stretch themselves to become what they could have. The only true failure is to play it completely safe in life and never know just how far you could have gone. I recently interviewed Kyle Maynard on my podcast, and he spoke about this. Kyle was born with no arms and no legs; if anyone has an excuse to play down in life it is him. But instead he is constantly challenging himself and pushing himself to failure. Over the past several years, Kyle hasn’t been sitting around feeling sorry for himself. In fact, he climbed to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Aconcagua, a feat only a small handful of people in the world have accomplished. Most people never understand how much further they could have gone and all the growth that comes by living in those spaces.



# ERIC EICKHOF

**Brokerage:** Fulton Realty

**Age:** 29

**Location:** Minneapolis, Minnesota

**Years in Business:** 6

**Best Production Year:** 2018—78 Units—GCI 520

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My friend Andrew Wao was my very first deal. It was a condo in downtown Minneapolis. I had a mentor, Nicole, and she really helped me through the whole thing. There is no way I would have been successful in that without her.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I come into the office, and before I even open my email or open my computer, I put together my goal list of what I want to get done that day. I then rank the list in the order of what are the most important things that I need to get done. I then jump into my day. It either starts that way or I have a morning workout routine even before that.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I'm buying probably about two to three homes a year, which is what I have been doing for the past four years. Currently, I'm actually selling about half my portfolio just because the market is pretty high. I've been pretty aggressively growing it; that's why I originally got into the business. Three single-family homes, five duplexes, a four-plex, and a twenty-four-unit.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

Recently, the market's been changing a little bit and slowing down. Listings are harder to come by. I lost a listing due to lack of communication. I had a client where constant check-ins were super important to them. I didn't really have my system totally dialed in with my assistant on who needs to check in with the client and what updates are we giving and when. It drove us this year to create a checklist. When we have a listing, we now write down exactly how far into the process we are, and when are we launching certain marketing strategies. Rather than just launching everything all at once, we stagger it out. Just to keep things fresh and to keep changing, we're not doing everything all at once.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Hand-addressed direct mail to investment property owners. We have a buyer looking for a property similar to yours, and then we hire people to hand address these letters so that they get opened. We get a lot of responses from them.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

It's about learning lessons for me. Every time I'm in a challenging situation, I try to remove myself from it and I try to coach myself as if I'm talking to myself. I'm a believer that this life is kind of a test for us. When you think about it like that, you can remove yourself from the situation and look at it from a third person point of view, and it's never quite as tough.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Don't try to be your own hero. Surround yourself with some really good mentors and don't be focused on the deals early on. Focus on the relationships, focus on the learning, and do not focus on the money.

**Coach's Notes:**

Eric gives some great advice here at the end of the interview: don't focus on the money.

Go to work every day, take care of people, and in the words of Zig Ziglar, "You can have everything in life you want, if you will just help enough other people get what they want."

# GEOFFREY ZAHLER

**Brokerage:** Zahler Properties

**Age:** 37

**Location:** Las Vegas, Nevada

**Years in Business:** 14

**Best Production Year:** 2018—44 Units—Volume in Sales 16 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My father is a developer and a custom home builder, and I was basically working for him at the time when I got my license, so I kind of got my license for internal purposes only to help him sell stuff. I had a \$1.3 million listing, but I literally did not know what I was doing. Luckily it's a small town, every agent knew each other, and the buyer's agent was a great woman and she basically did everything.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

We have two young kids, a four-year-old and a one-year-old, so the day's a little chaotic, especially in the mornings. I try to be up before the rest of the family. I usually shoot for 5:00 a.m. because it's a good number, but it's usually closer to 6:00 a.m. I'll do a little meeting or I'll do a little meditation. I take my daughter to school in the morning. And then I'm in the office. Generally speaking, I try not to book appointments in the morning because as a broker and a team leader, I try to keep the morning hours for team-type events. I'll get into the office and talk with my marketing director about what we want to accomplish that day, and answer any questions that my team has for me. Our team meetings are usually in the morning, and then during the afternoons is when I'm trying to meet with our clients, devote time to responding to open contracts, and follow up with my sphere.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

My wife and I own our own property. Our game plan at this point is not as much acquisition for ourselves, as much as we would like to, but it's really about getting the brokerage up and running.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

When we first moved down to Las Vegas in 2012, we were working with an investment company that was buying and flipping properties, and they were buying them at auction for cash. We moved down to Vegas specifically to run this fund, so I was in charge of a lot of other people's money. It was, from a real estate standpoint, great. I was essentially creating my own listings, controlling what we were spending, what we were buying. There was one house in particular, and this house I will lose sleep on for the rest of my life.

It was the most expensive house to date that we had ever bought at auction. It was in an area of town that wasn't as great. The property needed far more work to rehab than we were anticipating. Throughout the process it took a lot longer to rehab and everything, and it ended up getting broken into several times throughout the course of us owning it. And being the only one down in Las Vegas, I had to deal with that at three in the morning, four in the morning when the alarm would go off. And then we ended up finally selling it and the funds took a pretty significant loss. I'll never forget that one because it definitely hurt. When it's your money it's one thing, but when it's an investor's money, and it was our decision essentially, that was a tough one to swallow for sure.

I thought that it was going to be an easy one, I kept telling people. I had a couple of investors say let's just cut our losses and sell it now and take a small loss and just move on before we started any rehab, and I said no, we'll be fine, we'll be fine, we'll be fine. So that was a very good reminder that I don't know everything despite the fact that sometimes I think I do.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Be genuine, be yourself, don't play games—just to try to convert online leads with somebody you don't know. You don't need to love every client, but you also don't have to work with everybody. Move on. A bad relationship is mentally more taxing than any positive relationship could be. And you know, we all only have 168 hours a week, might as well try to focus on spending time around people that aren't going to give you heartache and increase your blood pressure.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I choose to do this business, and I chose to do this business. I grew up in this business, I'm a third-generation real estate broker, my father's a builder. I hated the business growing up because it took me away from being a kid. All you want to do is go play, and I had to go to open houses, I had to go to job sites, I had to go see homes being built. Eight-year-olds and ten-year-olds, they don't care about that stuff, they want to go to the park and play with their friends.

When I have a bad day I always remind myself, hey, you know, this is a bad day, but I don't have a boss, right? If I want to go home and sit with my kids, I can go home and sit with my kids. That constant reminder, I choose to do this, this is not anything that I have to do, this is what I choose to do and what I want to make my life's work. And I'm pretty lucky that we have the flexibility that we have and to be able to kind of have a "create something from nothing" kind of thing, and maybe leave it to our kids one day.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

It's not easy. If you do this the right way, it's not a job, it becomes a business. Go in with an open mind, go in expecting to not know it all. The logo behind you is just the logo behind you, people aren't necessarily going with you because of the name behind you, they're going with you because of who you are. Be true to yourself.

**Coach's Notes:**

I think Geoffrey and I take a very similar approach to a bad day. He chooses to focus on all the benefits of the business even in the midst of a really bad moment or bad day.

What I always try and teach other agents is "Don't let a bad day become a bad week, don't let a bad week become a bad month, and don't let a bad month become a bad year." It is important to move on from a bad moment as quickly as possible and like Geoffrey, just focus on all the great parts about being a realtor.

# HAYLI CAGLE

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Northwest Louisiana and Keller Williams

Rockwall Texas

**Age:** 30

**Location:** Shreveport and Bossier, Louisiana

**Years in Business:** 9

**Best Production Year:** 2018—145 Units—Volume in Sales 26 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first real estate deal was hell. I started in 2011, I was a single mom, and I was scared to death to do my first transaction. Instead of really looking to do a transaction, I did more training. I went to every class I could. I just didn't feel confident enough to even make a sale. Hence, as everyone knows, in real estate school, they don't teach you how to be a realtor. I did all the training, mainly my first six to seven months, and I didn't hit my first until October of that year. I then closed twelve the remaining year. So the first year was mainly training and then as soon as I hit that first deal, it was on.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

That's one of the things I'm not the best at—organization. I've been blessed. I'm mainly referral-based, but I also do a lot of leads and follow ups. I go to CrossFit and do my workout in the morning. I then come home, shower, and get ready for the day. Usually my appointments are all after lunch. It gives me the whole morning to get my things together and be prepared for the rest of the day.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I told myself I'd start buying rentals a couple of years ago, but I stumbled upon this property that I was supposed to list, and it ended up being something that I couldn't turn down myself. I bought a property on the lake here in DeSoto Parish that has never come up. I ended up with twenty-three acres and a really cool little cabin that we gutted and redid. We just put two new cabins on the property, and we rent it out using Airbnb and VRBO. I've been very successful with that.

I haven't invested in any rental properties yet.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

No error- and omission-extreme failures, but I have experienced a situation where I didn't get the listing, and I called back asking, but they had other options. I have used things like that as feedback to do things differently.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Facebook. There's just so many different groups that you can enter, and different locations to see. My main goal is that when anybody is talking about real estate anywhere, they are going to think of me. So far, that's been pretty successful with name branding and doing good work, getting reviews, and staying on top of the technology.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

To not act out immediately. Sit back and think before you act. Something I learned in the first couple of years in real estate was when I had buyer deals, if something wasn't necessarily going correctly, I wouldn't call them immediately. I would try and solve it myself first. I would come up with some ways that we could solve the problem before just going to them with that problem. If I do that, they're going to freak out, and it's going to make me freak out even more. Just sit back and think about what you could do to make whatever that situation is better or easier.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Work hard and be a good person. Customer service is number one. As long as you have good customer service, they're always going to come back you to. It doesn't matter how crazy the deal ended up being, it's the way that you control their situation and put as little stress as you can on your client.

Save your money and do not go off and buy a bunch of things that are not needed. Live within your means. Don't buy a boat. Use your money wisely. I just started doing some Edward Jones investing, and if I would have done that a lot sooner, I'd be a lot further by now because that money that I experienced wasn't like anything else I had experienced before, and I have worked my ass off ever since I could.

**Coach's Notes:**

I love the advice here to not act out immediately. The smartest and usually the most successful people that I know are very good at internalizing data and listening before they act out or respond. In real estate, I think we have to be careful not to create unnecessary drama. We make huge commission checks, so sometimes there is the temptation to try and make small issues bigger to justify that we did something to earn that big check. Eliminate the emotions and the drama, that is what we are paid to do.



# HEIDI PHONG

**Brokerage:** Phong Enterprise and HP Real Estate

**Age:** 36

**Location:** Sacramento, California

**Years in Business:** 8

**Best Production Year:** 2017—250 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first deal must have been our own purchase—a triplex. It was my and my husband's own transaction as an investment. It opened my eyes to the limitless potential of real estate earnings and income.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

It varies each day of the week. In the mornings, I like to organize the rest of my day and my appointments. Mornings would be calls, midafternoons would be meeting with my team, and in the middle of it, meeting with my staff. Client meetings would typically be scheduled between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. At the end of the day, I like to catch up on the day and come up with a to-do list for the next day.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

Buy anything that cash flows. Buy and hold. Buy as if you were going to buy and hold for the long term, and if the price is right and the market conditions are right, then you would sell and trade up. I wouldn't move the money unless the next investment would increase your cash flow and increase your returns.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I know that every failure is not a failure. It is a learning experience where I can take and learn from it and move forward. I don't focus on the failure.

Something that I learned in real estate is that you cannot control all the aspects of every transaction. Transactions will fail, and you just have to move forward. I don't recall any failed transaction because I moved forward from it.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Zillow has played a huge part in our career because of online marketing presence. That has been huge.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Fail forward, and take every mistake as an opportunity to learn and be better, and not do it again.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

You're not selling, you're consulting and providing a service after you've gained expertise.

**Coach's Notes:**

Heidi gives some excellent advice for investing in real estate. Cash flow is king! Let me say it again: cash flow is king! Whether you are buying for yourself or helping an investor, if the cash flow makes sense, then you can sell it or buy it knowing you are getting a good property. Never buy expecting a house to appreciate. Never buy hoping to make money if rents go up. If you are a full-time real estate agent and you want to work with investors, you need to be buying your own places so that you understand the process. You also need to be able to tell your clients with confidence, "Yes, it is a good time to buy! I can tell you that 'cause I've bought three new properties so far this year!" Personally, I have eleven properties as of the writing of this book and I will look for and buy two to three more cash flow properties this coming year.

# HUNTER CARTER

**Brokerage:** Carter TX Realty

**Age:** 29

**Location:** San Antonio, Texas

**Years in Business:** 10

**Best Production Year:** Volume in Sales 6.7 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I bought my own house when I was twenty-two. I had a job for eight months, and it was the only deal I did, actually, before all of the broker rules changed. And it was the only deal I did before I became a broker.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

Every day is different. Every single day, there's never the same day. I really focus around the support piece and around tool building. Well, we're the flagship firm for advisory roles at the foreclosure auction. I develop software. It's not really a day structure. It's more of a "What goal are we working on today?" Typically, I'm handling eight flips at a time personally, along with managing eighty people in a group. And then I have a property management company.

I get up around 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. I go to bed around 11:00 p.m.—between eleven and midnight. Sometimes I go into the office, sometimes I don't. Sometimes, it just really depends on the day. Lately I've tried to be more structured as I'm really growing in a faster, much bigger way these days.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

Last year, I bought four or five properties. Value plays, so if I look at long-term holds, I first off look at, one, can I buy or sell and make money, and if I can do that, then is it a

good long-term hold and I'm financing? If I can do that, I want to hold on to as many as I can right now. Financing is good, and in San Antonio specifically, I see a lot of short-term appreciation in specific markets. And I see an ability to capitalize on that short-term play on the hold, whether it be renting it or flipping it. That typically is our toggle point of where's the deal coming in and how do we look.

I really only started investing myself last year, and I've already accumulated about a million dollars from real estate. It's been done because I am just really, really hunkered into understanding and being more familiar with financing options and private money. And I've just become a much better financially well-rounded broker as opposed to others. I feel more like a hedge fund manager with some of the products that I developed, and some of the joint ventures I develop.

### **Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I got divorced last year. I would say that's somewhat of a failure. Divorce is bringing in a lot of personal growth that I think I did not have as a young guy going through some of that, while still being with the company every year. It becomes a learning path for people going through some emotionally difficult times.

With the business side, the failures sometimes come with a lack of specificity, as opposed to broadening that stroke and trying to be diversified and not being specific enough. And I think learning some of that in the business side, but I don't really fail in the business side very often. If I put my mind to something, I'm not making bets. I'm making very firm plays. I feel very confident in my actions, and I know the value in the marketplace.

The business side of the house is typically a very easy house for me. The personal side is where I think I learn a lot more in life. And then it flows into me being just more apathetic on the business side, which allows me to be more insightful. I think it allows me to be a better person and just have a better response when I go through a sales piece. I'm always learning. There's always mistakes in all of it, but ultimately it doesn't feel like failures in the business side. It's a failure in more of the emotional side of the house that I have to continue to work on more so than the business side.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I teach investment classes, and I've learned that the investment side of the house is what really attracts agents, which attracts investors, which just brings us business. So I developed a platform called Auction Caddy, and Auction Caddy is our system that patches us to cash buyers and allows us to differentiate ourselves and allows us to expand our service offerings which can go into a market, and I'll be a cash buyer player instead of just maybe a wholesaler; we actually are representing the cash buyers out there.

That's the lead platform that ultimately grows a really solid base. It increases retail by 5 to 10 percent. It increases our new construction by 5 to 10 percent. It increases investments by 40 percent. It increases all these other categories because you're retaining the people, so weirdly enough, it's not just this consumer allegiance piece. It's a spinoff of retaining the cash investor, which then you springboard that piece into the consumer clientele marketplace. And so I think it's kind of a weird thing, but I went after more of the cash guy, to then have the sign in the ground to be able to go after the consumer.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Patience. Making sure you're not making an emotional decision. Making sure it's analytical. Making sure that you're not putting so much emotion into it.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Core differentiate yourself. Find a path within this industry. We have such a large industry. Find a broker who is going to match up with those paths that you feel like you want to take and the education you want. And immerse yourself and create persistence.

Persistence is what is going to win you the deals. Persistence and a good attitude at the end of the day will win you more than anything that you do. I don't care what kind of marketing you're doing. If you're not persistent and you're going after that goal, you won't get there. Goal set, be persistent, and have a good attitude—ultimately it will win you those deals, and it will win your business.

**Coach's Notes:**

I really love what Hunter says about being persistent. Anybody can be great for a week or a month or even a few years. What all these great agents have that others with less success don't is that persistence. One of my favorite quotes and something I had painted on my wall the first five years I was an agent was the quote, "The difference between successful people and unsuccessful people is the successful people do all the things the unsuccessful people don't want to do."

# ISABEL AFFINITO

**Brokerage:** JB Goodwin Realtors

**Age:** 30

**Location:** Austin, Texas

**Years in Business:** 8

**Best Production Year:** 2018—Volume in Sales 14 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

A retail lease in New Jersey. I was working with a cast member from a reality TV show based in New Jersey. I don't like getting sued, so I'd prefer not to be more specific than that. This guy was starting a tanning salon business, and I helped them find several retail locations in New Jersey. Their tanning salon business didn't survive more than a few months. To this day, I don't really know what was going on behind the scenes.

I was so green at that point, I didn't know how to qualify my clients. I took them at their word that they knew what they were doing and had the money to do it. They defaulted on all their leases right after signing, and I never got paid anything for those deals.

That was a very colorful introduction to real estate.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I start my day by going to a 6:30 a.m. CrossFit session Monday through Thursday. My gym is my biggest single source of business. I go in the morning so I can start the day on a positive note. Also, I never know where my afternoon is going to go, so I've learned if I don't go in the morning, I'm probably not going.

After my workout, I have a pretty leisurely morning routine that usually takes about two hours. It involves drinking coffee and snuggling in bed with my dog and my husband. I also plan out my day in a paper journal. I time block my day on paper, do a "Top 5," and write out some things I'm grateful for. It takes up one page of a small notebook.

Journaling has been transformative for me. When I skip it, I feel completely out of control of my day. I find that when I sit down and put on paper what I'm going to get done that day, it puts the day in perspective, and I actually get it done.

Typically, my Top 5 will include a workout and prospecting. That leaves room for only three other important things I can get done. Those might be one listing appointment, one buyer tour, and one small time block for admin tasks. When you really sit down and look at it, there's not nearly as much time in the day as it feels like there is in the morning.

### **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

My husband also works in residential real estate. He is a developer and agent in Austin. We started investing in real estate before we were ever working in residential real estate. When we graduated from college, we were looking around at rentals in Hoboken, New Jersey. Renting required a month's broker's fee and a month and a half security deposit and first month's rent. With rents around \$2,500 a month, that seemed like a lot of money to pull together.

We looked at each other and asked, "Couldn't we just turn this into a down payment instead?" So, at the age of twenty-two, we went and talked to a loan officer and decided to buy a condo together even though we were not married yet. We trusted that we'd be able to figure that out and that everything would be okay, which it was.

That was 2011. We didn't know it at the time, but we bought at the bottom of the market. We sold it and moved to Austin in 2014, and used the proceeds to start our real estate business here.

Since then, we've bought, sold, built, and renovated many properties in Austin. Some for us personally, some for Chris's development business.

### **Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

The tanning salon episode was a failure that taught me a lot. It taught me to qualify clients better. And it taught me how I didn't want to run my business.

We drove all over the state of New Jersey for months. A ton of work went into that transaction, and I never saw a dime. But it was worth so much more for what I learned.

I had similar experiences when I first transitioned into residential real estate. Early in my career, I used to run around all over creation with buyers who hadn't committed to working with me exclusively. I'd show a ton of houses, just hoping that they would be loyal to me and buy something. I was afraid to ever ask them directly for that commitment, though. Then, finally, a sales coach came along and showed me how to qualify buyers, how to get them into the office for an appointment, and get representation agreements signed. My business really changed after that.

My success rate with getting buyers to closing went way up. I was happier, buyers were happier, and we had a lot more success together. So I really have to be grateful for every buyer who ever disappeared on me, and every deal for which I didn't get paid, for everyone who ever asked me to cut my commission at the eleventh hour. Because those failures taught me the importance of qualifying clients, having high standards in business, and having the backbone to stand by those standards.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Getting on the phone.

I set time aside Monday through Thursday to get on the phone. In an ideal week, I get in at least an hour of prospecting every day, Monday through Thursday. It doesn't always happen, but that's my goal. I have a database where I keep all my contacts: open house leads, past clients, friends who've asked me for real estate advice, internet leads... everybody goes in there. Today, I have over two thousand names, phone numbers, and emails in there. I can keep myself busy just calling through that list. One of the things I do in the office is go back and look at that list and make some calls to see what I can offer those people that might be helpful.

Marketing in my view is just a way to get names and numbers so you can call them. Whether that lead comes from Zillow, an open house, Facebook marketing, Instagram, or a referral, you still have to talk to them and make a human connection. No one is going to see you on Instagram and then say, "Hey, come over and write up a contract for me." Ultimately, you have to get voice-to-voice and face-to-face.

We're not selling socks here. You can sell socks with an online ad. But people don't make real estate decisions without first making a deep human connection.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I find a way to be grateful for it. I remind myself that I'm going to learn something from this and to see it as an opportunity for growth. If it's something that is likely to happen again and could be avoided in the future, I'll find a way to add something to my process to avoid it next time. So in a sense, everything that goes wrong makes me better at my job.

When the adversity comes in the form of someone being upset, I remind myself, "This isn't about me." I've had so many situations where I'm faced with someone who is emotional about a real estate transaction, but I find out later that they're in the middle of a divorce, or they have a loved one who is gravely ill. It's not really about me, and it's not even about real estate. So now, instead of taking the situation at face value, I just assume there's something going on in the background that I may or may not ever learn about. And I don't take it personally.



If I need help processing some adversity, I call my sales coach, Jason Edwards. Having an experienced mentor to turn to can really help put adversity into perspective. Any energy, any negative energy on it, just take it and turn it into positive energy.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

The job isn't real estate, the job is the people. And if you talk to enough people, then you'll get an opportunity to help them solve their problems with real estate.

If somebody can remember that, then everything else falls into place. They don't need to know anything else. They'll figure all the rest of it out.

**Coach's Notes:**

Isabel talks about one of the most important parts of being a great agent, and that is lead follow up. No matter where a lead comes from, if you don't follow up on it, nothing gets done. Mike Ferry always says, "The money is made in the follow up!" I schedule an hour every single day right after my prospecting for lead follow up. You will never lose a deal 'cause you followed up too many times, but how often do we lose a client if we forget to call them? A good rule of thumb for follow up is whatever time frame they give you to call them back, cut it in half, and that is when you should call again.

# JAMIE TIAN

**Brokerage:** Rodeo Realty

**Age:** 27

**Location:** Los Angeles County, California

**Years in Business:** 7

**Best Production Year:** Volume in Sales 25 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

A condo that I sold to a first-time home buyer. It was here in Los Angeles, in the Sherman Oaks area, and he was very hesitant. I was too at the time because I hadn't done any deals before. He didn't know what area he wanted to look in yet, so we ended up going all over the map. I think we had a thirty-mile radius. We looked for a long time. It was a pretty competitive market; at the time, the market was going up, and we actually lost out on the property the first time around, but the buyer who got it ended up backing out. We were the back-up offer, and then we ended up getting the condo for him that cost right around \$236K.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I don't really have a set daily routine. Every day is different, obviously, depending on if I have showings or listing appointments, and it kind of depends on my clients' schedules. I try to wake up early and if I have time, I try to get a workout in. Health is really important as well, and I feel like it helps me; it actually gives me more energy during the day. I try to get a thirty-minute to an hour workout in and then work the rest of the day until I go to bed. I make myself available 24/7, so I have a lot of overseas clients, and I'm often on the phone until really late at night. In the morning, if I don't have an appointment, then I check my emails and then start prospecting. In this business, prospecting is what you should be doing all the time, basically, unless you have a showing. I'm always on the

clock. Even if I ever get a chance to take a vacation or do something fun, I always have my phone glued to me, and my clients always tell me that one of their favorite things about working with me is if they call me, text me, or email me, I'll respond immediately.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I think that real estate is one of the best and safest ways to build long-term wealth, for sure.

Three years ago, when I was twenty-four, I purchased my first property. It's the one that I'm living in personally, and my goal in the future is to purchase a property every few years and then rent it out so that someday I'll have a passive income.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I think when I first started in real estate, I would try to do all different kinds of marketing, whatever I heard about or any idea that I had. After a short period of time, I would be like, "This isn't working," and then I would just give up and move quickly on to the next idea. I finally learned through trial and error that nothing is going to work if you don't stick to it long-term. Everything works if you do it correctly and if you do it for long enough. I wasted a lot of time. I also learned if you don't enjoy a certain type of prospecting, you don't have to do it. You can focus on the types that you like because you have to enjoy the things that you do each day to be successful at it too.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I like to market to a geographical farm and then hit them from all different angles. I'll hit them with mailers and postcards, I'll door knock in the area, I'll cold-call, go after expires, I'll market to them online, attend community events, and do open houses there. If you continue to market to the same area continuously, the owners will eventually recognize your face as a neighborhood expert and then they think to call you when they're ready to sell. I am Chinese and I speak Mandarin, so that's been really helpful to me. There are a lot of Chinese people looking to invest in Los Angeles and Orange County, so about half my clients I would say are Chinese and half of that half, a quarter of them, are from overseas. When you're working with overseas clients, you have to treat it completely differently. Sometimes they don't even have the chance to come look at the property, and they're buying it just relying on me through FaceTime and videos and photos. You have to hold their hands through the process, and it's a different kind of client, but there's a pretty big market for that.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I always think of my parents and how much harder they had it when they were my age. They immigrated to this country with no money and built a life for our family. Today, I have so many opportunities and I'm super grateful. It just helps me stay motivated to work hard. I was born in China and moved here when I was four years old. When my parents came over to the States for school, they came on scholarship to get their PhDs and they basically had no savings. They had stipends from the school, at the time, a small amount of money. It was difficult for them, especially being in school and having a young child at the time. My dad lived in Oklahoma and my mom lived in Pittsburgh because they had to go to whatever school would give them the most money. I lived with my dad in Oklahoma at the time, and our family was separated for a few years while they were getting their PhDs. They're both civil engineers, and they finally finished school and then they had to look for jobs. It was difficult, especially with the language barrier too, and accent and cultural barriers. But they've done really well for themselves and acclimated. I'm grateful.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

I would say that when you're first starting out and you get the opportunity to work on a listing and go to listing appointments, it's sometimes good to bring a more seasoned agent with you. It's better to get half the listing than none of it. I made that mistake a couple of times, "Oh I want to do the whole thing myself, I think I can handle it." But when you don't have the experience, it's hard to get the listing and you can actually learn a lot from working with other agents, seeing how different agents do their business—take tips from all of them and put it together and make it your own. Real estate is all about how much effort you put into it. It's really easy to waste time as a realtor. It's not like a normal job where your boss is looking over your shoulder. We really don't have a boss, even though we have an office manager. Time management is the most important thing and knowing how to be efficient and not just waste time, and making sure that you're always prospecting. You can easily get caught up in things like documentation, and that's why we have transaction coordinators because we have to be always generating the next lead in order to continue the pipeline.

Having a clear mind is also key to being successful. One of the things that I do to keep my mind clear is I love going to the beach. I live pretty close to Santa Monica, and I love to ride my bike to the beach and hang out where the weather is good.

**Coach's Notes:**

Reading through all of these amazing interviews, the same thing keeps popping up over and over to me: pretty much every single agent that is succeeding at a top level has a workout routine. Health is a major part of their success and fuels them to be able to do the type of production like Jamie does. I went to a Tony Robbins event a few years back called “Date with Destiny,” and he spoke about choosing which values you find most important to you. He said that when he started the program thirty years ago, health wasn’t even on his list. However, as he has learned more and more about peak performance, health kept moving up higher and higher. Now health is literally his number one most important value that drives everything else he does. It is that important to establish a healthy workout and eating routine.

# JASMINA WEST

**Brokerage:** Triumph Realty

**Age:** 38

**Location:** Virginia Beach, Virginia

**Years in Business:** 7

**Best Production Year:** 2016—60 Units—Volume in Sales 13 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I had just moved to Virginia Beach because my husband's in the military, and I wanted a housewife job, so I thought of real estate. I got on a team. They had a lot of advertising and online presence. We have a lot of military here in Virginia Beach. It's huge turnaround. Houses turnaround in like three to four years here.

So, what they did is, and I didn't know back then, but between Google Ads and Zillow, when you got on the team, you were provided leads, so it was actually a lead for another military family, the Smiths. I still remember basically having to fake it until I made it. I didn't know what I was doing yet.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

Real estate is one of those jobs where if you're not holding yourself accountable, nobody else will have you accountable. What I've done since day one is I try to plan my whole day out. I try to make myself a schedule, and if I don't have appointments or I don't have anything else, I try to research new ways of getting leads, of getting more business, better ways of following up with previous clients. I try to work out every day, because that kind of wakes me up and makes me motivated, so I will try to start my day with the gym. I really do try to work from nine to five every day, unless I'm showing, but I don't show houses as much anymore. I try to make it like any other job because if you don't, you get lazy, you can get really lazy, and you can do a lot of other useless things with your time that are not productive.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I buy mostly rentals. I have three children under seven, plus the whole team, and I'm the principal broker of the company, so unless I can personally supervise any renovations or any flips [I don't buy them]. I only have six right now.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

In my first year of real estate, I was responsible for doing selections for a new construction. This was a terrible fail. I wrote down the wrong floor numbers of the selection that my clients had made. When we showed up to the house, they'd laid the wrong floors because I wrote down the wrong item number. I had to give up my whole commission for them to get the right floors put in. But I'd rather I did that than get bad feedback or bad reviews or have an unhappy client, so I learned pretty early that sometimes it's just going to cost you, but it's not worth your reputation. That was a \$10,000 mistake.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Reviews on Zillow are very powerful. We've started exploring a lot of Facebook presence because it's very helpful due to the type of market we have here; we have a lot of out-of-town people constantly moving into the area.

I've never done any of the door knocking, I've never done mailers, I've never done some of the older real estate strategies or open houses. I barely believe in open- houses, to be honest with you; we only do them for leads on Facebook.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Always admit your faults. If you don't know what you're talking about, don't just lie. When I say fake it until you make it, it's more of the personality level so you connect with the person. Confidence. But if you don't know what you're doing, never just say something just to say it; always ask. Don't lie, always be honest. Never play dirty, because it will come back to you. Again, it comes down to reputation. If you don't know what you're talking about, it's okay as an agent to say, "Actually, I don't know that, but let me find out."

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Social media, social media, social media. Basically, blow yourself up, because I know brand new agents who are very social-media savvy that are doing fantastic, better than agents that have been in the area for many years. We're getting into the digital world now.

**Coach's Notes:**

Jasmina drives home two very important parts of the business: social media and online reviews. If you don't have at least one hundred online reviews, it isn't important enough to you at this point. I started last year just getting a quick thirty- to sixty-second review video anytime I was with a friend. Add a cool backdrop and after a few months, you have over one hundred video testimonials of why you are the best agent in the market. This can't be overemphasized enough: get the reviews and share them online!



# JAVILA CREER

**Brokerage:** Windermere Real Estate

**Age:** 37

**Location:** Seattle, Washington

**Years in Business:** 15

**Best Production Year:** 2018—90 Units—Volume in Sales 70 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I remember not knowing very much at all. I had a very low amount of information that I was able to provide to my clients that was professional. It was a condo. I want to say it was around \$250,000.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I don't organize my day. I am free and available for anything that comes up. I do it that way because things come up constantly. If I had some sort of plan that kept getting disrupted, that would be more frustrating than no plan and the ability to adapt.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I'm a little older than most millennials. I was very affected by the Great Recession and made a slew of very educational decisions during it. Some were big losers in the short term, but big winners in the game of life and perspective. For the most part, the things I purchased for myself are for me to live in because I want them and, generally speaking, far less a financial strategy.

I haven't bought, for many years, anything that was an investment property. I've bought multiple properties to live in that have turned into investment properties, but the last time I bought an investment property was in 2008; you can imagine how that went.

I currently own two properties, neither of which is a rental. I have my masters in investment property.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I throw a holiday party every year. At the last holiday party, I invited too many people. I was unprepared for the volume of attendees. I hadn't quite structured the appropriate childcare for my kid. As my kid pitched a fit in front of my entire audience of clients, who were all trying to connect with me in some way, I totally stumbled because I couldn't be both professional and a mom at the same time.

One of my clients, who I had done a couple of transactions with and I think was trying to talk shop with me at that time but was unable to, about a month later, listed their property with a different broker. It hurt my feelings. I reached out to them, I acknowledged it, and then watched it. Ultimately, they did not sell it with that broker. They decided to change agents when that listing expired, and I picked up the listing and we had a nice, successful story. At the end of it, they asked me to invite them to the next Christmas party again, which I thought was funny. Clearly, they remembered it too. It was a gentle reminder that sometimes showing someone a peek into your personal world is not actually what they need to see.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I don't market a lot. I do reach out to people when I'm thinking of them. If I see something that reminds me of a person, I'll often send them a note or give them a call just to say, "Hey, this thing made me think of you, and so I thought I'd reach out." And that's been a really good strategy.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I try to have a growth mindset. It's important to me when I have the really challenging transactions.

Most of mine are not; most of my business comes really easily and flows very well. For the most part, I'm attracted to pretty laid-back, easygoing clients. Every once in a while, I will have a client who triggers me a bit, and when I get a reaction out of myself toward the client, I go, "Oh, this is interesting. There's something here that's important for me to notice." I will spend extra time trying to figure out what it is that I noticed, why I'm having a reaction to it, and how I can be ready for that the next time it comes along. I guess you would call it a growth mindset, but I've been doing it since before growth mindset was coined, and I think many people have.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Don't expect real estate to be what you think it is. But also, don't expect that you have to do the same thing that other people do to find success in it. I think what's interesting about real estate is that it's the lowest bar, yet a very difficult industry to be in. It is so easy to get into but hard to survive. I think if you're authentic in how you're doing it, and if it's truly something that you enjoy doing, it's an incredible opportunity. But if you're in it just for money or free time or structure, there are other businesses that would probably be a better fit.

**Coach's Notes:**

I love what Javila says in her interview about having a "growth mindset." To not only accept new information but really try and understand it and learn from it. The smartest and most successful agents I have ever met, I seem to always run into them in places where we are learning and growing together. Where we are both trying to improve our skillsets and learn even more. I'm always amazed by how many agents feel like they know all they need to already.

# JAY PITTS

**Brokerage:** RE/MAX Premier Properties

**Age:** 36

**Location:** Louisville, Kentucky

**Years in Business:** 10

**Best Production Year:** 2015—350 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was a \$50,000 buy-side to a little old lady on Social Security. She bought a bank foreclosure to live in; she had rented her entire life and saved up money and had no family to speak of. She didn't really know anybody, and didn't know how to talk to anyone. This was how I got her. It was a phone call. She was speaking of another piece of property and when I talked to her, one of the things I learned was do whatever you can to program the next action, right? So I got her name, I got her home address, and I got her telephone number. It was December of that first year. I sent her a handwritten note with my business card, and she thought it was a Christmas card because it was December. She was like, "No one's ever done this," and she bought a house from me.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I have a rock-solid morning routine. I'm up at 5:00 a.m. every day. I eat something good, I get a workout in, I get my kids ready and take both of them to school. I'm in the office by 8:00 a.m. I take staff meetings first, prospects second, and then I'm out of the office in the afternoon. My days look a little different from how they used to because I'm not showing property as much. My afternoons are typically mobile. I'm checking on jobs. It's either a renovation project or property management that we run, or going on listing appointments and checking on listings, but I like to be stationary in the morning. I like to be mobile in the afternoon. I think that's the most productive.

As far as organization goes, if it's not in the calendar, it doesn't exist. I've got too much going on and I can't keep it straight in my head, so I'm a slave to the calendar.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I have a goal to be worth \$50 million by the time I turn fifty. A good chunk of that is going to come from real estate. I own fifteen rental houses. I don't own any apartments because I like houses better than apartments. Most people would disagree with that for scale, but I own a property management company, so I can own houses and still scale. I get thirteen to fifteen percent returns on the houses I buy, whereas the going cap rate on apartments here is around six. I want the extra return. What I do now is rent capital by flipping houses, and the profits from the flips are invested in buying wholes. I still have five of my fifteen paid for because I started off paying cash for them. If the right opportunity came along, I would leverage those too. There's no reason to right now.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I'm intensely motivated to the point where it is very hard for the people around me in my life to handle me. When my son was born, he's six now, I didn't do a great job of changing the way I went about things. I just thought, "Business as usual." I put a lot of pressure on my wife and I wasn't a very good husband. I wasn't a very good father at first, and it took me a little while to realize it and humble myself. What I learned at that point is that it doesn't matter how much success you have in business; if your family is not there to enjoy it with you, then it's not worth having.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

The monthly client parties are my best marketing strategy. The most unique party that we did was renting out a place called Flying Axes, where you throw axes at targets. It was pretty cool, and we invited all of our clients to come throw axes and we catered food.

We had close to three hundred people show up to a Christmas event where we hired an actor to be Santa Claus, we held brunch and had activities for the kids, and they got pictures with Santa.

My podcast has been fun as well. I'm about seventy episodes in, and we started just over a year ago. It's called *(RE)source: Real Talk About Real Estate*, and I'm actually getting ready to launch a second. Right now the podcast is national real estate commentary, and it is agent-facing. We're getting ready to do a local version where it's not about just real estate, for local movers.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

My dad is in real estate. He has been in the business thirty-five to forty years, and he's got all of these sayings. He's this country guy that has all these sayings. We joke a lot. The episode of my podcast that he is on is called "Shit My Dad Says." One thing my dad always told me is pressure makes pearls. What I think of anytime I'm in adversity is that you welcome the pressure because it makes the end result that much better.

Pressure makes pearls. The idea is that without adversity and without the pressure, the end result isn't worth it.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

The best thing you can do for your business is to stay in business, because what most people don't realize is that when you start, everything is buyer heavy, right? So when we place the buyer in a home, that's one transaction. The average homeowner in the United States turns over homes between five to seven years, so when they come back five to seven years later, they don't come back as one deal, they come back as two, so you get a 100 percent raise if you stay in business five to seven years.

**Coach's Notes:**

This is one of those interviews that you should probably read twice. Jay has had so much success and learned so much over the years. I loved that he says, "I don't care how much success you've had; if your family isn't there to enjoy it with you, then it's not worth having." There is definitely a time to be unbalanced in the job and to work on a massive action plan toward business, but if this is going on year after year, you really need to evaluate your model. I love the mission statement, "Helping to build careers worth having, businesses worth owning, and lives worth living." That is just such a great motto for any real estate company to aspire to.

# JENNICA HOLMQUIST

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty

**Age:** 28

**Location:** Tacoma, Washington

**Years in Business:** 8

**Best Production Year:** 2016—54 Units—Volume in Sales 13 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was with a friend of mine that I've grown up with, a townhouse. It was a bank-owned property.

It was six months after I'd been in the industry, and so it was embarrassing also.

I played my first six months. All the lenders were like, "Oh, I want to meet with you." And I didn't even know half the stuff they're talking about, but I'm like, "Of course." I was young, and I didn't know what I was getting into, so it took me that time to figure out what this whole world meant.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I usually get to the office around 8:30 a.m. It depends on what my day looks like. I have one other agent on my team, and we try to do our leads on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to noon, and then Tuesday and Thursday from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. So my Tuesdays and Thursdays, I usually will run errands. I mean, it just depends on what I have on my schedule for that day.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

We have three properties and one rental. Right now I'm going through a divorce, so we're each living in the other one. So after about sixty days, I think it is according to my math, I'll have two properties. One is mine, and then one I'm going to do an Airbnb.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I have a very direct personality, and I always thought I had to have people with different personalities around me. But I have figured out that those different personalities, we don't do well with. So I have seen that if there is a problem, nobody on my team has a problem opening their mouth and saying it, and I love that, because we can get to the point. I feel like a lot of times you hear about hiring for different strengths and different personalities, but I think you also have to know yourself well enough, and who you work well with, and I like a direct person.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I'm using social media. Right now I have three clients in contact that I went to high school with that I never would have stayed in contact with. Everything on my social media and on my Instagram is public, and the only thing that's private to me is my Snapchat. That's my real, real life, but everything else is intentional.

Everyone loves chaos stories of what's going on. I try to sprinkle in the real estate stuff, but more so I just post day-to-day, what's going on.

It's honestly just sharing who you are, but I also try to be purposeful about what I'm putting out there that is not completely real estate based. Our team page, our Instagram page, and our Facebook page, we use that as a hub, and so then we tag ourselves back in it so that it's not me self-promoting my business, but they can see from our page the promotion.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Nobody dies in a real estate emergency. The way that you handle the transaction and the way that you handle things when there are problems is exactly how your clients handle it, and I can feel it when agents are freaking out about things that don't need to be freaked out about. It's problem-solving. That's all it is. Nobody is going to die from it.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

I was so terrified of my age, and I put the weight of my age on myself way longer than it should have been there. Now I'm twenty-eight, and I see these little shits come into the industry where I'm like, "Oh my gosh, they are killing it." And I was in my head for way longer than I should have been. People don't know any better as long as you know what you're talking about and trust yourself.



**Coach's Notes:**

I love the last part of this interview. Oftentimes we don't know what we aren't capable of until somebody points it out to us. I remember a friend of mine who sold door-to-door security alarms. He went out his first day and sold nine alarm systems. He got back to the team meeting that night to report numbers, and nobody else had done more than two. He had no idea that nine was a lot, and everyone acted like it was the biggest deal ever. He said that for the next two weeks he couldn't get over three in a day because mentally he knew that was a huge number. It took him months to remember that nine in a day was totally normal as long as he believed it was.

# JIMMY REX

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty

**Age:** 36

**Location:** Salt Lake City, Utah

**Years in Business:** 13

**Best Production Year:** 2015—187 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My very first real estate listing was my brother's house. This guy showed up to look at the home. He said he had a home that he needed to sell, and so I said, "Oh, yeah, let me help you sell it. I'll run some numbers on it." I had never heard of a listing presentation at the time. I just put together a bunch of comparables and ran out to his house. I had probably thirty comps. I was just scattering papers all over his house for like an hour. By some miracle, I got this guy to agree to list his home with me, and we ended up selling that shortly thereafter. That became my first closed deal.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I'm really not as disciplined as most people as far as my morning routine goes. I always try to be more disciplined, but the problem is I stay up late. I'm a single guy and I like to get a lot of things done at night. I do a lot of side projects with blogs and my podcast and other things that I work on. I love to do a lot of that stuff at night. Plus, I do a lot of events and just like to go out. I don't beat myself up if I don't get to the office by a certain hour. There was a time in my career where I literally did not miss a day for two straight years, prospecting on the phones from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. But I can't honestly say that's what I do now.

Throughout the day, I try to make sure that by 11:00 a.m., I've done at least one hour of prospecting; I call clients at this time. I try to always hit at least one or two lunch

appointments. I think it's important with my spirit of influence to be going to lunch and be in front of those people. I also get asked to go to lunch quite a bit, so I'll take those appointments. The other thing that I always try to do is get to the gym. I feel like it breaks my day in half. So I work hard in the morning, I go hit the gym, and then I'm refreshed. I then go back and I hit it hard into the night or whatever I need to do.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I currently own twelve properties. I'm very adamant that anytime you buy a real estate investment, you need to put at least 20 percent down so that you get rid of the mortgage insurance. That's probably a little bit of PTSD from when the market crashed in 2007. I had thirteen properties in 2005. I was very aggressive when I was young. Because of the crash, I sold eleven of those thirteen properties and just got stuck with two that I ended up losing some money on. But I built it back up.

My theory is if I buy these properties with good cash flow, it's somebody else paying them off for me every single month. I want to own, today, \$5 million worth of real estate that will be \$10 million by the time I'm fifty or fifty-five years old. Then I can literally screw up every other investment that I make. I can burn every other dollar that I earn because other people are paying down my mortgages on all these properties, and I'll still have somewhere between \$5 million to \$10 million.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

When I was fourteen years old, my entire life was baseball. All my best friends were on the baseball team, and everything we did was baseball. I had always been on the All Stars with all my buddies. And at the end of the year, we had this end-of-the-year ceremony where all the parents and grandparents come, and they called out the All Star team. It was kind of like an amphitheater, so me and all of my friends were sitting about the second row right down where everybody could look down on us and see us down there.

They started calling the All Star team. One by one they started calling all my friends up.

And, by the way, I had been terrible that year. I hadn't worked hard and I really wasn't very good that year. But in my mind, I was an All Star because I always had been, and my identity was wrapped up in that. One by one, they start calling the kids up for All Stars. And it got to about five or six left, and I realized that I wasn't going to make the team. And sure enough, by the time they called every name, I was the only one still sitting there while everybody else was out getting their trophy and taking pictures as the new All Star team. It was so bad because every single person's parents were there, their grandparents were there. I was literally sitting there by myself on an island. I felt like I let everyone down. I felt like all of the eyeballs in the world were on me. I just started to cry.

In that moment, I had this self-awareness. Sitting there feeling the worst I had ever felt in my entire life, I said, “This is your fault, Jimmy. You didn’t work hard enough.” My next thought was, “I will never feel like this again. I will never be outworked. I will never feel this pain because I know that I didn’t work hard enough to achieve something.” So I’ve, since that day, always made it a point to work harder than my competition, to work harder than other people, and I ended up having a really good baseball career and it has made every other aspect of my life. That self-awareness that I wasn’t a victim—I didn’t blame the coach, I didn’t blame the parents, and I didn’t blame the guy that picked All Stars with the committee—really helped me. I blamed myself because I knew I hadn’t worked hard enough. I knew that the only thing I could change was myself.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I get around one hundred to two hundred leads per month right now using my Instagram. I created an entire guide for other agents to look at because it’s such a powerful marketing tool. With one post a couple of weeks ago, I actually sold twelve houses in one day. With four posts a couple weeks ago, in one day I sold twelve houses. It was for a builder that I was working with. It is just a very powerful tool and something that I’m starting to teach other real estate agents. I’m also very good at throwing client parties. I worked through charities to build my sphere of influence. I throw a party once a month for my clients. We just threw our Halloween party last night. We do a party once a quarter for all the families and then the months in between we either rent out comedy clubs or movie theaters, ice skating rinks, stuff like that.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

The difference between successful and unsuccessful people is successful people have merely learned to do the things that unsuccessful people don’t want to do.

One of my favorite movies is *A League of Their Own*. There’s a scene when Geena Davis’s character is leaving. She’s decided that she’s done playing, and Tom Hanks kind of sees her packing her vehicle up or whatever. He goes over and he says, “What are you doing?” She says, “You know, I’m done.” And he’s flabbergasted because this was his best player. He says, “I don’t get it. Well, why?” And she says, “It just got to be too hard.” And Tom Hanks says one of my favorite quotes in any movie I’ve ever seen. He says, “It’s supposed to be hard. The hard is what makes it great.” And I think about that because all the best things in my life, all the things that I truly honor and am proud of, all the things that I appreciate the most, are the things you work the hardest for. I know that to be true with real estate and anything else. Any time I face adversity, I try to remember that there’s no great reward at the end of something that came easy. But if you have to work your butt off for something, there’s a great reward at the end of that.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

We way overestimate what we can do in a year, and we way underestimate what we can do in ten. You've got to be consistent. It's the consistency and the skills that will set you apart from everybody else. The two things that I harp on with all my agents, number one above all else is skills, number two above everything else is consistency. So many people will have a good day or they'll have a good week, you know, making their calls or doing their marketing or whatever it is that they're working on. But they just don't have the discipline to do it every single day.

Real estate is like a funnel. At the bottom of the funnel, it's a very small opening. At the top, it's this huge funnel that you can pour everything into. And unfortunately, most people focus on what's at the bottom of the funnel because that's the result, that's what you see. And so they try to change the bottom of the funnel. But the problem is, by then it's already gone through the funnel. You can't do anything about that. That's the result of the previous actions. But all you can focus on is what goes in the funnel. So pump as much good, as much effort, as much positivity, as much prospecting calls, lead generation, everything you can do into the top of the funnel. If you just focus on the top of the funnel, then good things will come out the bottom of the funnel. They have to.

But it's also the opposite. If you do bad or you waste your time or you put bad things into your mind, into your body, things like that, then the result will come out bad as well. So just focus on the top of the funnel, not the bottom of the funnel, and realize that you can do a lot in a short amount of time, that you need to have patience realizing it's going to take that time. You can't cheat the process. You can't cheat the system along the way.

# JOE SCHWARTZBAUER

**Brokerage:** BRIX Real Estate

**Age:** 36

**Location:** Saint Paul, Minnesota

**Years in Business:** 4

**Best Production Year:** 2017—35 Units—Volume in Sales 8.1 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was difficult and I had no idea what I was doing. It was really tough just trying to work with these clients. I was representing the buyers, so I was trying to represent them the best I could with the knowledge that I had and knowing how to best represent them. It was a very difficult process. They are 100 percent still in my sphere. I still reach out to them at least once every forty-five days.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I have a set schedule until typically about ten-thirty in the morning. Wake up, go to the gym, come back home, go to the office and deal with emails, return phone calls from the previous evening, all until about 10:30 a.m. After that, there is a little bit of time if the schedule permits to reach out to past clients. I try to send one handwritten letter per day to a past client or somebody in my sphere for something that I've seen take place recently. Whether it's some Facebook post that they were on vacation or a closing that just took place. After that it's showings, I have a meeting with my team, and it's up in the air from there a lot of days.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I really like rental properties. That is my and my wife's retirement fund. Good cash flow is the number one thing we like to see. If we're not able to get good cash flow with the

property, it's knowing that's going to appreciate in an area that is up-and-coming. We only have three properties right now.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I took on a listing that was the largest penthouse in the city of Saint Paul. And it still hasn't sold. Would be the most expensive condo, essentially, in the history of Saint Paul ever to sell. I threw a lot of marketing dollars at it and did some big events. From the history of the property, I should have known a little bit more about how it was going to go. It had actually been on the market essentially since 2009 and had never sold. So the chances of this thing selling were not very good, and I probably just would have not put a few thousand dollars and effort into it had I known what the end outcome would be.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Working with past clients and friends, family, people that we know who are likely to give us a referral. Keeping them and knowing that they are valued to us, keeping them informed as to what the market is doing, and just being in contact with them has been our number one spot for referrals and just generating business in general.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I've got a two-year-old boy at home. The *Finding Nemo*, "Just keep swimming" type of thing is something that actually resonates a lot. You just have to keep moving forward and keep trying. Stuff will happen.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Build a team. Have a good group of people around you that are like-minded with the same goals as you. And it's going to help you succeed. It's going to move your business further and faster than you ever could alone.

**Coach's Notes:**

This is something that we have all heard a million times before, but it is just so important. You will become the equivalent of the five people you spend the most time around. You have to surround yourself with people that think big, create big, and that inspire you to be the best version of yourself. We tend to attract the types of people that we are, so look around—what kind of person are you? Do you need to level up the friends you are around?

# JOHN GRAFFT

**Brokerage:** Grafft Group

**Age:** 31

**Location:** Chicago, Illinois

**Years in Business:** 14

**Best Production Year:** 2018—33 Units—Volume in Sales 14 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first sale was with renters of an apartment building I helped manage, and they were looking for more space. The town they were looking in was an hour and a half away, but being young and eager, I wanted to get it done. I would drive out there on the weekends and look with them. The home we ultimately found wasn't something I sent them because they only wanted something with a garage. This property didn't have a garage, so it didn't show up on the MLS search I had set up.

They found it on their own, gave it to me, and I set up the showing. It checked every other box, so we closed.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

For breakfast, I have two eggs with Tabasco and hummus, and then a heavy mixed green salad with eight different types of nuts, seasonal fruits, and honey from my personal bee farm with apple cider vinegar and olive oil. Every day, the same exact breakfast. I don't eat lunch. I do my best to avoid appointments before 11:00 a.m. I use the morning, when my mind is the sharpest, for planning, creative projects, and hands-on work. I use the afternoon and evenings for meetings, follow up, and general planning. Typically, I eat out for dinner.



**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I have four properties. I only buy something where if I had to sell it the day after the closing, I would still turn a profit. I believe in buying right, and that's the most important rule in any investment, just buy it right to begin with. If you do that, everything else should work out.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

A few years ago, I was supposed to work on a project that had a gross revenue of over \$300,000.

I helped design the project, I worked on it, and I invested in it. I'd say that because of my lack of diplomacy, I lost it. I was more or less being self-righteous instead of diplomatic. I've changed my approach to communication ever since. I avoid any important conversations via email. I tend to look for projects where I can add value instead of being a replaceable cog that is perceived as a means to an end by the client. If my personality doesn't jibe with the client, I prefer not to work with them. But the biggest thing is to make it where you're not replaceable, where you're offering and adding something that the next broker isn't, or the next broker isn't able to.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I try to find places where I can interject something different. So I try to target projects, and I'm not targeting buyers and sellers as much. I'm trying to target a thirty-unit building, a three-unit building, a nine-unit building. I'm trying to target developers, investors, and builders. There's a few different reasons. One, if you can create a good relationship, you tend to work on other projects. I've also worked out as the second person to a project. I just closed out six units of an eighteen-unit project, and I was brought to it because the other broker couldn't finish the deal. I just believe in superior marketing and superior salesmanship at every turn.

You want to be able to do something that the next guy isn't willing to do, isn't willing to pay for, and isn't willing to justify. There are so many great tools for sales, and in real estate we utilize almost none of them. Real estate is the industry that I've decided to use my skills in. I don't consider myself a realtor. I don't consider myself necessarily a real estate person. I'm a marketer first. I'm a marketer and a salesperson, and I try to increase those skills at every turn. That's where I focus on my knowledge.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Think of all the positive things you have going on. Everyone has dark days. Everyone has down days. If you don't, you're lying. The most important thing is just to remember what you do have, because things can get real bleak sometimes. I mentioned that \$300,000 loss. It wasn't a loss because I didn't realize it, but it sure as hell felt like I lost it. That was a dark time. I was married at twenty-four and divorced at twenty-eight. Dark time. I also had the best year I ever had when I did that. So no matter what's going on, there's always something positive. I think we have a tendency to focus on what we don't have instead of what we do. Once you can flip that perception, I think it really helps in changing your outlook on your day, week, month, year, however you want to view it.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

There's no race. I don't know what the rush is for people to try and figure things out, but this isn't a race. Never compare yourself to the next guy. There's always a bigger dick. There's always going to be that type of situation, so you need to focus on what you do. You don't always know what the other guy is doing. There's a lot of agents that have real high numbers. I'd love to see their bottom line. No one ever talks about the bottom line, they talk about GCI. Let's talk about the real number, or the number of hours they spent. I know brokers that have production values four times, five times, six times, ten times what I have. I also know some of them are miserable because they are putting in those crazy hours. I also know some of them have twenty-five people under them just doing a little bit apiece, and all they really are is a glorified manager.

**Coach's Notes:**

I love what he talks about in terms of not trying to compare yourself to anybody else.

That truly is so easy to do these days with social media always showing highlights of everyone else's life. You are in competition, but only with yourself. Are you better today than you were yesterday? Did you give as much or more than you planned on giving? I know for me, the most rewarding things I have done seem quite small when compared to people that are doing much more than me. But when I know I have given it all I had and I can see the reward at the end, I am so filled with happiness and fulfillment, and that, to me, is the true comparison.

# JOHN LAJARA

**Brokerage:** RE/MAX In the City

**Age:** 30

**Location:** Bronx, New York

**Years in Business:** 9

**Best Production Year:** 2018—65 Units—GCI 675K

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I didn't know what I was doing, so I overpriced the property. I did multiple price reductions. After that listing, I learned how to run a CMA on the property and just make sure that I take listings that are priced better. That was back in '09, so that was a rough year in real estate, a real buyer's market. Obviously, pricing it high was not the right idea. I sold it, but it was a good experience on how to work a seller and make sure things are priced right so it sells, especially in that time period.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

The day before, I look at what I did for the day so I will see any voicemails I have to return, texts, calls, and emails. The reason I do that is because sometimes you get busy during the day and sometimes we can miss a text and we can miss an email, so I have the tendency of just making sure before I end the day, in case I missed something, I can catch it right there and then.

I'll usually plan the next day: appointments, phone calls. I love time blocking—for me, that's very important, so I work around things that are priority. With real estate, a lot of things come up, things like that. I give myself gap time as well because as you know, there's a lot of distraction, and a lot of things that happen during the day, so you want to fill in those gap times in case there's an issue with a deal. I usually time block the week before, so I have an outline of the week and then the day before, I just make sure if there's

things I have to move around, I do it the day before just to make sure that I'm on track with my to-do list.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

Buying old property. I list a lot of properties and sometimes I'll come across a good deal. If it is something that makes sense, then why would I put it on the market and give it to someone else? The strategy has really been, if you're an active listing agent and you're picking up a lot of inventory, it gives you opportunities to buy and find the best deals because the market is pretty competitive. If anything is on the market, it's going to have a bidding war and the chances of getting it may be slim, especially competing with strong buyers in this market. So just really being active in listings and referrals—that has driven properties that make sense, and I've bought them. The investment strategy has just been to be a very good listing agent, and opportunities present themselves. I have a primary condo and then the other three properties are multifamily.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I have a reminder, kind of like principles that I look at, and I tend to do it every morning. I do a quick ten- to fifteen-minute recap on how to have a successful workday, successful personal day, and there I label a lot of the things that have been failures in the past and consciously remember them.

I've gotten into the habit of sometimes winging presentations. Usually if they come from a referral or something like that, since the name is brought up, I had the expectation that obviously I'll get the business because I was referred. There's been times that I didn't get the listing because maybe there was another agent that brought a more detailed presentation or whatever the case is. I stick to a structured presentation agenda that sticks in place, even if it's for my mom.

It's a series of things that need to be done so that way I can pinpoint all the things and make sure that during the presentation I'm getting that reaffirmation from them that I'm the right person. Sometimes I've gone there, just going with what I think to be the best information, and maybe it's not. I humble myself. I still have to stick to a structure and presentation to make sure that everything gets presented and I cover every angle to make sure that I get the business.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

New business has been staying in touch with clients from my database. I have a newsletter that I put out every month that is personal. Sending that out every month to stay in touch with the database and setting out a series of activities during the year for clients has been helpful.

So the most beneficial has been taking the date of birth of the client, working the call sequence around that, and following them on social media. Usually when I can call them, I have something I can talk about since I follow them on Facebook. It creates a personal, relatable connection.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

If something doesn't go as planned, it's having a mindset that something better will await me. And ever since I've kept that going, that usually always happens. A deal falls apart, then I'll have the mindset of, "Don't worry, John, after this you'll have something better that will come to the table." And then boom, out of nowhere, I'll get a past client referral or something like that.

I think that's something I've kept in mind and it always follows with something good afterward.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

A new agent sometimes will get caught up in the work mode of always trying to close deals and just focus in on the next deal and the next deal. They might ignore bringing value to some of the people they've worked with in the past because it's pretty much a closed deal and I'm just going to focus on new business. Allocate time to the people you've worked with and the people that know you. People fall short of following up on that because there's no signs of business being done from them.

Just stay in touch with those people; the business will come eventually. It is hard for people to see that now because they just want to work on what they can cash in on now.

Just don't pack it in too late. People start seeing how other successful people capture that referral base. And they're like, "Oh shoot, maybe I gotta get on that." It is not waiting until you start losing business and others do it. It's starting that foundation now and keeping it as a common business practice that needs to be done. There's no exception.

**Coach's Notes:**

There is a lot of great info here. The golden nugget at the end though is worth mentioning again. You have to stay on top of past clients and people in your database even if no immediate money is flowing in from the interactions. You have to stay top of mind because eventually, 80–90 percent of your business will come from this group if you nurture them correctly. I have acquired a lot of business over the years because somebody bought a home and never heard from their agent again. You don't want to be on the other end of this.

# JONATHAN RICH

**Brokerage:** Keller Knapp Realty

**Age:** 37

**Location:** Atlanta, Georgia

**Years in Business:** 8

**Best Production Year:** 2018—150 Units—Volume in Sales 85 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I had a deal in my neighborhood that required I cut the grass for an entire year. The way that I got the listing was that I agreed to cut the grass for them. It's the bottom of the market and I cut the grass for a year, finally got an offer, and the offer was less than what the seller owed on it, and so they just walked away and didn't sell it. And that was the end of that listing.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

A lot about the way that I run my business is pretty nontraditional. I do block schedule, but I work a lot with construction developers and so the meetings often are not stuff you can schedule out. Like, "Hey, we need to meet in thirty minutes at this location." But I typically try to block schedule the first couple hours of the day. I have meetings with my staff on Mondays and Wednesdays in the mornings, and then everything else is fairly open and it books as we go through the day. It's a 50/50 mix of rigid block scheduling and complete fluidity.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I live on the east side of Atlanta in one of the neighborhoods that are up and coming—a neighborhood called Kirkwood—and we started investing early on. We've been

renovating and doing flips before we were even real estate agents. I started investing in rentals, a real portfolio. And my strategy has been looking for longer-term holds that have good land value potential, so the exit strategies are more than what it rents for in cash flow but has potential for development. We've been really fortunate with that. Our rental portfolio over the last four years has doubled in value just because we're buying the right lots in the right locations. They still do decent cash flow. If you looked at them on a spreadsheet, their cap rates are not what traditional investors would be looking for in terms of straight cash flow, but that's just been the way we've done it and it's been really successful up until this point.

Our sweet spot is duplexes, triplexes, and quad units. So the perfect deal for us is a duplex or triplex that's also on a great lot that could potentially be developed.

We own somewhere in the neighborhood of eighteen units and it's across ten different lots. So some duplexes, some triplexes, and then we have a few commercial buildings with a partner. We own a five-unit building with another partner. I'm looking at, next year, a really big next step potential where we would be building four twelve-unit walk-up apartment buildings. So there'd be forty-eight units all together.

### **Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I bought and renovated a house in a neighborhood called Eastlake in 2007 going into 2008. That was my introduction to real estate before I was an agent. Didn't have a clue what I was doing, had a partner who had a friend that was flipping houses and being successful and he was supposed to help us, and none of that happened. After eight months, we had this house that we renovated, I put every dollar that I had at the time—I was twenty-six—into it. I had also borrowed \$30,000 from my parents, and that money was in it. It was the recession, nobody was buying the house, and the hard money limit that we had, the private lender, was like, "You haven't paid." Everything was falling apart; they're losing all of their portfolios.

Fortunately, my wife and I were in a position that we could get an owner auction loan and we moved into it. That was really hard. I had to buy my partner out, basically pay off his debt and move into it. We had zero money, but somehow we got the mortgage and moved into it. We literally moved into the largest failure of my life, our first house was this thing that didn't work. We called it the flip to flop. We lived there for three years; eventually I got my license and we started having success. We flipped another house and it went well, then we bought another house and did it. We turned it into a rental for a while. But that was by far one of the largest failures I've ever had.

I'm a firm believer that sometimes your largest failures are really just catapults toward greater success. I looked at that moment in my life and that's what that was. I don't know that I would have a career in real estate if I hadn't gone through that process.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

The majority of the business you do should be in the neighborhood you live in because that's where you have the most credibility. That's the foundation of our business, and that's the way that our team works. We're building out our team and the agents that we're hiring and training have a goal: 51 percent of your business is in the neighborhood that you live in. I think for us, the more density you can have in your business, in the neighborhood or a certain geographic area that you're working in, the more residual marketing you get from that.

And in addition, that marketing is usually free. It doesn't cost you anything. Once you get to a place where you have a sign on every street in the neighborhood, that marketing doesn't cost you anything. You can supplement it with all sorts of creative stuff. We don't do any traditional marketing. We do have a very, very strong digital presence. Instagram is huge for us, our website is really huge for driving traffic to us, so we do have that, but that really is a supplement to that geocentric model that we're building. I know that if I can get my name and my signs on as many streets as possible, people start to subconsciously realize, "Oh, if I'm ready to sell my house in this neighborhood, that's the guy to call." So that's kind of our purpose.

We're pretty diversified, I'd say digitally, but Instagram has been our primary mode of communication with new clients and prospective clients. We've put not a ton of money, but a ton of effort into building our digital platform. We also do Facebook. Facebook for us is really like a megaphone for content we're creating. We have a really strong blog, we do some video work, and we post that a lot on Facebook. Probably 30 percent of our business is coming from our digital platforms.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

This business is a marathon, it's not a sprint. In a marathon, you just have to put one foot in front of the other, and so when you have adversity or you fail at something, or something doesn't go your way, all that is just another step in the process. If you think about it as a sprint and you take two or three or four steps, now you're way off and it's really difficult to get back. If you think of it as just that long, methodic one foot in front of the other, always checking in with where you're headed, then you'll get there. This business is hard. Everyone would do it if it wasn't hard. But I don't think it's hard or impossible to accomplish your goals if you're steady and continue to move forward, one foot in front of the other.



**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Anyone can learn the technical and the legal side of real estate. Anyone can get into the book-smart side of the business, but to be really successful, you have to be very good with people and you have to care deeply. You have to be flexible to work with a lot of different personalities. This guy told me once when I first started, “Hey man, this business is just kissing frogs. All you do, you’re just kissing frogs. And every once in a while, one turns into a princess.” You have to approach it with that mentality. Every single deal is not fluffy and perfect, and you’re dealing with a ton of different people and different personalities, but you have to be consistent. And if you’re consistent and you’re good and you care, you treat everyone with a level of equality, eventually, every once in a while, one turns into a princess.

**Coach's Notes:**

Jonathan mentions multiple times that his business is nontraditional yet it works great for him. I always say, the best method is the one you will actually do consistently. This is true for prospecting or lead generation, for scheduling, and for budgeting. I love the diversity shared in this group of one hundred because there aren't any two that work the same way, yet they are all producing at a huge level. Jonathan uses Instagram and Facebook to communicate, whereas several of the agents don't use social media at all. It also goes to show how much all of us can still grow our own businesses.

# JONATHAN ABRAHAM BEZERRA

**Brokerage:** Abraham Agape Group at Keller Williams, Gainesville Realty

**Age:** 30

**Location:** Gainesville, Florida

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2017—70 Units—Volume in Sales 10 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first ever real estate deal was in Weston, Florida. I had just gotten my license. I really did not know what to do. I figured, “Hey, I am going to get my license, I am going to start selling real estate.” A guy from south Florida, thinking he can sell water to the ocean; obviously, that was not the case. I ended up every weekend going in Weston. All the communities there have security guards; they are all gated. So I would bring maybe twenty dollars’ worth of McDonald’s every Saturday and Sunday. Say, “Hey, if anybody comes in and is not working with a realtor, tell them to give me a call.” Sure enough, about six months in, somebody gave me a call and that was my first real estate deal.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I have to have a strong morning routine. I want to feel and be in control. I wake up between 4:20 a.m. and 4:30 a.m. I have what is called my “peace time,” between, let’s say, 4:30 a.m. and 5:30 a.m. No phone, I will just walk my dogs outside, maybe clean up my room a little bit, clean up the kitchen, just little stuff like that—take a shower, get my clothes ready for the day, look over my agenda again. When it hits about 5:30 a.m., 5:45 a.m., I am sending some emails out, again, prepping for the rest of the day. Between 6:00 and 6:30 a.m., I start to implement the gym. I am in the office by seven.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I am being extremely frugal with my money because when the economy does eventually take a dip, I want to be able to buy multifamily and commercial properties. Part of my five-year goal is malls. Malls will no longer exist, especially with Amazon and stuff like that. I am preparing to be able to get in with these investors when they pick a mall and then make it into a true one-stop-shop.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I was fourteen years old and I joined the multigym. And I'll never forget, this twenty-three-year-old kid beat the shit out of me inside the ring and I looked at the kid and I told him, I said, "Brother, one year from now that would never happen again." Then I trained every day for one year and he got in the ring and I definitely gave it to him.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

My best marketing strategy has been not having any marketing. Walking into a listing presentation with a black book and a cup of coffee has literally been my biggest, best strategy as far as marketing. Especially in today's economy, we live in a consumer- and customer-experience-based economy and they don't want you to be predictable. They don't want you to come in and be like the other John or the other Jane. I learned this from actually, a good realtor in town, I said, "Hey, John, you used to get a lot of listings, how did you do it?" He said, "Authenticity, Abraham. You know I walk in, you know I know I'm the master of my craft, Abraham. And I walk in and I let them know what the price is going to be, and it is what it is."

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Any time that I'm feeling like, "Okay man, I'm feeling exhausted," I'll just fucking jump off and be like, "I don't get tired!" and just get my body and my blood rolling again. One of the best pieces of advice that was said to me was, "Abraham, just remember, brother, winter never lasts forever." So it's true, even if you ever think about a hard time you have ever been in, you obviously went over it, you're still here, right? I think about those things, if I'm ever having a hard time where I'm talking to the team or whatever it is, I remember not even three years ago I was in a way worse position, so how hard can it really be right now?

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

The best thing I ever did was get a coach that's part of my business, that I paid specifically to make sure I succeeded. Every person that I personally know that's gotten a coach is succeeding. They are truly succeeding.

**Coach's Notes:**

You will notice that there are certain behaviors that almost all top producers have. Jonathan starts his day with one of these. He calls it his Peace Time. It is a designated time to gain clarity on his intentions and goals for the day. Whether you call it "jam time," "peace time," or "focus time"—it is critical that one of the first things that you do when you wake up is to take the time when you are fresh and clear to make sure that everything is lined up to crush your day.

# JUDITH GABLER

**Brokerage:** Gabler Realty

**Age:** 29

**Location:** Delmar, New York

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2018—21.5 Million—105 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It became part of my first job out of college, very part-time, and I kept my license up when I left that position after two years. Within a few months I realized that I was pretty good at this whole real estate thing and decided to put 100 percent into it. I had an amazing manager and experienced agents who allowed me to help them when I asked if I could, and I ultimately learned so much from them by helping them with inspections, appraisals, showings, and so on.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I am up by 6:00 a.m. at the latest every day. I have a cup of coffee with my dog Lucy by my side and read a few articles or an empowering book, check emails, and scan through my day to double-check that I'm prepared. I then head out for a run or playtime with Lucy. I'm ready to take on the crazy workday by 8:30 a.m. Mornings are so valuable to me since we work so late in this business. I rarely pick up the phone if I get a call before then.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I own my own home of course, but below my means because I have investing goals that I am preparing for. I just opened my own real estate firm last year, so I purchased and

rehabbed that commercial building. Once I have the cash flow I need again, I'll be purchasing my first rental unit.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

When I first found out what I was capable of, my drive was a force to be reckoned with. I missed out on a lot of valuable, fulfilling time with my family, friends, and significant others over the first few years. It was a serious wake-up call when my best friend, who is my husband and ultimate supporter, called me in the middle of the day because he didn't think he would ever really see me again and felt our marriage was ending. That is how much I was working and wow, did that conversation hurt. I immediately called a real estate coach who helped me get out of the weeds. Within a week I had hired my first assistant, and within four months, I had built a small and powerful team, which took a huge load off of my plate. I really encourage every new agent to make sure you plan a day (or even just an evening) with whomever is important to you every week. If you can't find that time, then you need to find someone to help you give that time back to you, and give it back to your loved ones.

That help will give you a much more fulfilling life. I was on a dark path to wealth, but loneliness. My assistant and team became the light that I needed to head toward for serenity and I am extremely thankful for them every day, especially more so as we prepare to start a family.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Investing in an amazing photographer, or even hiring two for the same property so you get exactly what you want. Photos are everything! They are the first item in a listing that buyers look through, and then they will read on. As far as social media strategy goes, Facebook and Instagram have been huge for us. I know "boosted posts" and advertising will always change for social media, but as long as we stay with the times, we'll be able to keep up and show off our listings the best way possible.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

The more business you do, the more challenges you'll face on a daily basis. Every single deal is unique and has something that needs to be tackled that couldn't be avoided by you. My one piece of advice is not to delay in telling your customer what the problem is and how you're going to work with them to solve it. It's really hard to have those conversations. If a deal has gone south, I just keep it positive, for example, "We now know that this wasn't the right buyer for your home, but we will get your house sold again soon!"

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

For every new agent, there is a very busy agent who could use your help. Find someone who is producing a lot and ask them if you can help them cover inspections, showings, walk-throughs, etc. Just by listening to them explain how to handle certain situations (because they want to protect their image in front of their clients), you will pick up on how to present yourself too. You won't learn anything from fumbling through a deal on your own. You need to find someone you can help so that they can help you understand the business in return.

**Coach's Notes:**

In the last twenty-five years of being involved in this industry, I have had thousands of conversations with great agents who say, "I would like to sell more homes BUT... I'm already working more than I want and making sacrifices with my family, health, etc." Judi makes a key point, and that is the word LEVERAGE. One of my mentors used to tell me, "Learn to succeed through people." When you can step out of the role of single agent and begin to intelligently grow a team, you are in essence buying back your freedom and also increasing your ceiling of production. When growth is done strategically, you can still maintain high profit while maintaining balance in your life.

# JULIAN JACKSON

**Brokerage:** EXP Realty

**Age:** 33

**Location:** Atlanta, Georgia

**Years in Business:** 4

**Best Production Year:** 2017—64 Units—Volume in Sales 7 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I remember not knowing very much of anything. I did not have the GAR contract that a lot of agents use in Atlanta, so it was pretty much learn-as-you-go and ask questions as you go. My first transaction was a referral from another agent. I just showed them that I was a hustler and that I was willing to get the property closed, which meant they would get paid and I would get paid. I showed the house. They were saying, “Okay, well, they’re going to make a decision,” and they were actually trying to work through another agency. The house went to multiple offers, and I said to make the decision quickly. I closed the house and it ended up being, I believe, a \$421,000 property.

My second deal happened, I think, maybe within the same week and that one was a \$55,000 deal.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I organize my day by my Google calendar. Usually about 9:00 a.m. I really start working in my day. I’m getting phone calls and stuff like that but then afterward it’s just kind of like okay, I might have to get contract stuff done. Right now, I have, I think, twelve properties under contract. I’m actually running everything myself, I actually need to get a contract-to-close person or an administrative assistant. It’s one of those things like cutting your grass. It comes to a certain point in your life that you make more money not cutting the grass and just paying someone else to cut the grass.



**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I just purchased a house. I'm bullish on areas that are just gentrifying quickly or close to areas that are already big.

I caught the waves of gentrification happening because in, at least in Atlanta, people are moving in Fulton county. They're moving more into the city instead of the suburbs due to traffic and other circumstances.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I was in medical sales after I graduated college, and I went from medical sales to a different sales job. I moved down here to Atlanta and got another job that was low paying. It was paying about \$38,000 with a master's degree, which I felt I deserved to be paid more. I got a higher paying job at \$60,000. I thought things were finally moving forward, and I got fired from that job six months later. I just wasn't bringing the sales in, so I just thought, "Man, I'm not good at sales." What I realized is, there are some sales that someone is great at and they might not necessarily be good at another type of sales.

I'm very good with relationship-based sales as opposed to medical, which isn't relationship-based. It was finding the right thing to do. I failed multiple times, but I now do something that I love.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

A mixture of social media and Zillow. I would say Facebook is my go-to place for free advertising.

It pays off. Luckily, I'm in an area where people love to talk with each other, and it's not so overpriced, so people haven't lost that sense of community. So they do a lot of talking online, there's a lot of neighborhood groups in the area. When you have a listing come up, you're able to put it up in one of the neighborhood groups and let people know, "Oh, there's another listing coming on in the area." That is very helpful and I've gotten numerous listings that way. Most recently, I had a listing in the neighborhood called The Deer Park, and literally the lady reached out to me on Facebook, on my personal Facebook, asking me if I would sell her home. I sold her house for \$331,000.

Zillow also works very well even though it's for pay. One of the lenders I work with pays half of it. We're able to split the cost.

From the turnover that I get with it, it's more than paid for, many times over. Facebook is free advertising. You're not even boosting or anything on there.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

This is a whole lot better than the \$60,000 job that I had.

I always go back in the day to when I had my highest paying job, before I got into real estate, and I always do the math in my head. That salary was about \$2,100 every two weeks. And in my head I'm like, even on my worst days and on my worst trend, everything is still a whole lot better than that, on my worst day.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Believe in yourself. I remember when I first started, I let everyone know I was getting in real estate. I called every number in my phone book, from the girl I met at the club that one time and got her number, I called everyone. A lot of people didn't respond to it whatsoever. But then there was one person that I met at a wedding who was really cool, and they referred me to another person who ended up buying a condo from me. You never know where your leads are going to come from. You never know when people are going to really start supporting you.

From my personal experience, it took a whole year before people really started saying, "You know what, I'm going to reach out to this guy and work with him." For that whole first year, I still had to sell homes. I sold fourteen homes but it was more of like, okay, I have one under contract, and then nothing under contract, and then one under contract.

Don't stop believing in yourself. The first year is going to be hard, but if you hustle and you play the game like you are broke, and if you treat real estate like that, like you have no other option of being successful, oh, you're going to have a crazy-ass story to tell.

**Coach's Notes:**

Your first year in real estate...YOU ARE A STARTUP COMPANY. Julian exemplifies this. Read over the interview again (especially the end). He called everyone that he knew and got very little traction. He faced adversity, after adversity, after adversity and simply did not give up. I want to state this again: YOU ARE A STARTUP, which means that you are going to put in long hours, experience high levels of rejection, and probably make sacrifices that you weren't expecting. However, this is a game of attrition and the person who simply keeps moving forward will always win.

# KARA PIERCE CHEN

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams

**Age:** 31

**Location:** Hershey, Pennsylvania

**Years in Business:** 4

**Best Production Year:** 2018—98 Units—Volume in Sales 20 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I found a renter to rent an apartment and got like \$200 out of it.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

My husband is a radiology resident, which means he is either at the hospital working or studying. We have two boys—five and two. When they were little and I was breastfeeding, I would take care of them during the day, then work like a maniac during naptime and at night if they slept. Now the five-year-old is enrolled in a full-time private preschool (paid by my real estate earnings, thank goodness). I have nannies and tutors for my two-year-old but still spend a ton of time with him during the day. Though I've freed up some time by leveraging childcare in the last year, my business has also grown exponentially. So the extra daytime hours that I used to spend taking care of my kids have been filled with appointments instead. Most weekends and some weekdays, I'm out on listing and buyer appointments from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. I try getting computer work (contracts, emails, etc.) done during the kids' naptime. In the last year, I've leveraged a lot of the paperwork/admin to assistants. I'm still learning the hiring/managing part of the business. It's been fun learning this component. I have a contract manager now, hired a showing assistant (completely changed my life), and am trying to onboard two more assistants to help with administration and events, etc. I usually either go to sleep or get up around 4:00 a.m. to keep up with the business demands. I love working in

the dead of night because that's when my cell finally shuts the eff up and I stop getting harassed with emails/texts/FB and Insta messages for a few hours. I usually pull like 100- 120-hour weeks during the spring/summer season. Honestly, compared to some of the hours I had to pull in med school, it's not that bad. My husband and our surgery resident friends have to pull all-nighters pretty regularly. I just happen to do it by choice. My dad was also a colonel in the Korean Army. He was super intense, and when we immigrated to the US, he worked three jobs at a time to make ends meet. Our family members are used to operating at high intensity on four to six hours of sleep. I'm hoping as my knowledge and skills in business increase, my hours will decrease. But right now, I'm still grinding super hard, seven days a week.

Appointments/calls/settlements during the day, emails/paperwork/business at night. Sleep sometimes.

### **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

As I quickly climbed the production ladder, I was invited to different masterminds. At one, I sat next to this multimillionaire during dinner. He was like, "Dude, you're so young. If I were you, I'd just buy one house a year for the next fifteen years." Sounded easy enough, so I told my husband the game plan when I got home, and we've been doing it. That year, I bought a condo and rented it out to a physician resident. Repeated eight months later. This year, I'm on track to buy three more. A single-family home for our family (I'll rent out my current one), a triplex I was asked to sell, and a townhome a friend wants to rent but can't afford to buy.

My first year in real estate, I made \$150,000. My second year, I doubled it. After a while, I had a few hundred thousand sitting in my bank account. I opened up some money market accounts. Actively investing it in some stocks and mostly real estate has been much more lucrative than passive bank interest. We live near the hospital, and I get a steady flow of physician renters every spring. They're awesome tenants—rarely home, usually single or married with no kids, no time for pets. It's been a good way to build my portfolio.

### **Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I was a real hotshot in violin growing up, always the number one in school. I cruised on natural talent for a few years. As a freshman in high school, I auditioned in the district competition with all high school students from a bunch of different schools in the area. You had to be in the top forty to make it. I had a great time hanging out with friends while we sat in long lines to audition. I got my results back and ranked number sixty-eight. It's funny thinking back on how that was just a nice good slap in the face. Very

healthy for a thirteen-year-old girl. That next year I was obsessed with making it in the top forty. I found a new violin teacher, got very structured with practicing, and actually drilled for the first time. My fingers bled all the time from playing too much, my mom would bang on my door and yell at me to stop playing the #@^% violin—it was bad.

The night before my audition, I stayed up all night jumping in and out of bed fingering all the scales, looking over the solo piece, being a complete lunatic. I couldn't unwind, and my nerves were dancing. The next day, a school bus drove us to Dalls-town High School, which was a good drive from our school. I fell asleep while the other musicians laughed and chatted with their instruments on their laps. My stand partner woke me up, and we joined thousands of students jumbling into the school auditorium to unpack our instruments. When the violinists began heading toward the long lines, I stayed back so I could get in line with people I didn't know. I didn't want to talk to anyone as I mentally prepared for my auditions. I sat in the hallways staring at my solo piece on the floor as the lines snaked toward the dreaded three audition rooms. When you make it to the door, you enter a freezing cold room. A few judges sit on the far side with their backs turned to you. In the center of the room is a heavy black stand that bears either a sight-reading piece you've never seen before, a portion of the solo you've prepared, or three letters that indicate the scales you need to play. Because there are so many musicians, this process takes all day. At the end of the day, we were divided into different classrooms by alphabet, and they called each name. I got up when they called my name, took the white scorecard without looking, and meandered through the throngs until I could find a private corner. I stared at the envelope for an eternity, unable to open it. My lowest score the year before was in sight-reading. Which was always the hardest for me, my Achilles heel. I decided to look at that first—25/25. A perfect score? The rest of my scores were high, really high. I had ranked number one out of all high school students in the district as a sophomore.

That experience as a fourteen-year-old high school student taught me that failure is a strong fuel for success. I'm so grateful to have experienced that. Life is good, it's fun, a challenge. Get up and show the world what you're made of.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I pay almost nothing in marketing right now. Not because I should but because I can barely keep up with demand as it is with my current business structure. I give \$100 to Zillow just to have my reviews up there. I know I'm just a noob at this point trying to figure out how to structure a bigger machine that can handle and process business more efficiently. At that point, I'll have to learn how to market like a real business owner. Up to this point, my strategy has been to make sure the clients I had become raving fans.

And not just them—the agent on the other side of the table, my partners in lending/inspection/title, everyone I work with. On social media, I highlight what my clients are doing more than what I’m doing. If somebody has a baby, I send them pizza. If someone has a birthday, sometimes I send flowers. My time right now is so wrapped up in the business that I don’t have as much time to put toward marketing. I’m trying to learn how I can leverage that piece out. In the meantime, I trade quantity (time) for quality (impact). Even if I only connect once a year, that handwritten card or thoughtful gift seems to make up for frequency. Ninety-five percent of my current business is referrals from past clients, associated partners, and other agents.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

You could be giving birth to your fourth child in a rice field right now. My dad was born in the year after the Korean War ended. His older brother died as a baby, his dad died when his youngest sister was a baby, and my grandma was sporadically trying to poison her four living children to death with Coumadin so she didn’t have to watch them starve slowly to death instead. So honestly, the chances of going through a worse life than my recent ancestors are pretty low for me.

My dad as an adult is an austere survivor of terrible experiences with more grit than I touch. He hasn’t shared much about his past, but from the handful of stories I’ve picked up in three decades, I’ve woven together a sense of his childhood—whether it’s accurate or not. One of the stories was of seeing pregnant women working in the rice fields, wandering away for a few hours into the woods and then coming back with a baby tied onto them to finish their workday. Um, what? This story left such a strong impact on me for some reason, that when I was pregnant with our first kid, I decided I was going to just wander into a comfortable corner of our then-apartment on our med school campus and give birth naturally like these Korean women of yore. It was the most mortal experience I’ve ever had. My husband wasn’t super happy about my resolve to do this, but he was on a surgery trauma rotation and had been awake for thirty-six hours when my water broke. So he was probably too tired to fight me on my decision. Anyway, at the beginning of labor, it barely hurt. After a few hours, I drove myself out to Panera Bread and got some food since my husband couldn’t get out of work until later that night. Fifteen hours later, I had locked myself in our only bathroom, curled down into the bathtub and prayed for death. Soon after I’d reached kill-me-now mode, the baby came looking like an alien (I had expected them to come out looking all perfect, but no. They are bloody and scary looking.). That’s probably not book-appropriate—but my point is that as I held my first child after completing my rice paddy project, I was looking at this alien-like creature and was filled with an immortal depth of peace and joy. I’m sure it was chemical endorphins, but I doubt any drug can make you that high. I believe it is a law of nature, that adversity

is the precursor to reward. The breakdowns before the breakthroughs. I joined a small, independent brokerage when I first went into real estate. I had begun in October (start of the dead season in Central Pennsylvania), and I literally made no money, had zero transactions for a few months. Everyone in the office was so nice and supportive, super helpful if I had questions. Then the weather got warmer, spring arrived, and I started killing it—thirty-six sales my first year. As my success skyrocketed quickly, the attitudes of the people in my brokerage began shifting. Especially this one woman in the office who was a top agent and had partnered with a man in the same office. They began spreading rumors about me. One day, one of the managers told me that the two had reported that I was stealing listing files from them and other agents. He rolled his eyes and told me that jealousy turns people ugly and that as my success grows, the target on my back will as well. But he didn't want to intervene because he didn't want to lose any agents. One day, this same agent physically stole my book bag from my desk in the cubbies and took a listing folder I had, along with a few other items. I never saw them again. Management didn't want to lose me or the other agent, so they didn't do anything despite the heavy evidence. My husband and I decided we couldn't stay in a brokerage that would tolerate this type of culture. We began looking around. When I made the switch to a Keller Williams brokerage, it opened doors to a 100 percent commission cap (which put \$86,000 more into my pocket in my second year than I would have had if I had stayed at my first brokerage) and gave me the opportunities to go to national trainings and mastermind with some of the top agents in the country. One of my agent colleagues urged my husband to get me to apply for 30 Under 30, and a year later I was on the cover of *REALTOR Magazine*. Last year, Keller Williams International flew me out to their headquarters for an interview and photo shoot, and I will be on the cover of *Outfront*, their international magazine. I never would have had these experiences/opportunities if that agent didn't make my life hellish at my first brokerage. Since that debacle, I get a little excited when people start making my life a little more miserable than usual. It's always a sure indication of exciting things around the corner.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

It never fails when you invest in yourself. I went to medical school after college because I didn't know what the hell to do with my life.

After college I applied to a handful of med schools and got interviews at every single one of them except Harvard. Including Penn and Dartmouth. Well, what the heck, I interviewed and got letters of acceptance. Then I said, "No way, I don't want to go to med school." But I didn't have a stable family to go live with while I figured out my life. I briefly contemplated jumping on a train to get the heck out of Dodge, but I didn't have

much money. I didn't know what else to do, so I took a scholarship at Penn State College of Medicine. I hated it from the moment I stepped foot on campus. I got 100 percent on my first test and followed that with a prescription for Prozac. I gained a bunch of weight, didn't make many friends, and made a few enemies. As if in a trance, I just trudged along with it for two years because it was the path of least resistance. Though I had no undergrad loans, I put myself into over \$100,000 of med school debt because it looked nice to be a doctor, my parents were happy about it, and I didn't have the guts to try something else. You know, anyone can do anything on battery life. But batteries run out, and after my second year, I knew I was dying. I wasn't happy, and I needed to find a sustainable resource to fuel my life—those so-called passions. I turned in a letter and began what I had delayed since high school. I began soul searching. That journey was hard, especially in the face of all the people who were aghast at my decision to leave medicine: the prestige, the job stability, the debt!

Three years later, I was making more money in my twenties than most physicians do after finishing training in their mid-to-late thirties. Six years later, I've doubled that. More importantly, I'm not taking antidepressants. I'm physically and mentally healthier than I've been since high school. I have an awesome husband and kids I can make time for. I'm so grateful I went to med school and left with so much debt. It motivated me to build wealth quickly—and help others do it. It taught me I can lie to everyone but myself. It gives me a good conversational basis to discuss subarachnoid hemorrhages with my husband.

Don't be afraid to leave something good to pursue something great. You'll help a lot more people if you're fueled off passion than that good-for-nothing fear. Find purpose and meaning in this short thing called life. If real estate isn't it, find what is—and fight for it.

### **Coach's Notes:**

I loved this interview and perspective from somebody that had a background in the medical field. So often in real estate we think working forty hours a week is a lot, but Kara talks about weeks where she works over 100 hours. I have done this on very, very rare occasions but I have to say, if you are looking to get ahead, the quickest way to do it is to take massive action toward your business as Kara has.



# KATE WILLE

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty Professionals

**Age:** 36

**Location:** Portland, Oregon

**Years in Business:** 12

**Best Production Year:** 2015—92 Units—Volume in Sales 31 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I was a buyer's agent on a team at a different brokerage and it was friend of mine, so I was working with the team lead on going through the process. It was really hard to explain expectations just because, one as a friend, and two as somebody my age entering the market using online calculators.

They had a different price point than what they were ultimately preapproved for, and so from the start we weren't finding what we originally hoped for, and it just made it hard to keep momentum and stay excited about the process when it was already stressful and now the options were limited.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I try to get up early enough to block out substantial time for myself in the morning because about when 9:00 a.m. hits, you don't really ever get time to yourself again. So anything that needs to happen for my soul or health needs to happen before that.

I try to knock out five things a day by noon. So I have a general weekly, I call it my "dashboard," that I carry around. Sort of a checklist of everything that needs to happen in my world is a landing page for that. Every morning I pick five things with a goal to get them done before noon so the rest of the afternoon can be available for the chaos of real estate that shows up when something inevitably arises. That way I'm not putting out those fires and still have these big-ticket items looming over me.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

We just bought our third property a couple weeks ago. I was probably a little late getting into the investing game just because you get nervous about making all of that work. I really focused on a few houses in a community that I love and adore and had lived in previously.

My preference is to buy one more home in Portland because there aren't a lot of them and I think there's this big generation that's going to be downsizing, looking for one-levels, and we just don't have that. I'm thinking about my in-laws and my parents.

I'm trying to focus on something that would be appealing to many, including my own needs long-term. Because you know, I want something that is in a community that I can ultimately live in if I have to sell everything else and move into the cheapest property I've got.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

When I had bought a house. I was super overwhelmed. I made a book called "Kate's Guide to Buying a Home," a little pamphlet. A realtor saw it, hired me to join a team. And I was so dedicated those first five years to explaining the process and really doing education-based work for clients because I felt like it went too fast for my pace when I was buying.

So I built a business off of providing that value, and then I realized as I got busy and as it became habit, you know, you're selling fifty to a hundred homes a year, you see a lot and you forget some of those basic details. And whether they're new buyers or veteran buyers, I realized that I was going too fast and I was losing clients and they weren't having the experience and the customer service.

I just let the process overwhelm me, and I also got too comfortable with the process. And I feel like I let a lot of people down. I don't necessarily feel like I can put like a value on that, or an actual number on the loss, but I saw it in the way the clients experienced a transaction and that was really hard when they weren't getting out of it what I so badly wanted to provide them.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

We are about 80 percent referral-based, so I really believe in the belly-to-belly relationship. I think that from a marketing perspective, we personally do a lot of open houses because that's the way to meet new people that aren't in our tribe. And we are there to provide information.

We don't just open a door and hold an open house. We provide a lot of value. We have a big bulletin board that talks about the neighborhood. We get local businesses

involved so people know that they're there. New to the neighborhood? Go have lunch at this awesome restaurant down the street.

It provides conversations and those people might just be starting their process, so once you feel that belly-to-belly contact, we put them into a follow-up campaign that is very organized so that we don't lose that opportunity. We don't cast our net very wide, but we go pretty deep with clients and we go quickly to a relationship. Not just a lead.

It takes a little more up-front. We spend more money on our open houses and we have a lot of fun, and we're kind of known for those in our market, actually. People stop by just because they know it's our open house, and it allows us to maybe put that money there. It's time out of our day, but those relationships are so much more real that with consistent follow ups, they'll convert at a much higher level.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

It's very important to me that I know my members, I know my information, I know who I am as a person because if I'm authentic and I'm smart, then I feel like I can feel confident in whatever I'm providing. Being solution-based and thinking as a project manager, how to get to the end together, usually is what I try to do. Like if I don't have the information, then I will go find it so I can feel confident that I have a plan in place to achieve what I need to.

### **What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

I call it "when somebody raises their hand" about real estate, so it happens for me a lot of times in coffee shops, in bars, in grocery stores, where I run into people and they start chatting and they start mentioning, "Oh, my grandma wants to sell her house."

If you have a plan, then those have done more business for me. We have a new lead template that we submit every time one of those conversations happens, with as much captured information as we have, and then we have a five-step plan to follow up with them.

Sometimes it turns out they're really a few years out, so we do that. We have a two-year plan, and we never let those people fall through the cracks. And I think that is where we've had incredible business over the years because we've maintained those relationships or contacts where so many people let them slip through the cracks.

And it's afforded us the opportunity to have that relationship business instead of having to buy leads or do things that don't feel authentic to us. So when somebody mentions that they want to buy or sell, do everything you can to get as much contact information as possible and put them on some sort of follow-up plan so that you can remind them a week later, "Hey, when I ran into you, you mentioned your grandma wants to sell her house. Do you think it'd be okay if I reach out to her? Do you want to give her my info?"

You know, just kind of trickle that in. Not in a creepy way, but in a like, very authentic, “Hey, I’m here to help. Let me be that resource.” And it could be six more times of running into them before you’ve established that, but just don’t give up. Don’t forget about it because that could lead to something really great if you just follow up.

**Coach’s Notes:**

Success is simple, but not always easy! There are many nuggets from Kate; however, as a coach, what I truly love that she does is a technique called “chunking,” taking large tasks and breaking it down to a few key things that will act as dominos to push everything else forward. Kate’s Rule of 5 (five things to do before noon) is brilliant. This keeps you from becoming overwhelmed, and focused on things that make a difference versus things that just take up time or are easy. What are your key five things that you have to do every day before noon?

# KEITHAN JONES

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty

**Age:** 30

**Location:** Montgomery, Alabama

**Years in Business:** 1

**Best Production Year:** 2018—50 Units—Volume in Sales 50 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

When I first got started, on day one, I just started calling For Sale by Owners. I was just calling and calling and calling. And I ended up calling over 150 For Sale by Owners in two days and got a couple of listings. My first deal was \$15,000. It was my listing, and it took me two months to sell it. It was a small paycheck, but I was able to get a couple of bills paid up with that commission and yeah, it just went uphill from there.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I just go with the flow. If I have plans, if I have appointments, I might drop them in my phone. I have a notebook that I carry around and it's got everything in it, and I take pictures of the pages or whatever so in case it ever gets forgotten, I have it. I work with whatever works best for the client. If the client says they need me at this date and time, I'm always available. Just don't double-book.

In the morning it's gym, breakfast, lead generation. You know, health and body first. And then getting ready and going to work and following up with clients. Seeing what's going on in the real estate world, who's having open houses today. Are there any seminars that I can attend? See what the Board of Realtors has going on. Everything real estate. Looking at the markets, seeing if new houses have come up.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

It's getting homes at good prices and starting at a good price and being conservative with budgets and just watching everything.

I'm in the process of flipping my first one right now, and so far it's going really good. It's actually an old historic home, a designated historic home down here in Montgomery, and it's 5,000 square feet. The thing is huge.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I had a buyer and they were USDA, and I put a lot of options in front of them, but their criteria was so specific that the options were not suitable. They were just so picky, so I felt like I failed them because I didn't find them the perfect home. I blame myself for that. I feel like the perfect home is always out there for everyone, in a way.

It just takes a lot of hard work to find it, so that kind of increased my awareness and diligence in checking the market daily and trying not to miss anything that comes on the market. I want to be the first one to know about it just so I can better serve the client.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I put my listings on Craigslist, and I can't tell you how many times I've been able to get the whole pie from just putting it on Craigslist. Because believe it or not, buyers are on Craigslist and they're looking for deals wherever they can find a deal.

If I put it on Craigslist, I'm finding a buyer.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I've already hit rock bottom. A couple of years ago or so, I lived in my car for seven months.

Oh, God. Ask me about the time my car got impounded by the police and I'm on the side of the road, and that's my house that they're taking away, but that's a story for another day. It's just I've already hit rock bottom.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

The first one is people will screw you with no conscience. The politically correct way to say this is it is a very rewarding, but also very relentless business. Only the strong survive. That could be staying strong and working and also strong in the stuff that people are going to try to get over on you. You have to be physically strong and mentally strong.

**Coach's Notes:**

I believe that there is no situation that you cannot outwork. PERIOD! Keithan was living in his car and his car gets impounded. He had two choices: (1) fold to the pressure of the situation or (2) outwork the situation. So what did he do? Got on the phone and called the dreaded For Sale By Owner. A hundred and fifty calls later he had two listings, sold them, got some smaller commissions and began to chip into his debt. No matter what your story, background, or current situation, you can solve that situation through hard work, grit, and sweat equity.

# KERI WHITE

**Brokerage:** The Agency

**Age:** 33

**Location:** Santa Monica, California

**Years in Business:** 15

**Best Production Year:** 49 Units—690 GCI

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

The first one I did by myself was this Mexican guy, and I don't remember how I met him. The beginning of my career is a blur. Back then I wasn't coaching, I wasn't organized, and I wasn't keeping track of everything. I finally started keeping track of things six years ago.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I look at my day a week in advance, usually on Sunday. I have all my appointments set up in a calendar along with showings, and any really important follow ups I'll put in the calendar. I schedule based on having my mornings open to follow up on prospects, and then I start any showings or meetings that I need to do around 11:00 a.m. or noon and keep 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. open for showings and listing appointments, usually. I try not to be addicted to email or reactive to email, and I try to do the things I need to get done first in the morning. Every week I usually allow two or three time spots for client lunches, client happy hours, and client meetings. I have so many clients that it tends to be more than that, so most nights I am at happy hour with clients or something.

My morning routine, I'm not being cliché when I say this, it is my everything, and I've been very diligent about this for the last four years. I get up and do something for my headspace. I usually work out five or six days at most in the morning but if not, I will go on a walk on the beach, or I will do a little fifteen-minute yoga on YouTube so I have



some clarity to kind of think and process that day and pick a focus word, whether it be *trust* or *love* or whatever they tell you to pick.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

My goal is investment properties. I have two properties right now and we have turned some of the units into short-term rentals. They've taken up a lot of time, more than I've wanted, running that side of things and that side of the business.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I fail every day. Not getting clients, not getting a listing or whatever. Just because I have so many people I'm dealing with that I can't possibly win it all. Failed in life, I mean, I guess leaving relationships, and prioritizing work over them. I had a friend last year that kind of told me where to go because I canceled on her three or four times in a row and she was very busy and arranging for me, and we ended up not talking for probably six or seven months. She was a very dear friend of mine, and we slowly have been able to reconnect. I'm trying not to get emotional. I'd say that was a big failure. And definitely not being there for my parents at some point last year. They live really close to me, and I just put work before them all the time.

I've learned that I can't control everything and that failure is necessary. To take it not personally that I did something wrong but learn where I can improve for next time and try to do it better the next time and to let it go. I don't have any drama stories in my life, and I don't have that good rags to riches story. I'm just like a regular chick who's hustling and kicking ass.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

My past client strategy and follow up is great. I keep in touch, follow market reports, I try to see them, I wish them happy birthday, happy anniversary, and I add them all on social media because that's a really powerful campaign for me. I stay in touch with my past clients and I do a lot of repeat business. Ninety percent of my past clients work with me again. Another one would be buyer letters that we've sent out. We get a lot of off-market calls, and we've been able to sell buyer to property direct off-market with no listing agent, which is pretty productive.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Not to worry until there is a reason to worry. Not to blame, and to look to how to solve the problem. A glass of wine helps, and so does sleeping on it.

In cases of adversity, if there was a difficulty in other ways, not just to light a fire to put out, I look at where it could have gone wrong and then realign with new goals to get things back on track.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

It's not easy. Expect to fail, and get on any type of coaching or mentorship program that you can because it's an insane business, and it's not what you think it's going to be. It's a lot of hard work. Most people don't have the spine for it. It can be very rewarding, but there's so many people out there that have been there and done it. Jump onto one of their teams or coaching programs, do the time, pay the dues, financially, and see if it really works for you after a year, six months or a year, and if it's working, dig in and work your ass off.

**Coach's Notes:**

To truly create a duplicatable and predictable business, it is necessary to have at your base a strong strategy for repeat and referral transactions. What Keri has done is very admirable. Ninety percent of her clients work with her again. Why? Because she doesn't just look at them as a transaction, she looks at them as a true person, buying or selling their greatest asset, and then she follows up effectively with them throughout the year. I notice that this is one of the greatest holes in most agents' businesses. They have no system or strategy for post-closing follow up. When you develop a system to send twelve emails a year, twelve direct mail, two to three client events a year, and four calls/conversations, then a database of a hundred past clients will yield ten transactions a year (10 percent of the total) database.

# KIMBERLY WARD

**Brokerage:** Compass

**Age:** 30

**Location:** Santa Clara County, California

**Years in Business:** 4

**Best Production Year:** 2018—PCI 350

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was good. It was with an investor that I met through LinkedIn. I basically did everything I could to get the deal to close. I had to crawl under the house to inspect something the inspector couldn't access—I had to run to the hardware store and grab a saw, crawl under the house and cut something open. I was in heels and a white blouse and I came up covered in dust. It was an all-cash client doing a quick close, so I just wanted to make sure we didn't delay anything because they were working with a tight time frame, and it was in Carmel. It was basically a million-dollar teardown. But we had to have access, so I just remember in that moment being like: this needs to happen and I'm the only one that's going to be able to get this to happen. So I drove to the hardware store, I called the seller's agent, and they gave me approval to basically open it up and I went to work.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I've got three young kids, so it always pretty much starts with family life. That has always been my priority, and I try to schedule properly. I have a nanny and she comes on certain days at certain times, and I structure around what I've got going on with my kids, what I've got going around with my clients. I structure them on days that my nanny is here. I get up normally around five o'clock and I'm sure any agent will tell you, the first thing they do is check their emails, get updated on their transactions going on, making

sure everything's going out properly, and then I move on with the traditional day-to-day life of getting kids to school. And then going to work.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I grew up here in Carmel, in construction real estate, and we flipped homes on the regular.

That's actually what got me into the business. My dad retired when he was forty-five, and he was very affluent and did very well for himself. I wanted my whole life to have a very similar structure and just be very financially solid. I've done spaces and flips with investors and clients, but I haven't done any on my own. That's a goal for this next year. We have our own house and then we have a rental as well in another state. Our goal is if we find a great rental opportunity to pick it up because rents here, the prices are just crazy. We'll pick one up if it's in good condition, or if it needs to be rehabbed into better margins, then we go that route.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I had a client, an investor, looking to buy a great rental, so I found her a place and we got it in escrow at a great deal. And then we asked for a credit or repairs to be made and her agent gave me the verbal green light, and then she sent over an email and said, "Tell her signatures are here." I looked at it on my phone and it was a really grainy scan, and so because her email said sellers are on board, all good, I took that as okay, we can remove contingencies and move forward to close.

So I had my transaction coordinator send out that, and signed it and sent it back, and then right as we were getting ready to close, that several thousand-dollar credit apparently wasn't there because although she said in her email her client was good, they actually declined the credit. It was a huge oversight on my part. I should have waited and looked at the document on my computer and made sure everything said everything the way it should have been. If not, I should have gone back to them. I took the language on the email to mean we were all good, and we actually weren't.

I ended up making pennies on that escrow because I ended up giving my buyer the credit that she was supposed to get because she had been an investor I had worked with several times and I wanted to make sure I made it right. You'll be damn sure I'll never make that mistake again, and now I sign two documents that come in and every paper that comes to me, I take a look and I triple-check.

It's such a fast-paced, moving business that if you don't stop and look at everything, you're going to shoot yourself in the foot, and it's good to get a reminder of what you need to do and how you need to do it.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Online. That sounds crazy, but when I first got into the business, I was in the business for about six months. I had a few listings, I had my one sale, but I researched every avenue. How to really just get the best return of investment, and everyone that I knew said paying for online leads like Zillow or Realtor.com or things like that was just a terrible idea. I looked at it and I thought, “Well, if no one else is doing it, why don’t I give it a shot?” So I gave it a shot and honestly, it’s been ridiculously awesome and paid hand over fist every time. I actually get a great return. I think it depends on the person, but I think it’s because I’m so responsive. The moment they come in, I’m calling and I’m making appointments, and setting times up for people to see them. I spend close to probably \$15,000 on paid marketing, and a majority of that’s Zillow.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

When I first got started I was actually a single parent, so the get up and go was tough. The constant grind was hard, and my kids would come with me to early morning showings, to late night showings. They were with me all the time, and sometimes it was a lot harder than others.

I used to hear this all the time, “This too shall pass.” I’ll just always remember just to bear down even harder and work harder and not give up and that always just paid off. Instead of getting frustrated and throwing up your hands because this business is such a roller coaster, I would just work harder, I’d work smarter, and I think that’s honestly why I am where I am today.

In the past that success was because I never stopped, and the more you’re in it, you find more and more ways to better balance and better prioritize. The escrows are traditionally thirty days long and after thirty days, you move on. Some of the more challenging clients you don’t have to deal with anymore, and I think that’s really what it comes down to. Remembering that the hard times are going to pass. You’re going to have some amazing clients, awesome learning experiences, and just not giving up and making sure your life is a priority and that you’re not getting burned out.

**What’s one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

I’d tell them to invest in themselves. Not just emotionally or physically, but financially. Invest in your business. Someone once told me, “Why would I bet on you if you’re not willing to bet on yourself?” And they weren’t speaking to me in the situation, but they were basically saying, “Look, if you want to be successful, the first person who’s going to bet on you needs to be yourself.”

I honestly think the more my business grew, the more I reinvested money that I was getting back into my business, and then it just continued to grow. If you're going to grind, grind hard and reinvest in yourself, and that's going to pay off in spades.

**Coach's Notes:**

As the child of a single mother, I have amazing respect for Kimberly's story of starting real estate as a single mother. She has done a wonderful job of following a principle of "schedule what's important first." The first thing she puts in her schedule is her family, and then she builds the business around that commitment. What's most important to you? Is it in your schedule? If not, then how important is it truly to you? Put those things that are important to you first and then schedule your work around that. This way you don't just build a business, but you truly design an inspiring life.

# KRISTEE LEONARD

**Brokerage:** The Leaders Realty

**Age:** 34

**Location:** Austin, Texas

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2018—58 Units—17.5 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I saw real estate as a means to be able to help my family financially. I had the ability to make more money than a salary job out of college, and have always been of the entrepreneurial mindset. When my parents got divorced, it was a huge financial struggle with debt accumulating. It is so amazing to see God bless our family to where we have a paid-off home, cars, etc. I went from being spoiled and having whatever I wanted to worrying about a mortgage being paid. Now God has blessed me with more abundance than I could have imagined. Just last month I closed \$4 million in sales in just one month. God is good.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I prefer to get up at 4:00 a.m. so that I can do my Bible reading and get work knocked out before I start getting calls. I don't always wake up that early if I have to stay up later on occasions to get work done, but my preference is to start the day early.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I currently only own two rental properties, but my goal is to purchase one a year.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

My biggest struggle is trying to do everything on my own. The only way to take your business to the next level is by leveraging the help of others.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I need to get back to doing handwritten cards. I used to do that to find off-market properties for my buyer clients, but have not had the time recently. My social media strategy is to be on multiple platforms and grow a large audience, both of realtors to market my listings to and of potential referral leads along with potential and past clients.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I try to rest in the peace of knowing God is in ultimate control of my life.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

It seems like there are so many new agents these days that are too picky and automatically want a big deal. I was working leases and closing million-dollar sales. I got to the point where I couldn't work leases anymore because I was too busy, but I think you need to have an old-fashioned hard work ethic. While the sky is the limit in real estate, you have to work hard to succeed just like anything else.

**Coach's Notes:**

Sometimes old-school techniques are the best. We are in a world of social media, online leads, drip campaigns, and because of this we lose that great personal touch. Kristee doesn't ignore the need for relevant social media strategies; however, she does lean into handwritten cards. This "old-school" strategy is one that can create a phenomenal DOS (degree of separation) between you and other agents. No one sends handwritten cards anymore, and think about when you do receive one. What immediately comes to your mind? "Wow, how nice this person took the time to do this." It's a wonderful strategy to complement anything that you are doing.



# KYLE SEYBOTH

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty

**Age:** 35

**Location:** Providence, Rhode Island

**Years in Business:** 7

**Best Production Year:** 2017—292 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first real estate deal was a buyer of a two-family in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, and he was referred to me from a friend.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I have a schedule that I follow very tightly. I organize my day. I have a schedule for all the phone calls and follow ups that I need to do. Then I have a schedule for all of my appointments. I schedule all appointments between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. So I'm on the road usually between eight in the morning and eight at night. I do all my phone calls in between appointments and all of my text messages in between appointments. My wife, my admin, she does as many emails as she can during the day and then when I get home at 8:00 p.m., from 9:00 p.m. to midnight, I do all my emails.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I own almost ninety units, probably thirty-something buildings. My strategy has been, when it was dire, when there's blood in the streets, take advantage of that, so I took advantage of the downturn. I've been buying distressed properties ever since. If it's an opportunity, I'll buy it, no questions asked. I know it, I can feel it, I can touch it, I can see it. That's all I need.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

Let's say I go on a listing appointment and I don't get it. I take away something that I can do better the next time and try to implement that into my forte. Anytime I lose a buyer or a seller or lose some sort of opportunity, I kick myself in the ass and figure out what I did wrong so I don't do it again.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Spending money to make money. I mean, you have to throw enough spaghetti at the wall, right? Social media, Zillow, Trulia, Facebook, Instagram, postcards, mailers, you have to do it all. Because when one dries up, if you have nine other balls in the air, you'll still be fine.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

If you don't sell, you'll never succeed. If you don't know what failure tastes like, you'll never feel success and understand how foreign that is. If everything was easy, everyone would do it.

You have to take emotion out of this business. You need to look at every deal and every transaction, every opportunity, as a business opportunity, and you're not going to win them all. You can't cry about it. Move on to the next. Keep moving. My philosophy is just keep it moving. If it doesn't work, go to the next one.

It's going to just punch you in the gut for five minutes, but after that five minutes, never think about it again.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

There's no secret to this. There's no secret to the business. At the end of the day, the harder you work, the more people you know, the more networks you're in, the more centers of influence you have, the more you're out there in front of people, the better you'll do. Everyone wants to say work smarter, not harder. That's fine, but not to get started. You can't get started like that. You have to pound the pavement.

**Coach's Notes:**

Fall in love with failure, my friends. Kyle's words are so true. If you never fail, then you can never succeed. I see so many people not even try something new or innovative because of Fear of Failure. Thus, they end up just getting by doing the same things. If you are going to succeed at a high level, you have to realize that all change occurs outside of your comfort zone...in the realm of potential failure. I believe that if you look back on all of your great breakthroughs, they were preceded by a breakdown or a failure. This is a business of failure and the one who can fail, get up fast, take the lesson, and pivot will always win the game.

# LARS NORDSTROM

**Brokerage:** First Team Real Estate

**Age:** 35

**Location:** Anaheim Hills, California

**Years in Business:** 12

**Best Production Year:** 2018—45 Units—Volume in Sales 32 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

Thank goodness it was someone who could trust me. It was my cousin. It was a big help because I was new. I didn't have anyone coaching me. I wasn't on a team. I was with a different brokerage at the time.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

On a good day, I have to write my checklist or else I won't get it done. If I know I'm going to have a busy day, I have to write it down and after that, I have to put it into my calendar or in my reminders in my phone. I'm not as efficient when I don't have it written down.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I've only bought primary residences. We've bought and sold, we make money, and then we move every couple of years. I try to find a dog in that perfect area, and that's how we've made good money—primary to primary residence—just because there are no tax ramifications. I think my next purchase will be out of state if I'm honest, since California's margins are too thin.

We went from zero to three kids in the time that we've bought and sold our primary residence, so this is my second home.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I had a listing appointment where the guy schooled me. Given his profession, he totally schooled me. I didn't get it. I get 72 percent of my business based on sphere and based on church. Not because I go promoting myself at church or anything, but that's my sphere. Especially not being from where I live.

I had a lot of easy listing appointments where they said, "Lars, where's the paperwork? We trust you. We know you're going to do a good job, plus you're known in the area."

I had gotten comfortable. So if it was a massive learning, it was to never walk in just knowing it's in the bag. So I actually present to people who say they're not interviewing anyone else, and I still present.

I'm ranked. I'm currently number two in one of my strongest zip codes, and I'm also well established in another zip code. There's two that I hit really hard. So number two out of 1,700 isn't too bad.

But, at the same time, I want them to know that they're getting me because I'm good. They're not getting me because I have a similar belief in a church.

Because I walked into that one and he schooled me. He said, "You can't tell me who the competition is here, you don't know who you're going up against, like, how do you not know these things?" And so later, I went up and I knew that I had subsequent ones. I knew I had those in the bag and I still said, "Look, I do this this way, some do it that way, if you want more pressure, I'm not the guy for you."

If you want this, I'm good. You have me six days out of the week. I have a team formulated. We have six people working for me so that you have someone seven days a week and probably nineteen hours a day between sleep schedules of my twins and the others on my team. You have pretty much 24/7, 365. But, at the same time, you will have a difficult time reaching me on Sunday.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I've been able to put millions of dollars of deals together through handwritten notes. I cherry-pick, and I go out with the buyer. I cherry-pick the homes that they're interested in. I'll write a handwritten note, and either myself or one of my agents will go door knock it following that.

They don't necessarily just want to list, or they need some time and I need some time on my side for my buyers to sell their property, so I'd say that's going old-school. Going old-school with that. I use social media. I use all that stuff, and yet my handwritten notes are what have been killing it for me the last two years.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Double down on the next one. Anytime something comes and it doesn't work out, double down on the next one. And I seriously will get two to three deals when I use my frustration instead of stoking, I just go, "That's it. Let's go get some more," and then I'll get more.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

It's perseverance. We, the millennials—and I find myself at fault for this too—try to find the quick and easy because things are easier.

We're so wrapped up in instant gratification and quick and fast and look at Instagram, look at this, boom, boom, boom, boom. Things that happen in less than a second. So when you have to get in the thick of it, if it doesn't happen the first time, just keep doing it.

**Coach's Notes:**

The mindset he shares here is invaluable to anyone in the real estate industry. Too often we get caught up in the problems and we end up spending so much time and energy on things that are already past. The quicker you get over it and move on to the next thing, the better off you will always be. I always make it a personal challenge anytime I have a deal fall through—I see how fast I can sell two more. This keeps my energy up and keeps me excited.

# LAUREN SCHNIEDER

**Brokerage:** RE/MAX Real Estate Group

**Age:** 32

**Location:** Colorado Springs, Colorado

**Years in Business:** 3

**Best Production Year:** 2017—200 Units—Volume in Sales 55 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was an internet lead, and I think we put three offers in before we got it accepted. I have since sold their home as well, and they made a great profit. They made about \$25,000.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I'm very anal about using Outlook calendar as my organizer.

I look at my schedules the night before and see what I have on my plate for the next day. If I don't have an appointment before 8:00 a.m., I head straight to the office. If I do have an appointment, I'll knock out my appointments and I'll still make sure I get to the office at some point so I can go through my leads list and stack who should be working that week. Every day we revamp our to-do list of what clients to go under contracts. And then, basically setting the schedule for the next day.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

My husband and I did have a rental that we sold this year. I don't think it's for us. My husband's a lender, so we work very closely on a lot of our transactions. We love investing in both of our personal businesses and helping clients.

You have to like it. We don't enjoy it.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I am a huge believer in internet leads. That is what I built my business off of, and so I have failed multiple times with multiple different lead sources. When you try a new lead source, you have to invest pretty heavily to know if it's any good or not. I'm feeling every few months what the new strategy is. But I firmly believe you have to try everything to know what works.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Making the personal connection with the internet lead, and then seeing that turn into multiple personal referrals has been hugely successful. I use Google paid-per-click ads.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

We run into roadblocks every day. I definitely rely on my peer group; there are some great agents at my brokerage that are constantly bouncing ideas off of one another. We have a lot of heads we can put together to solve problems, and relying on past experience as well. Just remembering that at the end of the day, it's all able to be solved just by going to the right resources.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

When I wanted to get into the business, my background was in finance. I did agricultural finance for seven to eight years. This was totally new, and I spoke to a few realtors that I really trusted and they really tried to talk me out of it. I think realtors have a bad habit of being overly realistic with people that are looking at getting into the industry. And they'll tell you statistics. "Eighty-nine percent of new realtors fail" and all of these horrible things. My best advice would be just not to listen to that because you can absolutely make it work.

**Coach's Notes:**

One of my mentors used to always say, "There is no wrong way to get a great lead." I will never forget that. Lauren is one of the newer agents, having been in the business less than four years, and she absolutely kills it using internet leads. Others will tell you internet leads don't work. Lauren is proof that they do. I truly believe it is much more about working the system than about the type of system you work.



# LILLIAN KAY

**Brokerage:** HomeSmart Realty Group

**Age:** 26

**Location:** Salem, Oregon

**Years in Business:** 4

**Best Production Year:** 2018—45 Units—Volume in Sales 18 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first real estate transaction was a model home that was on this tour of homes here in Salem. It was a fairly easy deal just because new construction was easy, and my father has been a local builder for about twenty-five-plus years. I grew up in this industry. I grew up having family members that were builders, electricians, plumbers, flippers, and investors.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

Sleep is very important to me. I'm not an early person. Waking up early, working out, that is not my routine. So I like to get a sufficient amount of sleep. I like to wake up, work from home in the morning, be with my dog, and be with my husband, who is also in commercial real estate.

I make sure everything is in my calendar, whether that's a phone call conversation or a reminder. My motto is if it's not in my calendar, it just does not exist in my day. If something pops up, I add it to the calendar so I can go back and look what my last Monday was or last Tuesday was and remember what I had done.

I do not prospect. I don't follow up every single day. I usually do Friday mornings where I'm following up. I'm doing pop-bys. I'm getting gifts for past clients or sending them some sort of mailer in the mail thanking them for their past business or their referrals.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

My husband and I have not invested in any real estate properties at all.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

We all have those clients you'll never forget. And her name was Margie. And she found me through Zillow or Facebook or some online source, and she was a single lady. Been divorced a few times and was going through a foreclosure, so I decided to take her on as a client. This was my first year in real estate, and she just totally used and abused my time. During this time, I was building a home. I was getting ready to get married. We were planning a wedding. And so it was the busiest time of my life. And the most exciting time of my life. I worked with her for so long. I probably wrote maybe twenty offers on houses for her, and every time we were under contract, she got cold feet, and she would terminate.

I would get so offended, and I would get so hurt. And I never let her see my emotion. I always thought, "Why is she getting cold feet? Like what is going on?" So one day she calls me while I was having my wedding dress fitting. The most exciting day of my life, I'm thinking as a twenty-three-year-old. And she says, "I need to look at a house right now." And I said, "I'm not going to show you a house right now." And she said, "Well, I need to see it now." And I said, "You know what? I'm at my final dress fitting for my wedding, and I'm just not going to do it. I have people that are with me here." She caused a huge scene.

As a first year agent, I was so hurt. And I was like, "Gosh, I'm going to find somebody to show her this home." And so, the car ride home I just thought of so many things. I'm like, "You know what, I chose this business to set boundaries and to set my own schedule, and to do real estate when I wanted to do real estate." Of course, real estate is an everyday thing, but I should have the right to take the day off and do something exciting. She taught me how to set boundaries for myself. She taught me my strengths and my weaknesses in this business. And I thank her for that even though she was a nightmare of a client, but I honestly learned so much about myself and now I know how to say no to people and just respect myself a little bit more.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Instagram. I am an Instagram girl. I'm a millennial. I get a lot of clients through Instagram.

One thing I learned from my father, who has been building here in our valley, is any information you share needs to be positive, needs to bring information to people, and needs to excite them.

And since my first year in real estate, I've been doing that. I've just been posting on my Instagram. For instance, my husband and I have been dealing with an identity theft

issue. And we checked our credit scores and everything, and it looks like this person has started docking points off of my husband's credit. And so I thought, "I need to take this to Instagram and tell people to protect themselves and show them how to protect themselves since I've been through this, and I know what to do." And I kind of tied that into real estate, saying, "Hey, identify theft is out there, and it could affect your dreams of purchasing your home. And here's the steps you take to prevent that."

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Standing firm and having conviction in what you say is so important. And sometimes you don't always have the answers for people right away, but just being trustworthy and faithful that you'll bring them the correct information.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Good database. Create that database because you get busy and you lose business if you don't stay on top of mind. You've got to make sure you are putting it on a spreadsheet, every person you're encountering, have it on a spreadsheet and make sure you continue to reach out.

**Coach's Notes:**

Lillian uses Instagram much like myself as one of her number one marketing tools. I currently get about 40 percent of my leads now from Facebook and Instagram. It is such a great way to connect and share any message that you want. I use my posts to create interest in me as a person and then I use my stories to promote business and ask for leads. This has become the most important marketing tool I use.

# LISA ROBERTS

**Brokerage:** Russ Lyon Sotheby's International Realty

**Age:** 31

**Location:** Scottsdale, Arizona

**Years in Business:** 8

**Best Production Year:** 2017—55 Units—Volume in Sales 29 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first residential sale that I did on my own was a \$90,000, one bed, one bath condo. I sold to some Canadians that I'd never met, sight unseen, who I developed a relationship with over the phone and showed them a photo.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I fly by the seat of my pants, quite honestly. I get back to people immediately, and I answer my phone 24/7. I have two kids now, so I'm learning to structure a little better where I try to make myself available for appointments, out and about, between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. But it doesn't always work out that way, and you have to learn when to say yes and when to say no.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I knew rentals very well. There's one community I did a lot of farming in that I rented out, eight or nine different units per client of mine, and then I sold countless units in there. So when one came on the market that I knew was low, because I knew the market (if you know the market you're in, buy the market you're in), so for me, I bought in that complex. Then I owned a commercial space with my husband, but the reasoning behind that is he has to rent somewhere, so if he buys the space he's working in, he's a CPA, why would he pay rent when he could just own it?

Invest in what you know and what you're good at because for me, if you're really good at selling real estate well, just continue doing that and talk to a great a CPA—mine happens to be my husband—and he'll tell you where to put the money.

We own our house free and clear. We live on an acre and 440 square feet in Scottsdale. We own a condo free and clear. We own the commercial space free and clear. Anything we have, we buy—all our houses, all our cars—we don't own a lot, but what we own, we own free and clear. There is no reason in buying it unless you own it free and clear.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

When I first got started in the business, I was on my own for about six months, and then for a year and a half I worked on a team, and I went on a listing appointment with the head guy on the team. I remember walking into that listing appointment. We didn't necessarily fail, we succeeded because he got the listings, but when we walked out of there, I was very upset because I felt like, how am I ever going to be that good? How am I ever going to be able to walk into a listing and get them to sign the listing paperwork? I just felt like that when we walked out of there.

It felt like in my eyes it was a failure because I would never be able to do what he was able to do, and he said to me, "Lisa, I've been in the business seventeen years, it takes time, it doesn't happen overnight," and this was when I was in the business for probably about a year. It really empowered me to be able to know that over time and with experience, you get better at what you say, and what you do, and how you say it, that you'll be that person—you'll succeed. You just have to work hard at it. I've been on my own for over six years, and I would say I get nine out of ten listings I walk into.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Zillow, reviews, reviews online. Stay on top of getting people to write you reviews on Zillow because people look at Yelp and social media. People look at that and they think about how great of a realtor that person is going to be, and they'll look at that when they're going to sell a house or buy a house or whatever. And they'll call you up.

Second, being present online no matter what. You go on Facebook, Instagram, Zillow, you go on the internet, and if you're present in the community—it doesn't always have to be I sold this, I did that, I did this; even if you're just posting about the community—people will know, and think, you're super busy here all the time and that's why they should work with you, because you're educated about the area you want to be in.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Not everyone out there is a good person, and as long as you stick to your integrity and who you are as a person, and you keep working hard, you'll be good. There are a lot of other people out there who really do appreciate the work that you do. As they say: buyers are liars, sellers are worse, and you're going to run into that. Work hard and those people that don't matter will go away, and the good people are there to stay.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Create that database because you get busy and you lose business if you don't stay on top of mind. You've got to make sure you are putting it on a spreadsheet, every person you're encountering, have it on a spreadsheet and make sure you continue to reach out.

**Coach's Notes:**

Success is a marathon, not a sprint. You hear that multiple times in Lisa's interview. From her investment strategy and starting where renters become buyers, landlords become sellers, all the way through her mentor of seventeen years telling her that "This takes time." She is not in it for the quick turn. Too many times, agents are looking for the "magic bullet," the "secret weapon"; however, what works is small disciplines that are executed over long periods of time.

# LUCY FEICHT

**Brokerage:** Lou Realty Group

**Age:** 28

**Location:** Saint Louis, Missouri

**Years in Business:** 6

**Best Production Year:** 2017—130 Units—Volume in Sales 28 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I was twenty-two; I was representing a friend. Actually, I just closed on her, probably, sixth property this year. We have gone through real estate for quite some time together, but her mother had actually just purchased a new condo and her daughter was just kind of in the transaction for her. It was bank-owned, and it went relatively smoothly. I was asked more than once if it was my first realty transaction and I was like, “Of course, how can you tell?” I had a ton of questions. It was nice to be transparent with everybody. The first transaction went really well.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

In 2017, I was awarded NAR’s [National Association of Realtors] 30 Under 30, which has probably been the most defining moment in my career, but it has also had masterminding opportunities. Time blocking was always super important to me. I’m a very detail orientated person, very organized, but I don’t think I really realized how important it is to have a really neat day and for me to not ruin my day. Scheduling for me is something I’ve tried to become a Nazi for. My day is pretty much constructed to start at 5:00 a.m. and conclude typically by like 9:00 p.m., and everything in between tries to get at least as structured as possible. In the morning, for me, is a mood time situation. If there is quiet, it’s when I do most of my reading. Reading is very important to me. Typically, I only read for real estate purposes. So everything I dive into is either like real

estate related, negotiation driven, sales driven, or whatever it might be. It's a moment I take for learning purposes and collecting my thoughts.

From 5:00 a.m. to 6:15 a.m., that's what I'm doing. I do most of my creative thinking in the morning, too, I'm brainstorming for my brokerage or new things that I want to implement, something I might be struggling with. I walk into the office around 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. I have my day totally structured until basically about 5:00 p.m.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

We own and manage about thirty-three properties that we have acquired in the past four years now. We have anything from single families to multifamilies. Our goal with that is to have the least amount of debt out there and if we do take on debt, it is very short-term. We don't want to be leveraged. Our primary focus is not to purchase and resell, although we do. It is our primary to buy and hold. Investment opportunities that come along that might just fall into our lap, we'll "flip it," but it's not our primary focus.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

When I say yes to something, I say no to something different. So, I was taking on every client that needed me. I was wearing a lot of different hats. My brain was just in too many places at once. I made a mistake. I had a seller's signature signed off on something that they weren't willing to accept and that was sent over to another agent and unfortunately, the agent and the buyer, which I can also understand, forced it on us. It was monetarily fairly significant. It wasn't something that my seller planned on implementing financially. I wanted to make it right for my sellers and I absorbed the burden of it. That was that. I think it was just a matter of I had pegged them electronically wrong on the signature, and I didn't review it before I sent it over, and I needed to get it over quickly before a deadline. Unfortunately, it was my full responsibility to review that before sending it and I didn't.

That was really hard for me to take in. Not to take on the fault but just that I had made such a stupid mistake, that was hard for me to swallow and to be upfront with my sellers with what happened. They too were just wonderful about it. They didn't really think it was necessarily all my fault either. It was important for me to take full responsibility for it.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

We just recently this year painted a huge mural on the side of our building that says, "Welcome to the Lou." Which of course identifies with the Lou Realty Group and Saint



Louis. That probably, tangibly, is the coolest thing that we have done with marketing so far. It has served us just exactly as we hoped. We wanted it to be a place for people's comments, take a picture in front of it, and post it on social media and tell the world about Lou Realty Group and how awesome Saint Louis is, inadvertently getting people into our office. That has been really cool for us. It's been a good tool. We've done a lot with the mural itself and have gotten a lot of publicity with it.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Always trying to be better than I was the day before. I try to exceed my own expectations.

I'm actually not one that sets actual monetary goals for myself. I have been able to double my businesses. It requires me to stay focused.

Some people are so quick to want to celebrate victories and they get off course, or they think, "Oh, I've met my goal and this is where I stop." I think it is important for our age group too, to know that instant gratification is not always going to be the best option for everybody. I think you see it day in and day out with how much access we have to the internet and social media. I think that people are constantly just trying to keep up with everybody else. Then within that, they kind of focus on what their own goals are. Delayed gratification is much more important than instant.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

It's totally a sales position. By the same token, that's just how I recognize real estate. I'm not there for a sales pitch or to sell a product or a good. I am literally there to take someone through a transaction that could be one of the largest ones that they make in their lifetime. I feel like I'm an advisor to that. We wouldn't just walk in blindly to a doctor's office or an attorney's office. I say our position shouldn't be held to standards any less than those industries are held to. Ethically, it is very important for my own agents and my own team to always be doing the right thing and to not just think about it in terms of a number position or in terms of a sales pitch.

The marketing of it, for me, is 10 percent real estate and 90 percent everything else.

It is so important to become true professionals and experts.

**Coach's Notes:**

One of the best pieces of advice I received when I started out in real estate was to treat this profession like a real job. You can tell that Lucy does exactly that. I see too often agents that want to show up after nine, do weird chores during the workday, etc. They don't treat the job like they would if they were working for someone else, and it makes it hard for them to gain momentum every day.

# LUKE LASER

**Brokerage:** RE/MAX Best Associates

**Age:** 32

**Location:** Overland Park/Kansas City, Kansas

**Years in Business:** 2

**Best Production Year:** 2018—15 Units—Volume in Sales 4 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I held open houses on back-to-back days, and they showed up at both open houses. That's how I got the clients. Actually, at the second open house we talked for a little bit, they left, and a couple hours later they called me to go see a third house. They said I was the third agent that they called, but I was the first one that answered and so once we got locked in at that point, we went and looked at probably six or seven other houses, and they ended up buying a townhome.

I was lucky in the sense that my broker had me doing practice runs with the paperwork beforehand, so I was pretty comfortable with writing contracts with them. I do a lot of stuff in person even though we have the technology that, throughout the contracts and email, I can get e-signatures and that kind of stuff, but I like to go over all that stuff in person. I remember sitting down with them and going through the contracts, and every once in a while I'd have to stand up and ask them if they wanted any coffee or water, and go out in the hallway and call my broker and say, "Hey, I don't remember what this is about." He would answer those questions for me over the phone, then I'd come in and act like I knew exactly what I was talking about.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I usually try to get into the office between 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. every morning. The first thing that I do is I go through the market, everything that's come on so far in the

day, and I send my first round of listings to my prospects. The way our market is—I'm sure it's like this in a lot of places—it's super competitive for buyers, and so I do that early so that I can try to plan my day, then have my appointments in the evenings and in the afternoons.

After I do that, I go through my emails and see if anybody has sent me a property or anything like that. Most people nowadays just send it through text. Once I get everything sent out, I start setting up appointments with clients and setting the showing appointments up, and go on from there.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

First and foremost, you have to be able to buy it right. And so I think that dictates everything else. I've owned a couple of properties; I'm more of a buy and hold investor. I haven't done any flips; I'd rather hold on to things and try to accumulate wealth that way, I guess.

I have one. I had two other ones when I lived in Michigan, they were just a little further away than what I felt capable of managing properly, so I sold them.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

Every failure is a little different. Today, I just went and picked up a sign out of a yard for a listing that didn't sell. There were a couple of takeaways. One, pricing is so important and two, setting expectations is so important for clients that sometimes aren't ready to listen to you. When you sit down and talk to them—walking them through what's going to sell, what's not going to sell, why you decided to price their property a certain way—and they don't want to listen to what you think the value of the property is, then it's going to be hard to sell the property.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

What I like to do is talk to my buyers. I have them give me a couple neighborhoods they really like and then I send out notes to that neighborhood, and that's worked really well for me. I've picked up listings from it. I've picked up new buyers from it, referrals from it. That's been a really good marketing strategy for me.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I had an agent that gave me a great piece of advice. I'm one of those people, I like to try and plan out every scenario and I get really anxious about stuff, and he would constantly tell me, "You can't plan for everything. You just have to wait for things to happen

and then go from there.” So anytime I face any kind of adversity in a deal, I’ll talk to my clients, I’ll say, “Hey, this is what’s going on. Here’s a couple of ways that we can go about solving this issue. What do you guys want to do?” And then we just hash it out. I tell my clients I’m an open book. There’s not going to be a whole lot of secrets with me. I’m going to lay out all the scenarios to you, I’m going to write what they’re saying, and then we’re going to form a strategy together about what you guys want to do and where we want to go. I’ll try to give them as much advice as I can give them as far as some experiences that I’ve had. Really, it’s up to them to make a decision, and I just try to give them as much information as possible.

### **What’s one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

At the end of the day, this business is not a sales business, it’s a customer service business, and you have to be willing to do whatever you need to do to make sure that you’re able to guide your clients to the promised land of buying or selling a house. The best thing that you can do is take care of your people, make sure that they know that you’re a professional, and make sure they like you. That’s when they’ll start referring you, and your business will grow from there. Taking care of your people, you know, that’s the biggest thing. And then just going out and doing it. This isn’t a super complicated business. Everybody knows what you’re supposed to do. Just go do it.

#### **Coach’s Notes:**

I love what Luke says here about setting proper expectations. I remember when I first got in the business back in 2005, and I wanted to never have an expired listing. Three years later I had over 150 expired listings, and it really wore me down. I had over promised to clients and because of that, I was personally holding myself responsible for the market conditions. Learning to be realistic on expectations has helped me so much in having a positive interaction with my clients. I’ve learned to say things like, “The market looks like we should be able to get this for your home. But the market is going to let us know and so we need to be prepared to adjust if we aren’t getting the looks that we are hoping for.”

# MALLORY JANSSEN

**Brokerage:** Hasson Company

**Age:** 31

**Location:** Vancouver, Washington

**Years in Business:** 4.5

**Best Production Year:** 2018—38 units—16.5 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was for a piece of land. I worked with a builder for a little bit, back when I got started. I knew a local builder in the area, and I had no idea what I was doing. He had listing agents but he didn't really care for them, and he wanted to help me.

So I got my license, and I joined a company. The builder and I, along with my designated broker, pieced the contract together and two weeks later, closed the deal!

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

The first thing I do is I always check my email in bed. I know you're not supposed to, but it just makes me feel like if there's an emergency, then I can get it taken care of right away. If there's things I need to say yes to I respond immediately, otherwise I get up, make my bed, and sit down with my coffee at my computer and actually go over everything in-depth. I pull up my transaction rooms and double check my notes from the day before.

Once I've done that for an hour and a half or so, I get up and make breakfast. I usually go to the gym, dink around, stuff like that. So I organize and do morning work, and then go back to work. This is a day when I don't have early showings.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I own a house. I don't have much interest in being a landlord, with our current tenant rights.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I had a client that was a first-time home buyer, and she had been working with two other realtors before me and just didn't like them. They weren't very patient with her. We tried to write on a house and didn't get it. She then changed her mind and started looking for something else, and it was becoming more and more difficult to work with her. She decided she wanted multifamily and she wouldn't listen to me with what offers to write, so we couldn't get one under contract.

Right in the middle of writing one offer we were talking about terms, and I kind of snapped at her. I shouldn't have done it and she immediately told me, "Never mind, I don't want to work with you." She said, "Don't write the offer, I'll find somebody else," and hung up on me. I felt really, really awful about it. I know she was a first-time home buyer, and I think I just took out my frustration on her. I feel like I let her down, and she had already been through other realtors who were trying to pressure her and weren't really listening to her. The money doesn't matter at all, I just felt really embarrassed that I acted like that and was rude to her.

I saw that she was with somebody else and wrote an offer and bought a house and stuff like that. So I was glad that she found something, but I just felt really embarrassed and I thought, "That's a disaster, and if she ever hears my name, she's going to say bad things about me." I felt mortified that I acted like that; I was childish and couldn't control my temper.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Honestly my favorite? I'm good at converting leads, and I think I'm good at talking to people and making them feel comfortable enough to meet with me in person. When people click on me, I call them within a couple of minutes.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

That it takes a lot of determination and persistence, and although it's not going to be easy, you have to believe in yourself that you can get through it.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Just don't give up. Know that it's not going to be instant success, it's going to take time to build your business. Somebody explained that to me when I first started, and I got really frustrated that I wasn't making a lot of money at the beginning. They told me it takes three years to build your business, and at two years I almost gave up because I wasn't making the money I wanted to be making. You have to spend a lot of money and a lot of time working for people who might not pan out, and they waste your time. You have to believe in yourself and know that you're good enough, don't try to find a different job, don't give up, just know that it does happen if you work hard enough.

**Coach's Notes:**

One of the keys to success I have found in coaching agents is helping them to understand the word PATIENCE. This word is critical, especially when it comes to your clients. Mallory had a great learning lesson when she did not use patience with her client and it ended up costing her a transaction. Many times we forget that this is (for most people) the single largest financial transaction and investment that they will make in their life. When we get frustrated, impatient, or upset that the client is taking too much time, then we are more focused on ourselves and our timeline rather than being of service and progressing at a pace that has the client feeling comfortable.

# MARINE JANIKYAN

**Brokerage:** JohnHart Real Estate

**Age:** 31

**Location:** Glendale, California

**Years in Business:** 6

**Best Production Year:** 2018—28 Units—300K GCI

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was actually a referral from one of my coworkers, who's an agent, who didn't have the time to take on a client. Their purchase price was between \$200,000 and \$300,000, and so he said, "Oh, do you want to help them find a place?" Since I was brand new and didn't have a pipeline of anything happening, I agreed. She was looking for an investment property in Sonoma, which is about an hour away from Glendale. So we located several properties she wanted to see, and we squeezed it all into one weekend. We went, we took a look at everything, and she looked for what she wanted, and that's it. We made it happen.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I get up at 6:30 a.m. I try to get in a morning workout. If I don't work too late the previous night, I start with a morning workout, whether it's just going for a walk or run—just something to get my day started with energy. I then have to have my coffee.

Coffee time is the time that I look through all of my emails. I'm at the office by 8:00 a.m. That's when I start preparing for my cold-calling. I try to do that between 9:00 a.m. and noon. I think morning is the best time to do that, so I try to squeeze that in unless I have instructions or other commitments. I try to do afternoon appointments for showings, if possible. If I don't have any showings that day, I like to always look back in my database and reach out to my past clients, whether it's one or two a day. I just try to make



sure they know I'm still here in case they have questions or would like to know what their house is worth.

Throughout the day I try to do as much as possible, but if I'm doing heavy cold-calling one day, I won't door knock that day. I definitely try to squeeze in door knocking as well during the week, several times a week. I try to balance maybe two or three times of both during the week.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I haven't invested yet, but that is definitely the goal that I'm working toward. I do help a lot of investors buy, flip, and sell, and I do see the return on investment for properties like that, so I would love to get into that.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

This past weekend, I canceled escrow with a client that I was working with for two and a half years, on and off, and she is a first-time home buyer. She's very, very selective with what she likes to make an offer on. There's always that question in your mind of, "Is this a waste of time, or are we really going to reach the goal of homeownership with this person?" Those waves of emotion come and go because we're in an industry where income is not stable. So I always ask myself, "Is she ever going to buy?" That's something about this industry that I can't ever run away from, so helping her was something that I had to do, so I stuck with her for all this time and we looked at tons of different properties. I always like to give them both the advantages and disadvantages of each property.

So for example, "Oh, it's on a busy street, you may not find parking." I don't just like to sell the property; I want to make sure that they're comfortable and like everything about it, as far as I can see. We finally got her into escrow; I think she got cold feet because she just became afraid of the entire process. I don't think it was the property itself. It was just the process, so my struggle was trying to figure out a way to ease her mind that everything's going to be okay. Because no matter how many times that you say it, or you explain it, or go over all of the steps, sometimes it's still a very big step for some home buyers, and I think that they have to go through it once unsuccessfully to realize it's not that bad. So that's kind of the struggle that I'm facing right now—just trying to help her understand that real estate is actually a really good thing when you own property, all of the tax benefits that she has and those types of things. I'm still working on her, I'm not giving up on her, and it's time to get her into something before the end of the year. That's the goal.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Door knocking. Absolutely, 100 percent door knocking. I'm more of a face-to-face type of person, and I like to meet people directly. It's been working really well for me, I would say this past year, year and a half. And I'm a people person too, so connecting with homeowners at their house has been really beneficial to me, especially when my farm is in the area that I work, so it works to my benefit, definitely.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Never give up. Real estate is a really challenging career only because obviously, like I said, there's no real stability in it. We just have to keep developing long-term relationships with clients and hoping that eventually they will buy or sell. Have faith and hope that you're going to succeed, and always have that positive mindset because I think that's number one. When you're pushing forward, you will succeed. There's no other way. People face so many difficulties in real estate, they just have to remind themselves that they have to keep going and keep pushing forward, and then they'll see the outcome. And definitely hard work. I would say with hard work, no matter how difficult it can be, they'll see the end results as successful.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

I would say a few things. One, to be organized, because I think that's helped me with my success.

I'm very organized, from my CRMs to my database to even when I door knock and make notes. I have maybe six or seven notebooks just from my door knocking sessions because we communicate with so many different people on a day-to-day basis, and I like to remember the last conversation that I had with everybody that I met. So I'll write out a note that says, "Spoke with this person on such and such date about their dog." I happen to be door knocking, they were walking their dog, so of course you can tell that homeowner loves dogs. I like to remember people based on their likes and dislikes and where I met them, so keeping organized is definitely something that has helped me excel in my career.

I would also say to never give up because as challenging as this career may be, relationships with everyone you speak with and really getting to know your potential clients is so important.

Establishing that trust is really important to focus on, and creating those sorts of relationships, because those are the people that are going to help you, help you excel in your career. Expanding your network, reaching out to everyone you know, and letting them know you do real estate is very important and also has helped me in my career.

**Coach's Notes:**

Real estate is a contact sport! The more people you talk to, the better your chance is of succeeding. It's always exciting to meet an agent like Marine who, although implementing new relevant strategies, still sticks to old-school proven techniques. You can't go wrong with door knocking. With 55 percent of communication coming from your body language, you will always have better success at the doors than over the phone when it comes to building rapport and creating relationships. Granted, doors take longer; however, in the long run, I still believe that face-to-face is where it's at.

# MARK TOMPKINS

**Brokerage:** The Right Move Realty

**Age:** 34

**Location:** Richmond, Virginia

**Years in Business:** 12

**Best Production Year:** 2017—58 Units—Volume in Sales 18 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I'm a three-semester college dropout. I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I jumped into real estate, supported myself while waiting tables and bartending, and shared a car with my wife. We weren't married at the time, but we shared a car. The very first transaction was while I was waiting tables, one of the other waiters, Jay, bought from me. He was my first purchase, and I had no idea what I was doing. I had to pull another agent in from the office. They don't teach you in real estate school how to sell real estate.

Jay's aunt was the lender on that transaction, and she actually helped coach me through the how-tos. So it was very much a thrown to the wolves' environment, and a lot of faith and trust was put into me by a friend and coworker at the restaurant. We got through it pretty good. And he still lives in that house. Every time I see him, it reminds me of that first piece of success.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I have a very simple Excel spreadsheet. It has all of my pending transactions, my buyer clients that I'm working with, and the seller clients that are coming to the table soon. I organize my day by printing out the Excel spreadsheet with the action items that I need to take care of. Throughout the day, I update the spreadsheet. I started out that way because it shows me the priority of exactly what needs to be done, and it keeps all of my attention on where it needs to be, which is on my clients and on the transactions.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I want to know that what I'm looking at is able to be liquidated down the road and that it offers specific amenities, and it doesn't have any objections that cannot be overcome. So the old saying, "location, location, location," is very important in real estate. That has not changed. I want to know that whatever I'm doing in real estate, whether it's helping somebody invest, or investing myself, it's something that is going to add value down the road as well as be something that I could afford to pay off or afford to hang onto in the event of a downturn.

I have the one rental property. We flipped a few properties. Those have been profitable. I have such a good roster of investors that I would feel a little bit greedy buying it for myself. So I kind of pass off the deals to my clients first before I pick it up. Typically if it's a good enough deal that one of my clients is jumping on it, then I'm not going to get in the way of their success.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

You can find failure all over the place. I mean, you're always looking to be better. And there's always a way you could do something better. You could always improve. I tell my team and the agents that work with me that I don't want to be the best, I just want to be better. I think failure for a lot of people comes from being comfortable. My biggest failure in real estate is probably that earlier on in my business, I was not trusting myself and not having confidence about what I was capable of doing. I don't have a specific example as far as one particular failure. This is very much an environment where people hire the expert, they hire the real estate agent, they hire me because I'm going to educate them and help them make good decisions and help them understand what decisions they have so they can make those decisions for themselves.

So maybe one of my bigger failures was earlier on in my career when I didn't listen to my gut. I didn't make the moves to different companies or trusted other people more than I trusted myself. I feel pretty confident now in my career and wish I would have trusted my gut, trusted my instincts early on; I've always made good decisions when I've made them solely myself. But listening to other people and allowing other people to influence my decisions when it went against my intuition, I'd say that in itself is a failure for many people, not just myself.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

The fact that I treat all of my clients exactly the same across the board has been the marketing strategy that has proven to be the turning point of my career and has made

me feel success and feel the reward. The buyers that work with me, I help them out with the home inspection and with the rate on inspection. It doesn't matter what price point they work at. The sellers that work with me, they all get appraisals before they go on the market. They're all professionally photographed.

Homes that are below a certain price point, I actually lose money on taking the listings, but that consistency of doing the exact same thing for everybody is what has earned me the trust of many of my clients and a lot of the referrals that I receive. Just doing the exact same things for everyone and not focusing on the money but focusing on the service.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I think one of the main thoughts that comes up for me, especially in training other agents, I want to know what their problems are, right? I'm not going to be the first person to benefit. That is the mindset that comes to me. I'm not worried about the deal falling apart because I'm losing the commission check, I'm concerned about making sure that whatever I'm doing is serving the interest of the client. That's my fiduciary responsibility first. So anytime a challenge comes up, my mindset is, really, what is the job? The job is to represent these clients. That fiduciary responsibility is owed to them. Once you apply that filter, I think the challenges become much more simple.

The other thing I've found a lot of success with is getting creative. There's a lot of opportunities in real estate because people don't really think outside the box. I've surrounded myself with some very creative individuals. I have a lender that I work with who has strategized through a lot of challenging situations. So I'll call, I'll round-robin the problems. I'll call my appraiser whenever there's an appraisal problem. I'll call other real estate agents. I really want to know who else has had the same challenges. What they tried. What failed and what worked. And I want to think my way through problems with a very creative strategy. I've had a lot of success in being creative. It doesn't always make me the most amount of money and it definitely can eat a lot of time, but once you face that challenge, you know how to work through it better than anybody else does. And that's again what earns your reputation. It builds you up and earns you future clients.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

I would strongly advise anybody who is a new agent to go back and revisit the deals that they're involved with and to listen to other real estate agents and to ask questions about other people's challenges in this. Find that pattern of success. The success that you get in real estate comes from internalizing the job and filtering your specific voice to that job. So we all have a lot of the same real estate forms to work with, and we have a lot of

the same rules and regulations and ethics. And we have our own way of presenting that information to clients. Once you really are comfortable and confident with your job and you fully understand what your responsibility is, find your voice. Find a way to make it your own. Find a way to differentiate yourself outside the box. And I think it takes a lot more work than people give us credit for as real estate agents. It's not just turning keys and cashing checks. We're in the job for a reason.

**Coach's Notes:**

Success leaves clues! Mark's recommendation of talking to other agents and to "find the patterns of success" is absolutely critical. There are two ways to navigate the path to reaching your goals: (1) try and figure it out on your own or (2) find someone who has accomplished what you want and RND (Rip Off and Duplicate) what they have done. Now, you don't have to be an imitation of them; simply find out what steps they used to produce the result and then with your own "voice," engage in those same activities. In the long run, this saves you countless hours of headaches and frustration.

# MICHAEL BELLINGS

**Brokerage:** Compass

**Age:** 29

**Location:** San Francisco, California

**Years in Business:** 6

**Best Production Year:** 2017—42 Units—Volume in Sales 55 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was a two bedroom, one bath condominium in the NoPa neighborhood of San Francisco.

I helped a client that I met at an open house; we looked at a single family home in Bernal Heights, and he wanted to turn it into a multiunit building, so I helped him convert a single family that had expansion potential into a three-unit building where he gets rental income and has passive income. He lives on the main level, rents out the upstairs, and rents out the downstairs. It was almost a teardown house, first-time home buyer, but he was ready to take the plunge. We sold it for about \$900,000, which now in Bernal Heights would probably be upwards of the high two millions. We wrote about three offers for him, this was the third one, it was my first deal, and we did all of our due diligence by doing our inspections, and I brought in all of my contractors. My family's been selling here for thirty years, so I have a really great team around me. It's important to bring in my full team, the contractors, the architects, things like that during the pre-escrow process.

She was an out-of-town agent, which typically they're not as savvy with San Francisco-type scenarios, so I was able to stay close with her, we wrote a competitive offer, and got it. My clients are some of my good friends now.



**How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I really believe in time blocking, and I try to do it as best as I can. I time block prospecting, time block calling past clients, time block even when I'm going to get back to emails, and then time block appointments. So I try to do a big push for emails early in the morning when I get up, get all my emails done, then do prospecting and appointments in late morning, middle of the day, and then try to get back to emails later in the afternoon into the evening.

Typically, in the evening I'll have a walk-through for a new listing, a walk-through with a buyer, or I'm running an analysis for an offer that we're writing for a buyer or preparing for an offer date on a listing. It's important what I've learned over the past couple of years, which again is the time blocking. If I sit down at my computer and just answer emails, I'd be sitting down for weeks.

Of course, I prioritize based on how important the stuff is.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I bought a property with my business partner and brother four years ago. I owned a portion of it, it appreciated quite a bit, I sold that portion in order to buy my primary home. So I own a condominium in Pacific Heights, one of the nicest neighborhoods in San Francisco, top-floor condominium that I live in and I'm now preapproved to buy a multiunit building or single family home right now. So right now just one in the portfolio, but working on a second. Should have that by the end of the year.

But my investment strategy is to buy and hold in San Francisco. My dad is a top agent here, he's been a legend here for thirty years. He has never regretted buying in San Francisco ever, only regretted selling at the wrong time. If you're able to buy and hold real estate in San Francisco, it will always go up from where it is.

There will be times it goes down, of course, but in the long term, it will always be up in the city. We're only seven by seven miles, we're tiny, you can't build out anywhere, you can only build up in certain neighborhoods in the city, so there's a constant supply and demand issue.

So my investment strategy is to buy and hold, and then passive income. The rent-out units collect passive income, bank on the appreciation of the property, and create a portfolio from there.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

The first time I was representing a buyer—I thought that they were my exclusive client, and they weren't. They ended up writing with a different buyer's agent, and that just caught me off guard. I thought everyone had the same values and loyalty that I do, but

that's not the case. So it's really important to sit down and have the conversation with the person, the loyalty talk: "I'm working incredibly hard for you; I would appreciate that you work exclusively with me."

We don't sign buyer brokers in San Francisco, or it's very rare. Just looking someone in the eye during a buyer meeting and saying, "Hey we're working exclusively together, does that sound good?" That was the lesson I learned from that and it hasn't happened since, knock on wood.

The first time I did that, I was like two weeks into the business. I was holding another listing agent's open house and I met this buyer, I was talking to her for about two or three weeks, and then two weeks later I get an offer from her and her buyer's agent to me as the listing agent. So it wasn't my listing, and I wasn't representing her as a buyer, so I just totally missed that, and I was totally green and new. I tell my mentees now about it, that you're so wrapped up and then you're so excited, you don't stop and actually say like, "Hey, I'm representing you on the buy side, right?"

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

We do a couple things. One is a neighborhood open house. We've been really, really successful in that. Some people don't understand it, like "Oh, why would you want to meet all the neighbors?" We do a neighborhood preview.

So before we hit the open market or the MLS, we send out about three to five hundred invitations around the neighborhood. Private, custom invitations saying "Hey, come check out the newest listing in your neighborhood. It's not on the market yet, come see it." And that's two-fold. We get all of the nosy neighbors out of the way, so they're not there during the open house with the real buyers. They're also cheerleaders for the house and oftentimes they want their cousins, their brothers, their sisters, whoever to move into their neighborhood, and they're great cheerleaders for it. And more often than not, the selfish reason of the neighborhood open house too is you meet sellers.

We've become pretty well known for our neighborhood open houses in the neighborhoods we sell in, and we get people that call now all the time and say, "Hey I got your neighborhood invitation, I can't make it, but can you go look at my house and tell me what it's worth." And they see like wow, these guys are going above and beyond and doing a neighborhood open house and sending out invitations.

And second is buyer seminars. We're half-Jewish and we've held them in a synagogue, we've even done one in a church cause we're half-Christian as well. Even in professional tech companies, we've gone to Dropbox and some other tech companies, and we do what's called a Lunch and Learn, an educational seminar, where we call it "Demystifying the Homebuying Process: It's Easier Than You Think." It's about how to get your offer accepted in the most competitive market in the country.

We bring lunch. You know, it's not self-serving, we don't push our business, we literally just educate people on how to put the right pieces in place to purchase a property in San Francisco, and we've been really successful at it. We hope they call us. Some of the buyers just don't know where to start or what they're doing and it's a great, great tool for us.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

This industry is such a roller coaster right now. I have five listings coming up that are awesome buildings, and I'm excited about them. We just set a record in this other amazing TI condo that we sold that's stunning and made the paper. So I'm on a high right now.

And then there are days, like three weeks ago, where I had no prospects. And this all happened in a matter of a month. The industry's such a roller coaster. When I face adversity, when I'm pounding my head against the wall and thinking my phone is never going to ring again, I just go back to the basics. I have a business plan where I have twenty prospecting activities on it, and I try to focus on my bread and butter which is open houses, calling my past clients, doing pop-bys, touching my clients through phone calls or texts, things like that.

My quote has always been, "The harder you work, the luckier you get." That's a Ben Franklin quote that was the foundation of my business. The harder you work, the luckier you get. It's now transformed into "Work smarter, not harder."

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

It's not a quick buck. It's not a get-rich-quick scheme. That's not what real estate is. I think people see the amazing market and just think, "Hey you know, I can do that and I can sell one or two deals every month or year and be fine." This is a full-time job. It's not a soccer mom or soccer dad profession.

If you want to get into this business, you've got to give it your all. Give it 110 percent. Have some savings lined up and jump in. You can't do it part-time, you can't do it on the weekends. I promise. I've had a million mentees who have a job and then do this on the side, and none of them have succeeded. It's kind of like when I watch *Shark Tank* and they say like, "Why haven't you quit your job yet to pursue this product or service that you're doing?" That's the same with real estate. You need to jump in the deep end. You have to have some savings to be there for it, you need to pour it around you from your friends and family, and you have to give it your all.

It's hard work. It's the hardest thing I've ever done in my life, and it's also the most rewarding and most fun at the same time. If you're not someone that can work weekends, work long hours, can tailor your message, work with people, not get a paycheck

every week or two, then it's not for you. But if you can line up all those things, then it's the most rewarding thing ever.

And I'm the first to say, I was a guy that loved a steady paycheck every two weeks. So it took me out of my comfort zone to do this, but it was the best thing I ever did.

**Coach's Notes:**

Open houses are for sellers too! Great job, Michael, in helping the readers recognize that open houses have three ends in mind: (1) sell the house, (2) generate buyer leads, and, even more important, (3) find the future sellers in the neighborhood. Think about it: when you sell a home, have you noticed that one or two more homes come on the market in that area in the next three to six months? With the right strategy of marketing, bringing the neighbors in for a private "neighbors only" open house gives you the ability to find that next person who will be selling. This way every listing you get in an area can generate one or two more sellers for you.

# MICHAEL DAUGHERTY

**Brokerage:** Benham Signature Properties

**Age:** 30

**Location:** Norfolk, Virginia

**Years in Business:** 4

**Best Production Year:** 2018—200 Units—Volume in Sales 30 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was a wonderful woman named Sharon. She bought a house in Portsmouth. I represented her as the buyer's agent. We call it the selling agent in this area. It was a \$57,000 house, and she's this super sweet woman. I still talk to her now. I still follow up with her.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I read an excellent book last year called *The Miracle Morning for Real Estate Agents*. I started following the template they lay out for the SAVERS. That is Silence, Affirmation, Visualization, Exercise, Reading, and Scribing. I do all of those things every morning.

Every morning I wake up at 4:00 a.m. The first cognitive thought that I have, or I'm actually thinking and not just doing, I immediately begin to thank God for my life and my wife and my children. And then I go downstairs, and pray and read my Bible. I meditate for about five minutes. Then I read an affirmation. Right now I'm reading Og Mandino's *The Greatest Salesman in the World*.

I get to the gym at 5:00 a.m., knock out a CrossFit workout, get home, and make breakfast for my family. We have breakfast together, and then I read about thirty pages of a different book. I then journal. That's the Scribing section of the SAVERS. Journal, write down a few things you're grateful for, and then a few thoughts from the prior day. And then I start cracking on real estate.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I'm more focused on paying off my homes that I have right now. So we have our residence. We have one rental property. I want to pay off both of those before I continue investing in real estate. I don't want to leverage, leverage, leverage, and then see a major downturn like what happened in 2008, where I'm forced to get out of the business or my relationship and my demeanor changes because I'm stressed about money because I've overfinanced my life. I'm not doing that. My strategy is to get completely debt free and then begin buying more rental properties.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

There's a lot of them. Lots of failures. But the good news is failure is an event, not a person. So it happens, and where you learn a lesson from each other, or it can be something that holds you down if you let it.

One of the biggest lessons I learned is not to give an exact value of a home before you see the home in person. I had a buyer that had called in about a house and I showed them a few houses, then I asked them for their address because they had another house they needed to sell. They asked me what I thought it was worth, what I would sell it for. I did the CMA for them, said, "This is what your house would sell for." But I didn't set the appointment to go over there. This is back in my first year, definitely a "newb." I made a mistake. But I never went inside the house, and they had done some things to it that made it worth more money.

I continued to follow up with them, but they stopped answering my phone calls and all that. I looked them up and saw that they had sold their house with another agent for more money than I said, and that's when I saw the pictures. I said, "Oh, of course this would sell for more. It's a nicer home than all their photos." They bought another house, so I lost out, not only on two transactions, but a loss on a relationship because I didn't have a professional skill that told me, "You need to see the inside before you give an exact value."

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Following up in the database. Not just being there when they need to buy or sell but following up on a regular basis to see how they're doing and to really build a relationship.

For me that is THE answer. My people trust me, and they use me over and over again because I'm still here. I do a lot of repeat business even though I've only been in business for four years because I just call my people and see how they're doing, and I send a lot of personal notes, and I send my database and monthly added value. That's pretty much it: just deeper and deeper relationships with the people that love me and that I love too.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Be grateful for adversity. It's the challenges, it's the adversity that makes you better, so you're actually blessed to have the adversity. So learn from it and remember, you get stronger. It's going to make you stronger. The weights at the gym make you stronger, not sitting on your couch. Sitting on the couch is easy. It's an opportunity to get better, and also that this too shall pass. You're in it, you'll beat it, and then it'll be gone.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Good things take time. You have to plant a bunch of seeds that may not seem like seeds in your first year. And after a few years of watering those seeds, they'll start to come to fruition and business just gets better and better, but only if you lay the groundwork. So you won't make one Facebook post and then three years later someone remembers that you made that Facebook post about you're a real estate agent now. You have to be consistent, planting the seed. And you have to water it regularly.

Part two would be, you don't have to live up to the people that you highly esteem. A lot of people that read Tom Ferry stuff may want to be Tom Ferry and they think that's the ultimate goal in real estate—to be a really great agent and then start a coaching company. No, that's true of Tom Ferry's job. That's a totally different thing. You may be the world's greatest real estate agent ever. But if your focus and your definition of success is defined by Tom Ferry or Tony Robbins, you fill in the blank with whatever big personality that people seek out a lot, you'll feel like a failure. You don't have to do that.

We all have different gifts. We all have different relationships as well. Figure out what your thing is. Figure out what you're good at, and become the best version of you. Michael Daugherty could never be a Tom Ferry. It's just not going to happen. I'm not Tom. I can get really great at being me, and I can have really good relationships with my people and really enjoy my life. I'm not on my way to being them. I'm on my way to being the best version of me.

**Coach's Notes:**

Above all, to thy own self be true!

It's so easy in this world of real estate to get caught up comparing yourself to other people's success and to use their standards as measures to your own success. One of my mentors said to me, "Do not compare your inside to another's outside." It's critical that you use others' success and business as an example and not a benchmark. Build the business the way that you want to and be the best version of that model instead of being a cheap imitation of someone else.

# MIKE SHERMAN

**Brokerage:** Compass

**Age:** 31

**Location:** Boston, Massachusetts

**Years in Business:** 7

**Best Production Year:** 2017—Volume in Sales 40 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I think I rented a big house out in the summer to someone, and I had no clue what I was doing.

That's about it.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I start in the morning with emails and coffee. Coffee is very important for my production. I just make phone calls once 8:00 a.m. hits, and then I go through my emails, and if we have appointments, I deal with that. Can't say that every day for me is the same. We're in a real fast-paced real estate environment, so for us, our day to day changes.

We sort of play each day by ear. My partner and I communicate probably every single morning; as soon as we wake up, we're on the phone or we're texting and we're figuring out what each of us has on our plate and how to help each other do more or do better.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

We're both pretty young. I own an investment property and my family owns investments, so I don't really have a strategy. It's just coincidentally a family house; the opportunity presented itself and I purchased the property. Thankfully I have a great tenant, and it's sort of on cruise control.



**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I sold this wonderful family a brownstone in Boston, and I interviewed to sell their condo, which they were going to sell after they bought their brownstone. They had nothing but great things to say about me and referred friends to me, so in my head it was a slam dunk. Low and behold, they launched it with somebody else. And, unfortunately in this situation, it was just about money to them. Somebody went and offered them a lesser price point. For months I spent time beating myself up about it, and I guess the lesson learned here is that sometimes it's not about you personally, and you have to just be aware of that and just know your market and hope that people will stay loyal, which in this business, sometimes they don't.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Things have really shifted to social media exposure, and showing people the power of that. I think clients are much more impressed when you go to a listing presentation, showing them how you're going to build up these videos. This huge social media presence has a much bigger impact on people, showing them how more powerful your social media presence is than it used to be, so it's really become a game changer over even the past couple years.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

You have to remind yourself that everybody who is in the process has the same goal in mind, so when there are major hang-ups, you have to realize both parties do want this resolved and there's going to be a whole team of people physically working on resolving it. Rely on everyone, and everyone's hopefully well-intentioned toward getting things sorted out.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

For every super successful agent, there's about ten thousand who are not successful. It takes a lot of hard work and you get what you put into it, so don't watch *Million Dollar Listing* and expect that to be your future.

**Coach's Notes:**

Mike touches on one of the most important aspects of being a millennial real estate agent. We have the ability to overcome a lack of experience or age by wowing the clients with technology. He uses videos and his social media presence to do this. I have found that the more I talk about having an online marketing platform and a social media marketing plan, the more the client is impressed and wants to use me to sell their home. This is especially important in the high end and luxury markets, and it has become my secret weapon in any listing appointments.

# NATHAN KING

**Brokerage:** EXP Realty

**Age:** 32

**Location:** Fresno, California

**Years in Business:** 4

**Best Production Year:** 2018—12 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first deal was my father-in-law's. It was his property that he used to own and then he had it rented out, and nobody was biting on it because it was tenant-occupied still. We ended up selling it to an investor. My second deal though was really tricky, and actually my broker said, "You can't do that." It was called a reverse mortgage short sale. Several people said, "You can't do that." And I argued with them. I said, "Well, I've talked to other people, and they said that you can." So I figured it out. And that worked.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I wake up at 4:45 a.m. I spend an hour reading, studying, and praying. And then I work out and come home and get to work. I work from my home office because my wife goes to work and my daughter goes to daycare.

I get the house to myself. I will actually begin my day with emails, which I realize is not what I'm supposed to be doing because there's going to be some changes in my business coming up in the next couple of months. I'm in transition right now; I just left Keller Williams. I'm getting a new CRM system set up. I don't have as many leads coming in as I should be, because my goal is to do one hundred units per year within the next two years. So by 2020, I should be doing one hundred units. But if I'm going to do that, I've got to get more leads and make more contacts, accept more appointments, and definitely get more listings. Right now I'm about 90 percent buyers.

I'm always planning and evaluating where I'm at versus where I'm trying to go and seeing what kind of course corrections I need to make.

Most of my time is eaten up with my emails and trying to stay in contact with my clients because my clients are emailing me because I have them on the autoprospecting email. Anytime a new property hits the market meeting their criteria, they get automatically emailed that property. A lot of times they'll email me back and say, "I want to know more about this." Or "Let's go look at this property." So I do make between five and ten contacts a day, some of it's just doing follow ups. On Tuesday and Thursday nights, I'll block off two hours to actually follow up with all my leads.

Right now I'm making about forty contacts per week, and that equates to about seven appointments per week, which then equates to five closings per month.

### **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I do not have any investment properties; I just own my own property. I'm still having to pay a mortgage on it. I'm still in the beginning stages of my career. In my opinion, California isn't the best place to buy real estate for cash flow purposes unless you get a smoking deal. And frankly, where my financials are at, I'm trying to reinvest into my own real estate business. If I find a deal, I'll buy it and flip it if the margins are right. But that strategy does not hold in Fresno, California.

### **Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I had a client that got angry. I was representing the buyer. We closed on the sale, and the buyer was really upset at the seller because when the tenant moved out she felt that the tenant's dogs peed all over the carpet. She said, "Oh, there's a musty smell." She was really getting very bitchy about it. She's yapping in my ear, and I kind of lost my cool with her over a text message because she tried to get the seller to replace all the carpets. I wasn't going to do it. She was going off, and then I just said something snarky or rude to her and all that built-up aggression and anger toward the seller was then turned on me. She wrote me a bad review and was just making my life miserable.

The broker had to get involved and calm her down and offered to pay her money for replacing the carpet. She backed off, and she didn't even take the money. "Oh, I just wanted an apology." So lesson learned. Tread lightly when a client is upset, or they'll turn on you and take all that aggression out on you. Do whatever you can to make them satisfied on your end. There's only so much you can do, but make sure they are head over heels satisfied with your service.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Lender referrals.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

This too shall pass.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

If you're not successful, or you wanted more business than you're already doing, or you're just getting into the business, join a team. Don't try to do it on your own. I tried to do it on my own. I didn't have a team at first, and I really struggled. I joined a team, and my business just took off like a rocket ship. And when that team didn't have the exact structure that I wanted, I went to another team that was essentially bigger and better, with better systems, and again, my production skyrocketed a second time. Now I'm out on my own and doing better than ever.

**Coach's Notes:**

Numbers are the language of business! What is the difference between someone who treats the business like a business and someone who treats it like a hobby? Plain and simple numbers/KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). Nathan knows his numbers: 40 contacts a week = 7 appointments a week = 5 closings a month. That's about six conversations to every appointment...Got hung up on..."Yep, and if I have five more conversations, then I should generate an appointment." When you know your numbers, it not only allows you to be predictive about your business but it also helps you move through the rejection that is part of this business.

# NATHAN TORGERSON

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty

**Age:** 29

**Location:** Chattanooga, Tennessee

**Years in Business:** 8

**Best Production Year:** 2017—20 Million in Sales—100 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

The first deal that I had was in 2011. I was twenty-one years old and right out of college when I got licensed. It was a first-time home buyer buying about a \$300,000 house in the suburbs. They were friends of mine from college.

It was a learning experience for sure, making sure you've got all your deadlines met and you are providing the best customer service. I was new to Chattanooga. So I barely knew anybody here in town. What I did know is that I had to provide the best customer service experience so that I could get referrals and grow my business. Once I got someone locked and loaded, ready to go, I made sure that I knew just about everything that I could know. Especially being my first transaction, I wanted to give them first quality service.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I'm a calendar person. Every night when I lay in bed, I open my phone and I look at what is happening for my next day. I usually get up at about 6:30 a.m. every morning, and I'm in the office before 8:00 a.m., prepping and ready to go. And about 8:15 a.m., I'm doing follow up. Just following up with people that have raised their hand or have made inquiries, and making sure that's being taken care of. I'm super scheduled. After I take care of follow up, the next thing is lead generating. I usually do that until lunchtime. I take my appointments in the afternoon as much as I can so that all of my mornings are basically lead generating.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

We don't have any rental units; we buy and flip homes. My wife and I and our financial planner, we started that maybe about three years ago, at least until the market crashes, and then we're going to go full rental.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I had missed ordering a termite inspection for a client, and we had passed the inspection period. I quickly paid for the termite inspection. They're not expensive, but it needed a full termite spray. I was not going to let my client pay for that because I missed the date. So I had to fund that. The most important thing I learned from that was making sure that I was systematized so that I was not missing deadlines moving forward.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Most recently it has been testimonials and reviews. We get a ton of people that have just called in or emailed or Facebook messaged us that have just said, "We're looking to buy." And we get down to it, "How did you find us?" "We just googled top agents, and we saw that you had the most reviews or the highest number of reviews, so we contacted you." So, making sure that, again, you're giving your clients the best customer service.

Then, when it comes time for a review, make sure you're getting five stars. And then make sure you're publishing those on different avenues. Google, Facebook, and Zillow have been our top three. Sharing those on social media: Instagram stories, Instagram, and Facebook. Using those testimonials and listing and buyer presentations, providing those people with the links so they can go in and look at you if they're interviewing multiple agents. Since we're so strong in our reviews and we have so many, I always tell them, "If you're interviewing multiples, make sure to go read testimonials. I'll provide you links with mine. Make sure you google and find those of your other agents." I know that I'm going to stand out against the competition when I do that.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Be honest and work hard. Whether you have messed up or something like that, you own up to it and you make it right, and don't point the blame and try to finagle your way out of it. Just to own up to it and make sure that you're fixing it yourself. As far as market diversity, whether you're having an off week or an off month, instead of just sitting there and dwelling on it and beating yourself up, figure out a way you can work hard to get out of it.

I feel like a lot of people just sometimes sit there and base it on luck. And it doesn't always turn out that way.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

It's not what the surface appears it to be. If it's something that you want to get into, get into those trenches and do everything humanly possible, everything that you can give. And make sure you're with a company, or a mentor, or somebody that's going to train you on what to do so that you can be held accountable to do it.

**Coach's Notes:**

We live in a review-based society! Think about how much we use reviews to make decisions in our lives. From what we eat, where we shop, the cars we drive, the professionals we use. Reviews are now an integral part of the structure of decision-making for human beings. The social proof that reviews give us creates influence on others as they are choosing to work with you or not. The more reviews that you have, the easier it is for a potential client to choose you. Nathan is an example of how reviews can remove resistance, move potential clients more quickly to a yes when choosing to work with them, and to show the degrees of separation between him and the other agents in the marketplace.



# NIK BOONE

**Brokerage:** Ascend Real Estate

**Age:** 26

**Location:** Bakersfield, California

**Years in Business:** 8

**Best Production Year:** 2018—12 Million in Sales—60 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I had a lead come in from my mom, who's actually a lender in town, and she was interested in a HUD home that was for sale. It was right when HUD had changed basically everything. They went from old-school to completely electronic, new systems, all of that. My very first deal I learned how to just do a deal in general, but also nobody had really trained me on it because nobody knew the new system yet. So the way HUD worked was you have to send a cashier's check and the contract and everything is just very, very timely. You have to do it in the exact amount of time; if not, they send everything back to you, no questions asked. I had literally sent this deposit check like six times to HUD because it was wrong or different or they needed something new, and the lady kept apologizing and saying it was this new system and they couldn't accept it unless it was exactly perfect. So it was like a thirty-day escrow; the whole process from offer to finish was adding like fifty days 'cause we took three extra weeks to figure out this whole HUD thing.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

My day is organized, and I have certain committees or nonprofit groups or boards that I serve on that have prescheduled stuff. Then my clients have first priority on if they want to see a house or if I have a listing or stuff like that. Typically the morning, when I'm the most energized, is for prospecting, depending on which day it is and who I'm calling.

I try to keep it as routine as possible. I'll make some exceptions if I have a difficult client, or they work weird schedules or something like that, but for the most part I'm pretty strict on my time. I haven't really had much pushback from clients on it; it just is what it is.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

We manage about five hundred units with Ascend Property Management, but it's a different corporation. I have three homes, two of which are investments. My first ever purchase was actually an investment home. I was renting a single-family home and didn't buy a home for myself, I bought an investment. We're actually looking at buying a commercial building sometime this year and hopefully just expanding with the rental income on the side.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I actually consider when I first opened this office as a failure. I was a manager for about fifty or sixty agents at a local brokerage, and I was only like twenty-three or twenty-four and decided I wanted to go out on my own and have this big brokerage, fifty or sixty agents. I had, at one point, I think about a dozen agents working under the brokerage, and in one week pretty much 90 percent of them left and went to a different company. I had this whole business plan of what I was going to do and recruit and get people, and that just took me back. I signed a three-year lease on this office and all kinds of stuff.

My office now is just me as the agent. I have a staff that handles everything else. They'll schedule for me, they'll take phone calls, my phone is forwarded to them, everything is really centered around my listings, my buyers. There's no other agents doing their own business. So that I would consider a failure; I'm much happier doing what I'm doing now, so definitely a stepping stone, but I would for sure consider that a failure.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I think Google has been our best friend. We really push reviews. So if you google "real estate company" or if you google "property management company," we have over 220 reviews on Google and like a 4.8. We don't pay for that, we don't run Google ads, we're not on Zillow paying for that. I don't do a ton of that because the ROI is not very good. We really hit our actual clientele. I stay in touch with them pretty regularly. We have a very detailed list. I walked in this morning and have a list of who I'm supposed to call today based on it being Monday, stuff like that.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

When I face adversity, I think I just ask myself, “Is it worth it?” You know, if it’s a difficult client that just doesn’t have the same viewpoint or the same strategies or wants a drop in commission or any adversity like that, I’m in a position to say I don’t need to work with that client.

So I just ask myself if the stress is worth helping. Now, at the same time, if somebody is in need of my help and I have to put up with or do certain things that typically I wouldn’t, it’s for the benefit of the client, whether they know that or not. I won’t take the listing just to have a listing.

**What’s one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Your business needs to be exactly that. It needs to be a business. From financial to everything else. Most people get a check, it’s made in their name, they deposit it into their bank account, they’re not tracking expenses, they’re not tracking income, they’re not tracking leads. If you’re to have a business, have a business. I think a lot of people look at *Shark Tank* and put themselves in other people’s position of, “If I owned that business, this is what I would do and that should easily increase revenue or that should easily decrease expenses,” but then they don’t look at their own business, that way of tracking or measuring or marketing. I really keep my real estate sales as a business and that comes with pros and cons, but I think overall it’s above all else a professional business, and I think people see that from me.

**Coach’s Notes:**

Nik’s favorite marketing strategy is pushing reviews. Whether we like it or not, we live in a “review society,” and it has never been more important to put an emphasis on it. We give instant credibility to somebody when we see that over one hundred people have reviewed them and have recommended working with them. If you don’t have at least one hundred reviews on Google and Zillow right now, you should immediately put together a strategy plan and spend the time to implement it to get those reviews. You are losing business you don’t even know about because of lack of reviews.

# PEDRO RIVERA

**Brokerage:** NextHome My Way

**Age:** 27

**Location:** Milwaukee, Wisconsin

**Years in Business:** 2

**Best Production Year:** 2018—125 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first real estate deal was my own. So it was actually trial and error on things that I had not received training for. However, it was not as challenging. We got it closed! When I got my check, I realized that I had to start doing this full-time.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

If you don't have control of your time, you're going to be all over the place between deals, networking, buyers, sellers, showings, prospecting, follow up, family, etc. I quickly realized that I had to organize my day in advance in order to be effective in what I do.

I use time blocks. I divide my day by hours and make sure I follow it. After trying it the first time, I realized that I can have control of my time. I am an individual that likes to finish things once they get started. At the beginning it was hard to let things go to work on others, but that trains your brain not to procrastinate and be productive.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I currently don't have a real estate portfolio. The main reason I got my license was to start one; however, this has been a roller coaster for me. I'm definitely looking into it, hopefully within the next two years. For now, I am concentrating on growing my office and empowering my agents so that they can do as much or better than myself.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

There is no learning without failing. One failure that helped me raise the bar was a deal I had that went south because of the financial contingency. The buyers were a couple with newborn triplets, crying in my office because they didn't have anywhere to go. I think that if I had been more involved with them in the financial process, kind of like a coach, I could have prevented that. Even the loan officer could prevent that! Who goes and orders custom-made furniture before closing? Buyers. As real estate professionals, I think it is our role to educate them on what the process looks like at all times. After that, I got very engaged with buyers on a personal level to make sure that they don't go through things like this and that they have the right information to go to the closing table successfully.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

My favorite marketing strategy is to find common ground that creates conversations. I don't have to be in front of a person to know what they need or want. It's basic advertising. I can share on social media to my sphere how beautiful the kitchen on the picture looks. It will trigger conversations. Conversations are what get us the relationships that lead to business.

Everybody talks about how many calls they make, how many people they got to talk to, how many voicemails they left, but they never talk about the conversations they had. Real estate is not my first business. In the past, I used my office décor/art to trigger conversations, unique canvases made by a local award-winning painter. Nine out of ten meetings in my office turned into relationships that led to either instant business or business in the future.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Anytime I face adversity, I think of peace. This industry is difficult for many reasons. There are a lot of components that you have no control over. That's why many quit within the first two years.

I'm from Puerto Rico, a small island in the Caribbean. I learned how to swim at an early age.

One thing people kept telling me when I was trying to learn how to float was "Try not to be heavy."

I would think to myself, "How do they want me to lose weight instantly?"

I use the same principle in business when I face adversity. I make the decision not to let myself be drowned. By finding peace and believing in yourself, you can overcome any adversity. At the end of the day, it's how we feel; it's what we think, how we think; what we see and how we see it.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Consistency would be my best piece of advice to any aspiring millennial real estate agent. We live in the communications era. Become the go-to local expert by remaining consistent in every avenue/platform you choose to market yourself. Communicate with people—there are many platforms nowadays. Aim for conversations/video content that leads to relationships, and keep doing it.

**Coach's Notes:**

Real estate can be a very challenging business. Clients calling at all hours, other agents being emotional, highs and lows of income. Pedro's one-word answer to adversity...PEACE. Peace is not something that happens randomly to you, it is a state of being that comes through diligent practice and strategy. There is an entire canon of research outlining how the most successful leaders and business professionals maintain peace in the chaos. What I have found in the last thirty-plus years of studying and working with top producers is that almost every single one of them has some type of mindful practice such as meditation, journaling, prayer. Even if it is just taking a moment and taking ten deep breaths, you disengage the survival mechanisms of your mind and allow yourself to not only be calm but clearer and more effective.

# ROB RIDDLE

**Brokerage:** New Albany Realty

**Age:** 30

**Location:** New Albany, Ohio

**Years in Business:** 7

**Best Production Year:** 2017—23.7 Million in Sales—57 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My very first real estate deal was a purchase of a home for myself. It's actually how I got into the business. I was working in corporate retail. That's what my degree was in, merchandising, and I really was not passionate about it, and I felt that maybe rentals would be my way out of the corporate hamster wheel kind of thing. I got my real estate license taking evening classes, thinking it would be for my own personal use. During that time, my parents decided they were moving out of state, so all of a sudden my focus shifted from buying my first rental to buying my first house. I discovered a first-time home buyer's grant that the state of Ohio issues to recent college graduates called Grants for Grads, where the state actually gave me my down payment, and that first year when I discovered it, less than two hundred grants had been written statewide. In the first year, the twelve-month span that I knew about it, I wrote almost twenty.

I did 10 percent of the grants in the state the first year that I found out about it. Basically, I was just selling all my friends homes.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

My day starts with phone calls and client and contractor touching base for about an hour. Then I have generally a ten- to twenty-minute call with my assistant, who comes in right around 9:00 a.m., and I give her a task list to get started on, then I start my day. I go through my morning routine and get cleaned up and shave and take my son to

daycare and get him dressed and all of that. Then, midway through the day, I generally do my prospecting, usually after lunch. Then at the end of the day, I generally wrap with contract reviews and client calls. I find most of my clients are available to speak between 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and then 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

When I first got into the business, I started flipping houses. The first home that I owned, I fixed that up, turned it over, and then did it a couple times and until I had enough money to buy a portfolio of rentals, and I bought a group of rentals in downtown Columbus. Seven rental units, and I managed those for three and a half years. That was enough time for me to realize that my highest and best use was not managing rentals in the hood. I work in a good market. Our average price point is over half a million. My time was better spent managing those transactions, and so I found an investor that wanted to buy my rentals all at once and I sold the whole farm.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

Honestly, I probably failed with my first job at retail. It wasn't a good fit for me and that's an easy excuse, but I don't think I was giving it 100 percent and I checked out a little early. We parted on good terms, but I think I would have been asked to leave if I hadn't tendered my resignation ahead of time.

Generally, I think people should find a good fit for themselves and they'll be successful. If you're in a career where you're not enjoying success and you're miserable, don't waste any time switching. I think that there's something out there for everyone, and something that everyone will be good at. That's been a really powerful lesson for me. We recently just had to let somebody go who was working for us in the capacity of a marketing director. I felt more good about it than I did bad about it because I knew this wasn't a good fit for her, and I knew that by pushing her to an uncomfortable place she would find something that is a much better fit, that she's passionate about, and that she's really, really good at. Understanding that there's always something better around the bend is a really good takeaway from that.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

We live in a community where the school district is highly sought after. We have slightly higher property taxes because of that and a community continuously supporting the schools and passing new levies and raising taxes and this and that. A couple years ago, I decided to start marketing to people with graduating seniors, and that's been a very successful strategy.



On a \$400,000 home here, you might be paying \$12,000 a year in taxes. I mean, they're heavy. We basically figured out a way to determine when people have graduating seniors and when that's their last one. We're not typically marketing to people who just had a kid graduate but also have two more in the line. We're only marketing to a very targeted group of people who have no more kids in the school district.

That's been good because it's a small enough group that you can just pepper them. I mean, we've got a campaign set up that hits them every two weeks. There's no way they're not calling you when the time comes.

Another thing that we've actually done and had a great deal of success with on social media, and I think anybody could do this, is we started championing. We started supporting other people's businesses, even if they weren't our clients. Don't get me wrong. I'm not interviewing my competitors or anything and supporting them, but we're going to the local ice cream shop and the local restaurant and doing an interview with the owner and we're putting that on the website. We call it our Community Spotlight. What we've found is by supporting them and revving up their business and generating goodwill for them, they do it like reciprocally without thinking a lot about it.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Keep your head down and just hustle. That's always been my thing, I just grind and I'll just outwork whatever the situation is. I just keep pushing. I guess it probably comes from my business partner, who is like an old corporate warhorse and somebody I learned a lot from in real estate. His name is Tony Thomas, and he's just been a fantastic mentor and is one of the greatest in our area. He never lets a deal die on his side of the table, and he just never takes no for an answer. As cliché as that is, that can be so powerful if you're in sales, and the difference between a really good transaction for your client and the nice payday for you and them is that extra bit of push.

I think the really good agents work very hard to keep a deal together.

### **What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

It's very important to get good training somewhere, and they would be wise to build up some savings before they get into the business. If you get in, it's like anything else in life. You can't go halfway. You have to go full bore. There's a lot of money to be made in this business, a lot of success if you're just willing to hustle, so it's just really important that they put their money away for that first year because it's going to be tough. Whenever I hire new agents, that's what I tell them. I think they need to have nine months to a year in reserve, and that's usually one of the hardest things for them to do before I'll hire them. But it's important that they take the time to get good training, and last but not least never take no from somebody that can give you a yes.

**Coach's Notes:**

The late and great Zig Ziglar had a belief that has stuck with me for my entire life, “You can get everything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want.” Rob’s social media strategy centralizes around that. Their Community Spotlight is a brilliant strategy that allows an agent to simultaneously assist the growth of another small business owner while growing their audience and client base by cobranding with the interview. Every small business owner is looking for ways to create more awareness of their restaurant, store, shop, or product and when you do that, you are opening a massive referral relationship that can return multiple transactions.

# ROBYNN ECCLES

**Brokerage:** Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

**Age:** 40

**Location:** Salt Lake City, Utah

**Years in Business:** 10

**Best Production Year:** 2017—15 Million in Sales—53 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My very first deal was a buyer that I had started working with from a sign call. I drove all over the planet to find the house that would work for them because it had to be single family within their \$90,000 budget.

So we ended up finding a little property in Sunset and it had tenants in the property, wall-to-wall garbage, and it included seedy furniture. We walked into this house, this cute little couple, and they said, “We’ll take it.” They asked what happens with all of the stuff that’s here, and I’m thinking they’re asking about it physically. I explain the idea of crew clean and they said, “Oh no, no, you don’t understand, my dad, his whole job is to clean out apartments after tenants leave and he has found some real treasures, so we will haul all of this garbage away today.”

I had to figure out how, in my first contract I was writing, to have “garbage” listed as being included. So it was an interesting sell, but we got in the house and dealt with the garbage. It all ended well.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I have time blocking in place because appointments sometimes need to be moved around, but if I don’t start out with a general blueprint of really what the ideal day will look like, I’ll get to the end of the day and have something that was time sensitive that didn’t happen, or some high production activity, because the day got away from me.

So I start off with time block chunks in place, and then I have a few that are nonnegotiable with myself. There are always a handful between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., calls or emails that need to go out that are nonnegotiable. There's a couple of activities that I know really need to be nonnegotiable. Everything else just kind of works around what happens at the day's end, and where it goes from there.

Once a week I compare my time blocking to what actually happened in the week to see if there are processes or systems that I need to change. I start out with delegation, if people want delegation who are not getting it, or getting called back in when they shouldn't. Just really where the gaps are. I find if I don't work on that on a weekly basis, it gets away from me. On a weekly basis I can see and determine those trends when they show up.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I have my personal residence, which I have watched the equity grow in. I had really anticipated someday I would move into a bigger house. I've been busy, so we expanded and bought an investment property startup where my oldest daughter is in school; that allows us to have something that feels within my comfort zone because it's where we are frequently and I have more information on it, but it's outside of my direct market. And then I have partners in two investment properties here in the Salt Lake area.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

Almost daily. So it's tough because I feel like in the past ten years I've failed frequently enough that it doesn't feel like a failure anymore. There are properties that I thought were going to be really great, but bombed.

One that I tell my kids all the time is that I have to take my own medicine. I tell them you just need to forget enough about the experience that you want to let go and remember just enough to keep it in your mind. Remembering that lesson but letting go of the emotional sting of it has been really important to me, and not deciding that any one failure or any one mistake defines who I am, or defines my business, or defines anything. It just sets me on that next path.

And then the other thing I think with it is that I'm not planning to fail. I think if you're not failing, you're probably not going big enough, and I am more concerned if everything's coming together exactly as I expected because that means that I'm not expecting enough of myself. So I'd be hard-pressed to find one specific failure, but I think that knowing that there's going to be a series of failures is not going to lead to success, and not fighting things about myself based on those failures is how I pick myself back up and move forward and try to learn from that.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Zillow has been a really good platform for me. What works about Zillow is that I start out calling residential lists and return sign calls that I don't think anybody uses anymore because you didn't call back. Regardless of what the platform is, it's the strategy of building relationships, it's the strategy of really looking for what people are looking for.

So sometimes it's building the relationship, taking the time to be willing to work on their timeframe, not my own, and to just know, to just trust that when you've got enough time, then it fills in the year. So I don't have to worry about if the person I talked to on the first day isn't ready to do something in the next thirty days. If I have people that I talked to six months ago, and you talk to enough people and you build that pipeline, that's really key to building those relationships. Then it's all clear for you.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

One is something that my great-grandma started in my family. It's that you can't ever cry over something that can't cry back. And so when I get frustrated, when I'm upset, I just remind myself to respect this.

The other is something that I really settled on during a time of my life when I was dealing with a whole lot of adversity. My husband was injured in an accident, and it resulted in basically his entire mouth needing to be rebuilt. It was over a dozen surgeries and years of rehab. It was awful, and I felt like it was a very tough time. And it came at a time when we had a lot of other crises that happened all at once. My mom had a brain tumor. It was just a lot. And I really told myself during that time that when the bottom falls out, you can fall or you can fly. Anytime I start to feel myself falling, I go back and make a different choice.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Just do the work, and have the power. There's so much possibility in this business, and I see time and time again that the people that just do the work, and do the work when they're frustrated and it's not coming together, and do the work when it's exciting and it feels like it's rolling in, and like, "Hey baby, I can just coast on this." The ones that really just do that, that do the work every day, ultimately do have that power, ultimately do have the ability to decide what direction they want to take that's clear and what they want to give it.

**Coach's Notes:**

Having known Robyn for years, there are so many things I could discuss. Her ability to overcome adversity, putting clients' needs first, being a great mother/wife while being an absolute rock star in the business. What I want you to notice from this interview is one simple but incredibly powerful process that she engages in. Once a week she goes back and looks at her proposed schedule compared to what actually occurred. This level of awareness, in my mind, is critical not just with scheduling, but it can be applied across the board to almost any part of the business. You don't get a listing...review it so that you can determine what you could have done better and then pivot for your next presentation; you get a bad review...then take a look at where you didn't fulfill the client's expectations so you can adjust your systems to better serve clients; a past client buys or sells with someone else...instead of getting upset, dig into where your marketing and follow up is lacking so that it never happens again. Instead of getting mad...get curious, and then get into action on making the changes.

# RYAN JANCULA

**Brokerage:** Compass

**Age:** 27

**Location:** Los Angeles, California

**Years in Business:** 7

**Best Production Year:** 2017—Volume 36.4 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

In 2015 I went off on my own after working for someone, where I started to build my brand and name. I was working diligently to make something happen and a referral came into the office, I was working at Sotheby's in Pacific Palisades, and it was for a \$400,000 house near USC. My knowledge was primarily in the \$2 million-plus-market of Pacific Palisades, but I would take whatever I could! The lead ended up being a very wealthy man who was looking to buy for his son who was going to school at USC. I thought to myself, "Okay, a very wealthy guy buying something for his son. I don't think he's going to want to buy something in the USC area," just because it's kind of rough and there are a lot of gang territories around that area, but I learned the area and showed him over ten properties that looked like good opportunities.

One of the final places I showed him was a property on the corner of an intersection. As we viewed, the listing agent just became extremely transparent and just said aloud, "Ya, this is Four Corners. There was a drive-by the other weekend, and then there's this person right across the street who frequently does drugs, so I just want to let you know this is probably not the right place, but by all means go ahead and make the offer. Make the offer, and we can make something happen." From there, the son of the buyer ended up going and staying in a really nice luxury lease that was a better fit altogether for him. I was a bit discouraged that my countless hours didn't lead to anything, but I stayed in touch with the client, and a few months later he gave me a call back, saying, "Hey, I'm

looking for a cabin in Mammoth,” and I said, “Mammoth’s really not my market, but you know I’d love to help you.”

Little did I know this guy had a private jet. We fly up there, and I end up locking up a deal with him for a \$2 million cabin right on the golf course in Mammoth. It ended up being a wonderful return for him as it was a great investment and offered him the vacation home he was looking for. The \$400,000 deal turned to a \$2 million deal all because I kept in mind my client’s best interests and stayed in touch with him. It acted as a testament that the relationship is what matters when working with a client. There will always be another deal.

### **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I make a list, and I like to knock off each item while also adding to my list. This is a simple way of accountability, and it also offers the satisfaction of consummating a task. I also am habitual with my Calendar app on my phone. I set up all my appointments and to-dos on my Google Calendar app, which keeps my days very structured and efficient. I used to do it by paper in hand, and that would keep me in line—and I still utilize this tactic at times.

I also take ten minutes every morning to focus/meditate. I call this perspective training and it keeps me efficient in handling objections and not taking things too personally or emotionally. Emotions tend to slow down decision-making processes, and I focus on being as efficient and logical as possible in my day to days.

### **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I always wanted to buy a property by the time I was twenty-seven, and I was able to do it when I was twenty-six. I bought a condo. Ended up flipping the condo, and then from there I bought a property out in Henderson, Nevada, and then immediately I also bought another property in Burbank, a duplex. Right now, I’m in escrow on another two in the West Los Angeles area.

Within about a fourteen-month span, I put myself into a learning curve to educate myself on homeownership and investing in income properties. In my mind, I am a business, and our revenue is our commission. If I can put my commissions into hard assets that produce revenue while also creating equity (and having tax benefits), I do not know where you can find something better. It all stays under the real estate professional umbrella, and I do not know why the majority of real estate agents do not own properties.



### **Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

A lobster, right before it grows and breaks out of its shell and forms a new one, literally gets so uncomfortable that it sheds its old shell. I like to use that analogy because it is a really, really good statement for growth. Every single time you fail, success is on the other side.

I was let go from my first job working for my mentor. This was the person that mentored me and I had so much respect for. It was an eye-opening experience as I thought I was doing extremely well and was intrinsic in increasing his sales as well. He had given me much praise, and then all of a sudden he just dropped me and he said some nasty things to me, which I didn't think were true. I looked at that and instead I said, "It is time for me to go to the next level and see what I can do for myself." This was a sendoff that showed my considerable growth and by believing in myself, showed how I could rise and take myself to the next step of my career, no matter how difficult it was to hear things you do not agree with coming from the person you respect the most.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Well, I believe that I can create a relationship with anyone by this formula, which starts off with a direct marketing strategy. It has to start off with some kind of value proposition that you're bringing to the table. From that value proposition, they need to see and prove that you're credible. What are the assets that you're bringing them that are hard, and what are your qualifications?

Then it's another proposal of a value proposition that will lead to what I call a trust engagement. Basically, if I say, "Hey, now let's go see a property. If you're considering selling your property, let's go see a property and see what's out there for you. By the way, during this whole process, it's offering both sides. If you're not interested or you don't want to move forward, then we don't have to and we stop here, but at least I've taken you down this path to realize what your options are," in a completely cold relationship where I haven't met them before.

Then from that trust engagement, it's funny because at that point, after you've done something with them, whether you've taken them to see another property or you've shown their property, got them to show their property or anything, they really go ahead and open up to you. Then you really are able to start identifying their motivations and then being able to provide truly what they wanted, which would have been just a glint or an idea that they had before, and I've been able to help them take it through.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

The lobster analogy, right? When I feel angst, anxiety, or pressure, I do my best to step into it, feel those feelings, and logically ask myself what I can do to stop feeling this way. Is it to confront the person that made me feel like this? Is it to go work out? Is it to write an email addressing the issue? It comes down to properly analyzing your own feelings because adversity is very much per the person feeling it. Humans are amazing as we can take on so much, physically, mentally, and emotionally, and still stay alive. Maintaining a level of perspective in the moments of the most difficult adversity is what keeps me going.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Understand your weaknesses and strengths upfront, and surround yourself with people who pick up your weaknesses and you pick up theirs with your strengths. Also come to the realization that as a newly licensed agent, you really don't have anything to offer anyone unless you immediately have a deal at hand or an immediate value proposition for another agent. There's a lot of ways that you can break it down and go, "Okay, how can I provide value to someone else," and there's creative ways to do that, but to walk into real estate and think immediately, off the bat, that you're going to be on a TV show or be making millions of dollars is just stupid.

I earned my way to making good money while also learning how the business works. But, at the same time, I started off my first six months in the business working a restaurant job in the evenings and making \$15,000 working for my mentor. Through consistency and persistence, I was able to work up via the value I provided him on a regular basis, through my work and effectiveness. Then when I went off on my own, I had a nine-month period of time where I made zero money. Even though I had paid off all my credit cards before going off on my own, I maxed them all back out because I had to invest in myself so I could propel myself to the next level of success and financial freedom.

Define how you can you provide value to others on a consistent basis; leave the money aspect of it out for your first few months. If you focus on what you can do for others, you will create relationships that will be far more fortuitous than being recently licensed and having expectations that are not reality. Additionally, if you focus solely on the money, people will see you and can put a value on your thoughts, actions, and relationship. I say, create the ability to be invaluable, don't let your actions allow others to put a value on you.

### **Coach's Notes:**

I can't tell you the countless number of stories that I have heard over the last twenty-five years of how a buyer looking at a lower-priced property turns into a big whale that ends up becoming hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of commissions to that agent. Ryan's story of his first transaction is case and point of that. Too many times a lead comes in on your personal website and they put "Mickey Mouse," or they are only looking at the lower end, and we immediately discount it as "below me" or not serious or not worth my time. Don't discount that there are still big fish looking at the small bait and it's only a matter of time before you find one...as long as you have a line in the water and are willing to fish (even for the small ones).

# RYAN KANE

**Brokerage:** RE/MAX

**Age:** 36

**Location:** Reno, Nevada

**Years in Business:** 10

**Best Production Year:** 2018—37 Units—20 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My very first real estate job was lucky because my soon-to-be father-in-law was in the market. I was just getting into real estate and the market had crashed in Reno, and he's a smart, savvy guy. He had some cash and he wanted to jump on some investments, so he bought a few houses in Reno. My first few deals were all with him, which was a nice, easy learning process with low pressure. And actually, the first or second deal I did was actually the house I live in to this day. Just this year we bought it from them.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I am the free spirit of the group. Basically, I am a 50 percent partner in our group for the Drakulich Kane Real Estate Group of RE/MAX professionals, and the other 50 percent is the husband and wife team. The husband is my best friend since middle school. We basically set our team up five years ago when we moved to RE/MAX and set up the team where we specialize in our roles. I do nothing but buyers.

My business partner J.D., he's the exact opposite. He's all listings. His wife acts as our marketer, bookkeeper, organizer, and team leader.

What we've built allows me to be that free spirit that I like to be and not be as organized. I'm the only guy on my team. I keep a calendar on the wall in the office, but that's it. I don't have a calendar on my phone. I keep everything in my head. I just keep the energy flow going and stay creative and keep relationships going and take things on as

they come as the buyer will send. That's the polar opposite of my business partner, which is why we're good partners. J.D. is super organized, super calendar-based, and scheduling meetings and getting through his phone calls is all systematized and system-driven, and he's just done that better than anyone in our office.

When we started to decide our roles, we all took a personality test, a pretty detailed one, and found out what our strong suits are and kind of show our roles based on that. So, just being a buyer's agent, it's a little more of a, kind of a social butterfly type. Doesn't want to be in the office, looking at his calls and this and that. So I get to do what I like to do. J.D. thrives in what he does.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I own four rental properties. I started buying them as soon as my first year of making money in the business. So, in '14, I had about an extra \$50,000 lying around. I bought a property. Anyway, I own four homes, two of them are duplexes. One of them I did about a \$150,000 remodel the year after I bought it, that first one. I buy rental properties on fifteen-year notes. I don't make any money on them. No cash flow. But fifteen years go by pretty quick and they'll be liquid at that point, and that's all good retirement money and some cool flexibility.

I'm actually in the process of selling my first one. We fully got one side, remodeled it. So, we bought it for \$333,000, we're selling it for \$469,000 just a year later. It wasn't even supposed to be a flip, but it's just kind of how it turned out.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

Just the whole energy of this business and running a team and working with business partners and all that kind of stuff, it's emotional at times and there's a lot of details to figure to make sure everything's there and how things are working. So I'd say that part of it was a failure at first. There was a lot of butting heads upfront. That probably took away from some of our production, when the better thing to do would probably be to just realize that it's never going to be perfect. But just get out there and grind and kind of massage it as it goes. The emotional side of friendship and business and putting a team together is stressful sometimes. You've got families at stake, and everyone's working their butts off to be successful. There's just a lot that goes into that. I would say, just taking things with a grain of salt, stay patient, stay respectful, and just looking at the big picture and stay as a team. I think that's very hard to do.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I would say it's our snail mail that we do. We're old-fashioned. We make phone calls, we shoot text messages, and we use snail mail. Basically, anytime we are introduced to a new potential buyer, we put them on what's called an eight by eight. They're going to get eight cuts over eight weeks from us in the mail. It's just a front of mind awareness thing. That person is a serious buyer or seller, and they're seeing you every week for eight weeks; they're probably coming to you if they are serious. That's less of an impact now because we work at about 80 percent referral now. But to get our business started, that was crucial. So we did eight by eight on everybody we touched, and we also did a monthly mailer; something funny, sometimes informative, but always had a nice flair on it. Just used that as a means to stay in front of all the people that we knew in Reno because we all grew up together. I don't want to call it a "brainwashing," but it basically didn't give people anywhere to run. We were in front of them in their mailbox, on the phone, on their emails. So everybody knew we were in the business. That form of marketing got our name out, allowed us to be successful, and allowed us to start turning.

One thing we've done over the last two years now is that every time we do a client event, or any sort of party we throw for our people, we also involve a charity in it and kill two birds with one stone. It's been received really well. People like that we're raising money and they feel like they're part of something and we're throwing fun parties for them. That's been a cool thing.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Energy is everything in real estate. It literally is. It's the lifeline of the business. I think a lot of people forget that. I'm very universal or cosmic in the way I work, really. And I feel like if I keep my energy pathways open and stay positive and focus and visualize good things, then good things come. I feel like a lot of times people get stressed out, whether it's personal stresses or finances or something silly in an escrow, and they just get bogged down on that and you block all of your energy channels and that's why you can have a couple rough months coming off of a hiccup in your deal. You can't let that happen. It's all about staying positive. Breathe through it, realize you can only do so much and it's not the end of the world. Cut ties with bad things. Say there's a buyer that's just crushing your energy and your time—don't be afraid to let them go. You might let a half-million-dollar house go, but that half-million-dollar house might've cost you two million dollars' worth of other production because it took so much of your time and energy. I think just realize how you're feeling about things, trust your instinct, and always stay in a positive energy flow because it's very important in real estate.

### **What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

I would say it all has to come down to, first off, database. One thing that our team had going for us is we've turned this into a higher age range so anybody that found our team, they have to have grown up in Reno. We like people that are of a certain age. Not in their twenties anymore, particularly. People that have a family. That grew up in the same town to where they have, probably, 150 to 200 people off the back that we can go contact and market to. That's huge. The other thing, that I would say, is the team. Trying to wear five hats in real estate in where you're working three listings, four buyers, running two escrows, and trying to market for yourself, and it's just not possible.

You have to build. Don't be afraid to grow. You have to allow yourself to stay in one lane. I'm telling you, that's what makes our team very successful. I make phone calls, I share houses, I write contracts, that is all I do. I get an escrow, I hand it off to a transaction coordinator. All my marketing is done by someone else, and my books are taken care of. I'm just in one lane which is sell, sell, sell, sell, sell all day long. That would be my best piece of advice. All that only works if you've got a database and people to be contacting to get that business.

#### **Coach's Notes:**

I love how Ryan talks about combining his client parties with charities. I have found that this is the best and most efficient way to build rapport with clients and to truly use our profession to give back. Some of the best clients I've ever had I met while doing charity work in other countries.

# RYAN NAGER

**Brokerage:** Stunning Homes Realty

**Age:** 31

**Location:** Phoenix, Arizona

**Years in Business:** 8

**Best Production Year:** 2018—60 Units—20 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

A \$260,000 condo. It was unique because this was somebody I'd worked with at my prior job at a grocery store. I was a young kid, twenty-one. She got into some money and wanted a condo. It was the first place she saw, it was the first place I showed her, and it was a cash deal. That was maybe six months after I got my license.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I have a weekly calendar as kind of a loose guideline, but every single morning I write out what I want to accomplish that day. Some of the bigger goals to smaller, more specific things that I know I need to get done. So for me, the musts are calling at least five past clients, writing three note cards a day, and then everything else is kind of specific.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I have four rental properties and my primary residence now. Buy and hold. I've sold a few properties that were troublesome or I needed to for tax reasons, but I'm a long-term guy. I believe in rental properties. I believe in real estate, and investing in real estate is one of the best ways to create personal freedom and wealth, financial freedom and wealth.



**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

Even though my business is built a lot on referrals and relationships, you can never take those relationships for granted. You need to treat every person like they are a client first and a friend second. And so really just understanding that you need to be always aware of that fact. And don't take relationships with people for granted just because you've helped them in the past and had a good relationship.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Client events. I do an annual pumpkin patch for clients that have young kids. So it started with me actually hand delivering pumpkins to all of my clients when I first started getting into the business around Halloween, and then it got too big for me to do it by myself and so I invited everybody to come and pick one up. Now it has turned into like a little festival with just a fun thing that we do every year. I do a couple of other things. I did a comedy event this year. I try to engage people with things that they like to do or want to come do but also give you a reason to see them.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

That there is a lesson in every experience.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Be genuine. Don't buy into the fake it until you make it. Understand what you're doing.

Work hard. Care for your clients and what value you're providing to the industry.

Something along the lines of, "It's not all hard work that it takes to be successful. You need to be fully rounded as a person." And so taking care of your mind and your body is important. Taking care of your bank account. And constantly be growing in the business too. You're growing or you're dying. You can't stay at the same level. Always be open to learning more.

**Coach's Notes:**

Yet another example of a great marketing strategy that is proving to be more and more effective: client events. I transformed and doubled my business by doing just that, throwing events that people and families appreciate and would like to come to. Not only is the event a great way to go deeper in relationships but it is also a built-in opportunity to call every quarter to invite them and to have a different conversation with them besides “Here’s an update on the market” or “Who do you know that is thinking about buying or selling.” Think about your client base and your city. What great events could you throw at a low cost that would allow you to create even greater engagement with them and create an experience that they will remember (and remember you when they do)?

# SAM SAWYER

**Brokerage:** Compass

**Age:** 31

**Location:** Dallas, Texas

**Years in Business:** 9

**Best Production Year:** 2018—40 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I got my license when I was still in college at SMU and was doing it part-time, but a friend of mine's dad who was a huge real estate developer in Saint Louis came in town one weekend and somehow trusted me to help him buy a townhome that he wanted to buy right near SMU's campus. I don't think I admitted to him until three years later that that was the first place I ever sold. I'll definitely be sending him a copy of this book. We got the inspection report back and it was the first time I think I'd seen one of those and I had a panic attack, but it was brand new construction and everything ended up working out. We're still great friends now, but I had no idea what I was doing. I think I filled out the contract on the completely wrong form, but it all ended up working out.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

Every day is obviously different. I get up pretty early and usually go work out or jog or do something on my own. I feel like the first two hours of the day is the only quiet time you have to do what you want to do and not get interrupted. I try to read a lot, nothing even real estate related. I just try to read like a chapter of whatever book that I'm reading at that time. I have no idea what's going to happen, so I try to control a couple of hours in the beginning of the day before things break loose.

I don't really schedule a lot of lunch meetings anymore because I feel like that gets so stressful. I used to try to meet people for lunch all the time, but if people want to meet

now, I try to meet for coffee in the morning or do something later in the afternoon. Just because in the middle of the day you think it'll be calm, and then everyone else, clients are not working, and you're having to get in touch with people and things and you can't. I definitely work on the weekends a lot.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I live in the Design District in Dallas, which is an up-and-coming urban infill area. It's seen tons of development over the last fifteen or twenty years, but it's really becoming a super cool neighborhood all on its own in the last five or six years. Virgin Hotel is building a hotel there right now and there's lots of new restaurants and art galleries, so two years ago I bought a warehouse down there that had been converted into a house and lived there, and then I bought a couple of other little properties that I rent out as office space. I love the urban redevelopment stuff, and I sell a lot of that stuff for clients.

Right now I have four properties that I own.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I played lacrosse growing up, and we were always expected to win the state tournament every year; my senior team was ranked one of the top teams across the country. That year we made it to the finals; everyone was expecting us to blow this team out, and we lost really badly because everyone underestimated the other team. That's from a long time ago, but I'll never forget it because you've worked so hard and at the last second you assume that you're going to win, and then everything that you thought was going to happen didn't happen. Worse things have happened since then, but I think that was just a good reminder that you never know what's going to happen and just always have to stay on top of stuff. You think you know how everything is going to work out.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I've always had the best success just going out of my way to keep in touch with friends who have never even bought a house from me, or property, or whatever, and then past clients. Which sounds so stupid, but so many people just sell people a house and then they never talk to them again, and it's usually the best way to get other business because if you did a good job for someone, they'll most likely give your name to someone else. I send handwritten letters, which I know is really old-school, but I have a ton of good feedback. You can't say directly that referrals and stuff come from that, but I really just try to keep in touch with people I know and I would rather deal with someone I know, at least have a friend of a friend or a family member connection, instead of some random Zillow.

It's amazing how people spend \$20,000 on an ad in a magazine that they think looks cool and can tell everyone about, but you don't know if it helps or not.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I'm pretty positive, so it takes a lot for something to bother me, but I just always think worse things can always happen than something stupid that happens with work or whatever is going on. At the end of the day, there's way more important things than stuff that happens with real estate.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Treat it like a full-time job, even though you're not getting checks regularly. So many new people get into it, and after a couple of months if they haven't sold something, leased something, or done a deal they get discouraged, but I feel like real estate is also an industry where there's not a ton of young people getting into it right out of college. People want to go do the banking jobs or work at the tech companies. There's a huge opportunity for people that get out of college and start helping their friends immediately. That's how I did, and in the beginning you might be leasing apartments or whatever just to make money, but eventually you stop doing that and start selling houses and you have a real business.

**Coach's Notes:**

Sam's experience as a top-rated lacrosse player in high school provides a very valuable lesson. Never underestimate the work and sacrifice that it is going to take to reach your goal. I have found in my life and my coaching clients' business that we normally underestimate what it will take to reach a big goal. Think about it for yourself. I bet you can look back and have a hard time finding a larger goal that when you finished you said, "Wow, that was a lot easier than I thought." So, as a business owner, take the amount of time, skills, and commitment that you think it will take to reach your goal, and double it. Yes, you heard me right...DOUBLE IT. If you overprepared and begin to crush your original goal, then you can always increase the goal...it's much harder to make up ground when you are three to six months into the year and realize you are behind.

# SAMMY DWECK

**Brokerage:** TTR Sotheby's International Realty

**Age:** 29

**Location:** Washington, DC

**Years in Business:** 9

**Best Production Year:** 2017—Volume 23.8 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I picked up a buyer at an open house in DuPont Circle. I was holding it open for a colleague and friend in the office, and I actually sold it to her.

I'm not very reliant on open houses for serious buyers. I just got a little bit lucky that day, I think.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I keep a calendar and I understand that things change a lot. I try to leave the mornings available for me to get things done and do things in the afternoons and the evenings.

My dog is a lovely little dictator, and he decides when I wake up. Absent him, I might get to 7:30 a.m., but sometimes he is up at 6:00 a.m.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I own my home. It is not in a neighborhood that I necessarily expect to appreciate tremendously. I think it will track with the market. I always tell my clients that your primary home is not an investment. It is a place for you to live. If you want an investment, you should be buying something that you are not going to live in, calculating a capitalization rate, and probably hiring a manager if financially feasible.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

When I started out in the business at the age of twenty, my first client, who I did not successfully sell, was a family friend who was really condescending and abusive and it was really surprising because we had known these people for my entire life, at least. And that was really demoralizing for me. After a few months of not being able to sell anything, I took a job as someone's assistant who is a more successful agent in the office, and I stopped selling. I was actually just a full-time assistant for a few months. From that failure or transition, I really learned how an office works and how to run a business and how to do successful marketing. I think what I saw was this very successful person selling \$70–80 million a year at the time deal with difficult people and really navigate it. I learned that no matter how good an agent you are, you might get to the point where you can pick your clients, but you are still going to deal with difficult people, and you just have to have thick enough skin for it.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

My favorite marketing strategy is actually not to consumers, it's to other brokers. My relationships are one of the most valuable assets, and within the broker's community, those are among the most valuable assets to my clients to market their property.

The first thing I do when I get a listing is I call my favorite forty or fifty people who I think might have a buyer for it. I get them excited about it. Even if they don't have anyone for it personally, they often share the information with the people in their offices and connect us. Sometimes, I've been able to get my sellers multiple offers on a property before it even ever goes to the market.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

My grandfather, who is now ninety-six, has always taught me that you don't wait for things to happen, you have to make things happen.

The other one was something my uncle said to me, and it really resonated. You can't control the world, but you can respond creatively to what it hands you. He is an extremely successful commercial developer. Sometimes when I have a real brain-buster, I call him.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Do everything with authenticity and integrity. Those are timeless values that never go out of style. Don't be afraid to tell people no. If the seller wants you to take a listing at an outrageous price, have enough respect for them and for yourself to tell them what the reality is and to teach them what the reality of the market is. Don't make promises

to people that you can't keep. Listing something really high just to take the listing is a promise you know you can't keep.

**Coach's Notes:**

You aren't just selling a home to a client; you are selling it also to the agents. The relationships that you have with other agents in your marketplace is critical. Are you known by other agents as someone who returns calls quickly, maintains their emotions in a transaction, is easy to work with, has integrity, or gives back to the agent population, or is it the opposite? Your brand is not just B2C; it is also B2B. Make it so that who you are, and through your reputation, other agents want to show your listings first, look at your offers first, and find ways to do a deal with you.



# SANTINO FILIPELLI

**Brokerage:** Modern Realty

**Age:** 29

**Location:** Portland, Oregon

**Years in Business:** 9

**Best Production Year:** 2018—108 Units—40 Million Volume

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

When I first got in the market, everybody's houses were underwater, so I remember every transaction taking nine or ten months to close.

I joined right after the market crashed, and I think one of my first transactions was a guy who sold drugs before it was legal, and his house was up for foreclosure. He wouldn't let anybody go into this room, and I'm like, "If I'm going to sell your house, people need to be able to see the whole house." He was this hippie guy and anyways, man, that was selling.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

My assistant organizes my day for me and then I just follow what she tells me to do. That's how things go now, unless something of importance comes up.

I've read a lot of different books on how to stay organized, and I think one of the best things is to organize the day around what the most important things that need to get done are and what the next steps are that I need to do to get it done, and then I execute.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

My own personal investment strategy is to buy as many houses or units as I can and leverage. Leverage, leverage, leverage. Leverage and leverage, as much as you can right

now when you're young. Interest rates are at an all-time low, leverage the crap out of that. In my investment portfolio I have a duplex. I have two single-family rentals. I own two office, commercial properties, one which we just purchased with an SBA loan close to a million dollars. My real estate portfolio is continuing to grow. I just purchased a loft that we're developing fifteen units in. That's good, but that's a while out. I also own another property in Oregon City.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I fail a lot at managing. I realize I'm not a good manager. I'm a better entrepreneur than I am a manager.

I'm a great rainmaker. I'm really good at getting business, but after that I just want to be able to hand it off and go get more business. When it comes to managing people, I'm not good at that. I'm not a micromanager either, and so that makes me even worse sometimes depending on who the person is. I partnered up with somebody who has better management skills than I do, and I learned a lot from that.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Just my face. When I first started in real estate it was kind of a joke at first, but I put my business card out and literally the front of my business card was just my face, and then on the back it had my information. I would just post my face everywhere.

After a while the best marketing strategy became social media, and I realized how many people paid attention even though nobody would look or like it, but when I would talk to them, they would say, "Oh, wow, I see you every once in a while on Facebook, it looks like you're doing pretty well." And I'm like, "Oh, I have like two likes on that," but obviously a lot more people saw it. A lot more people were paying attention than I thought, so for me it's social media, leveraging that and showing people what I'm doing.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Failure is not an option. It's just not. There's always got to be a way. There's always a way, and I approach every situation like that because 99.99 percent of the time, there really is a way. Whenever I face adversity, you know Michael Kay, there's got to be a way. There's got to be a way to make this work. What can we do?

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Get used to getting three or four hours of sleep a night if you want to win. Because while you're sleeping, I'm working. While you're playing with your friends, I'm working. I'm winning.

Basically, I thrive. I love when other realtors go on vacation. Don't get me wrong, I think there's a time and place for that, but there's more realtors right now especially because millennials are the most entrepreneurial generation there is and they look at real estate as something for fun. Be prepared to work hard. It's a grind, and the work never stops. Get used to not sleeping because if you want to make it, you're competing against the best of the best.

The same listing appointment that you're going to go to may be the same listing appointment that I'm going to go to, and if you don't bring your A game, I'm going to crush you. I'm sorry.

**Coach's Notes:**

According to the great real estate trend predictor Stefan Swanepoel, the emergence of teams is one of the biggest trends that exists in real estate today. Santino has identified that in the past he had failed at managing. I notice this as a major challenge that many great agents like him face. They choose to grow a team but they fail to grow their LQ (leadership quotient). So, how do you solve this problem if you are growing a team? (1) raise your LQ through books, seminars, and audio on becoming a more powerful leader or (2) hire someone that is a much better leader than you are to fill the gap that you have (or better yet, do both). Think about it, my friends, if you are (on a scale of 1–10) a 7 on your ability to lead, inspire, coach, hold accountable, you will never attract talent that is an 8–10. You will attract 4s and 5s. Raise your LQ and you not only raise the talent you attract but also the income that you earn.

# SARAH KETTERER

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty Downtown

**Age:** 36

**Location:** Chattanooga, Tennessee

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2018—55 Units—GCI 12.2

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My first real estate deal was hysterical. I had been licensed only about a week when a dear friend approached me and asked if I would list their home and help them purchase a new home. As you can imagine, I was beyond excited and terrified at the same time. The owners had completed many updates and additions to the property, and now I know, it was really over improved for the area. But of course, I had no idea of that at the time. I just loved the home and was pumped and ready to sell my first listing! So, with no real guidance, I took a stab at it and with as much research as I was capable of at the time, I decided we should list around \$220K. I somewhat guessed on what the value was. I didn't completely understand the comps and was certainly no expert at that time. Well, I got it under contract within just a few days! Now, to the fun part, the appraisal. The appraiser called me and literally asked me what the hell I was thinking and why in the world would I value the home at \$220K? I was shocked and replied, "Look, this is a great house, I think it's worth this and apparently so do these buyers." Nonetheless, he appraised the home at \$190,000. Shocked, I really didn't know what I was going to do to hold this one together. The buyers decided to pay the difference! It was a total miracle. That never happens with that large of a gap in appraised value versus purchase price. They brought \$30,000 cash to the table. It just worked out. That was my first deal, it was nuts, unheard of, and a really good lesson.

**How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I really love the CRM Follow Up Boss, Google Calendar, and I have an assistant. I am never as organized as I'd like to be, but I am continuously working hard to improve that. I time block every single day. From work tasks to family and personal time. It is all blocked out and color-coordinated on my calendar. It has taken me quite a while to get my calendar to where it is now, and I still have tweaking that takes place regularly. I am working to create a well-oiled machine! I have to have structure and flexibility at the same time, so my calendar is crucial to me staying on task each day. Now, the next game changer for my business was finding a CRM that my "not so tech savvy brain" could work with. I absolutely love Follow Up Boss. I use this for my database. I can keep notes so I remember personal aspects of their life and not just the transaction. We then set tasks within the system to connect and make sure we are getting our "touches" in throughout the year. I want to connect with people on a personal level, so birthdays, anniversaries, etc. I don't really want to send them real estate trends and market updates. I'd much rather find other reasons to connect. When I connect with my clients throughout the year on these various personal levels, it still keeps me top of mind if real estate needs arise. I create tags for every single person, like hobbies, interests, relocations, anything I can think to use to connect with them in the future.

The tags also group people together, for example, adoption. I'll use that tag for any family who has a heart for or story of adoption. Then in the future, I may be able to use that as a sweet way to connect with my clients. Lastly, my precious assistant is a lifesaver. I waited too long to make the hire, but so glad I found the right one! She has many admin roles, but most importantly, she helps me execute the above and beyond ways that we serve our clients. We love on our clients well, and she makes sure that they are getting the experience and service they deserve. When I was without an assistant, something was going to suffer, it was either the client experience or my sanity. Usually was my sanity! So, make the move and get an assistant!

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I have only been in the business for five years and learning a ton about investing, so I certainly have investment goals. Right now, we have one single-family rental. This was my personal home before my husband and I married. It's a fantastic income property because we don't have a mortgage and it's basically 100 percent profit! Our goal is to at least acquire one hold per year and do some flips in between.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

A couple of years ago I sold a property where the seller was a hoarder. The property had three acres of land with it and the owner had JUNK everywhere in the woods. I'm

talking tires, bikes, toilets, you name it. You would think the owner would take all of their belongings with them when they vacate the property, but I didn't put in writing for all that junk throughout the land to be removed, and it just turned into a real estate nightmare. During the final walkthrough, he left cans, jars of food in all the cabinets, junk, junk, and more junk and left the place filthy. Now, this property really was a diamond in the rough, or we would've backed out. In the end, it would be worth all of the drama. We almost went to court because he literally left toilets in the yard. I called the listing agent and told him the house needed to be emptied or we weren't coming to closing, and he tried to act like I was an incompetent newbie and this was my mistake. The agent argued with me that I should have put it in writing to have everything removed. Long story short, we had the seller hold money in escrow with the title company until he at least emptied the interior of the home. Once he cleaned it up, they would release the money back to him and if he did not, my buyer would get the money. Not to our surprise, he never cleaned the property. The seller left a huge mess and my buyers did in fact receive the money, but it wasn't enough to pay for the dumpsters and time they had to spend cleaning that property up. This was yet another big lesson for me as an agent. I am always very specific with anything remaining or NOT TO REMAIN!

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Just keeping that relationship going and being very intentional. Knowing I care about them, and I love them. My business is almost 100 percent repeats and referrals. We love to love on our clients. I'd rather spend my "marketing" money on a fun party than some signage and ads.

We started client events this year, and it has been such a blast. We do a Ketterer Homes Fiesta in the spring and a Ketterer Homes Barn Bash and Hoedown in the fall. For the Barn Bash, we hired a square dance caller, and it was so silly and so much fun. To circle up with your clients, hold hands, learn to square dance, and look completely ridiculous doing it was worth every penny! It was a night to remember, and we can't wait for next year! The events are family friendly and just a really sweet time with our clients. The events also give us content for social media, and we get to reach out and do our touches by just picking up the phone to call and invite everyone to the event, send an invitation, and send a thank you.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Win-win. No matter what adversity I face, I try to do that right thing based on my morals. There is always going to be adversity and obstacles, but that is what I love about real estate. There is always a solution, and it's my job to find the best solution possible.

I always strive for it to be a win-win for everyone involved in the transaction. When I meet with my clients, whether I'm representing the buyer or the seller, my goal is for everyone to walk away feeling good about the transaction. I never want one party to feel like they had to win and the other party feels like they were taken. I want the best for everyone involved. If there is a client interested in insulting offers or playing games, I'm not going to be the best agent to represent them. I'm not interested in that kind of business.

### **What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

For me, it's character. If you don't have good character, no one will want to continue to do business with you. No agent, no buyer, no seller, no lender, no one. I have had agents say, "Wow, thanks for calling me back, you're so refreshing." What? I just returned a call! It just blows my mind. Be courteous. Care more about people than your commission. For my clients, I will do whatever it takes to get to closing if I feel like it is truly the right purchase or sale that needs to take place. As agents, we work really, really hard and can get super creative if needed to make a deal work and sometimes we need to let it fall apart and take the loss because it's the right thing for our clients. We don't want to push so hard to make things happen that shouldn't just so we can get paid. My goal is not to close that one sale. I want to do an outstanding job, be their hero and their realtor for the rest of their lives. I want them to tell their momma, grandpa, neighbor, their cousin, and every other person they know, to use me. That is the goal.

#### **Coach's Notes:**

Before I say anything else, I want you to notice that this is another agent that has said her favorite and most effective way of growing her business is client events (yes, it works). MORALS and CHARACTER. Love this, Sarah, and I wish that we could tattoo that on the back of everyone's hand so that they are reminded of it. *USA Today* does an annual poll on the public's perception of the different sales professions and unfortunately, real estate agents battle it out each year for the bottom position with used car salespeople. Why? I believe that it's because there is a small portion of the population of agents that lack MORALS and CHARACTER. Do the right thing, answer your phone, call back when you said you would, be in communication (even when you're not delivering good news). The clients appreciate and expect that. We do this as an industry and not only will the perception rise but also all of our incomes.

# SARAH LYONS

**Brokerage:** Century 21 Judge Fite Company

**Age:** 30

**Location:** Fort Worth, Texas

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2018

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I worked with an older couple for three months to find a home they liked. Then I found out they hadn't filed taxes in three years AND had nine more months on their lease. I was too new, at the time, to know the red flags and questions to ask on the front end. They ended up finding a lender who helped them file their taxes and get them the loan. The next problem was getting them out of the lease. Luckily, it was a house that was leased out by a couple that didn't intend to be landlords and were happy to let them out of their lease IF the house was sold at the same time. I listed the rental house and was able to get it closed within a couple days of the tenants closing on their new home. Happy ending, but a very stressful first transaction with lots of moving parts.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I keep ALL appointments (personal and professional) in my Google Calendar. I schedule my personal commitments first and schedule everything else around them. I have vacations, a day off, workouts, date nights, lunch dates with friends, and doctor visits marked off as a priority. If a client requests an appointment in a time that is already booked, then I let them know I am already scheduled. They don't need to know that it is a workout or taking my kids to the zoo. Our business is what we make of it. You will be a happier person and ultimately a better realtor when you don't allow the work to control you, you control it. I didn't always run my life this way. Over time, I realized



my personal time was an afterthought. It was a big mindset shift; my business AND my happiness have improved since.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

When I started in real estate, we had a mountain of debt from living off of student loans (my husband attended three years of medical school and ended up becoming a stay at home dad). Our goal for the first few years was to build up one year in savings, fully fund my SEP IRA every year, and become debt free. Six months before my thirtieth birthday, we had these items complete! Since then we have started investing passively in multifamily housing (30–200 unit complexes) and are looking to purchase more in the future.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I try to own my mistakes. Our imperfections are a big part of who we are. After any listing appointment or client interaction, I try to take a minute in my car to reflect. I think about what I did right and what I could improve on. Often small statements or body language can turn off someone without us realizing it.

The beginning of 2018, I experienced a very slow first quarter after coming off a very good 2017. I felt like a failure and thought maybe my “luck” was running out. It really helped to reflect on my successes and analyze where the business was coming from. I also focused on setting new goals for the year, both personal and financial. Things picked up, 2018 ended up surpassing 2017, and I was able to refocus on family at the same time.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Referral-based business! I have hosted two client parties a year for the last three years; I do frequent pop-bys to my past clients with seasonal gifts. I leverage my relationships with a lender, title company, home warranty, foundation company, and insurance company to participate in my client appreciation parties, and that covers the whole cost. It is a fantastic way to reconnect with people that will use you again in the future and receive referrals from them. This business will die if we don't keep the personal trust and relationships alive.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Often I feel like things have a way of working out how they are supposed to, and that gives me inner calm during struggles. When a client missed out on a home they really want, another home seems to come on the market that is even better. I am not a religious person, but I have seen this happen time and time again.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Share your secrets! I love educating consumers about the insides of our business. I explain to them how I get paid, how most realtors spend a lot of their time on lead generation, and what makes me different. I focus on giving my current clients such amazing service and providing them so much value that they refer me to their friends, family, and coworkers. Often, industry professionals like to assume the consumers know things that I have found they don't! When we looked for my mother-in-law's first rental property (for my husband and I to live in during college), we did all the work and called all the listing signs thinking it would save money not to have a buyer's agent. No one ever explained how that process worked. I share that story with prospective buyers daily, not to assume that they know how it works and to take the pressure off by saying I used to not know either!

**Coach's Notes:**

I just spent last week with one of my mentors and a man I respect very much, Steve Harney of Keeping Current Matters. If you don't subscribe to KCM, you need to immediately. He said something that stuck with me and had a huge impact (and it's something that Sarah mentions). "We must move from being a salesperson to an educator in today's real estate world." Our job is to educate the consumer on the market, the process of a transaction, and yes, even the insides of our business. The more we educate our clients, the easier it is for them to make informed decisions that best serve their goal.

# SARAH ROCCO

**Brokerage:** The Rocco Group at Keller Williams

**Age:** 33

**Location:** Jacksonville and Sarasota, Florida

**Years in Business:** 3

**Best Production Year:** 2018—130 Units—30 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I was hosting someone else's open house. It was an orphan buyer. And I remember the fact that I never told them they were my first transaction until the day of closing. They were my only customer that gave me a gift basket at closing.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I live by my calendar. I time block 80 percent of my day. Every Sunday I time block for the following week. The reason I do that is because in real estate, there's so much flexibility in a schedule and you can go days on end where you don't feel productive. So I have learned you could be very purposeful about that. So I usually time block what is most important. I have my "me time" from 4:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.

And then I get the kids ready for school and then from 8:00 a.m. to noon is my 20 percent, which is basically what I'm going to be focusing on the most to create the most results. And then everything after that is appointments and meetings.

I do all of my calls during drive time. I'm productive during drive time.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I own three, and I bought when the market crashed. I am waiting for the market to dip, and I am saving every bit of money that our company makes so that we can invest. And I'm going to give individuals on our team the opportunity to co-own those with me.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I believe in failing forward every time. One time in particular that I know I failed: when you have individuals on your team and they're in the role of a buyer's agent, it is our job as a team leader to train them and then at some point, you have to let them go and do their thing. Our median price range is \$230,000, and a buyer lead came in and it was \$500,000, and I was feeling that gut feeling that I should probably keep it and take care of it myself. But having a buyer's agent, I wanted to give her the opportunity. I gave her the opportunity, and it failed, and they fired her. I realized that it was actually a coaching thing on my end, so I could take ownership of that and realize that if I am going to entrust it to them, I have to trust them fully and that's going to require coaching. So that was one of my biggest failures, not coaching to the level I needed to trust them fully.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Videos. Videos on social media, and the most important thing is to not make it perfect. We do Facebook live a lot, and it's not always pretty. Being that face on social media has been a huge, huge, benefit to us, from being very real, being very genuine, and it shows up in that way. And it's not boring, we're not talking about our open houses, we're talking a little bit about our new properties and stuff like that, things that are very relatable, maybe funny things that have happened to us this week.

We have a program that allows us to capture their information on social media. So we're very purposeful when we do it, and when they click for more information, they can sign in through Facebook and it captures their information. We're really intentional about what we use, but that's on our business page. I think one of the things that makes us unique is we use our business page very separately from our personal pages. On my personal page, it's more about this is who I am, this is what I do. Make it fun and exciting. So that's our social media strategy. And we require everyone on our team to be highly, highly involved in social media. They're required to do "X" number of videos a week.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I think every person that has had massive success has come from some place where it was dark, and it was tough, and they had to go through the trenches to get there. When I face adversity, I think, even if it's the worst day, it's never as bad as other people have it. I could be homeless; I just had that experience where I got to live a day as a homeless person for our chamber of commerce. It was fascinating. I was literally homeless for eight straight hours with ten other people and we had to go through the motions. Anytime adversity comes, it's never that bad. There is always a way to make it better. I'm really high on the optimism scale, and that can be a negative as well.

But unless I'm dying, I will get over anything.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

You need to fire any of your friends that are not going to encourage you, support you, and push you to be better than you are today. You need to fire them, and you need to surround yourself with people that are going where you want to go, doing what you want to do, and that your circle, your environment, is the most important thing if you are going to be a successful real estate agent or team owner in the real estate industry, hands down.

**Coach's Notes:**

Oh, Sarah, I absolutely love your “golden nugget.” I have told my son and daughter, who are ten and twelve, that the most important decision that they will make is the friends that they choose to associate themselves with. It's true for them at ten and twelve, and it's true for you at your age. If the people around you are not going to support you, your vision, and your goals, then are they truly your friends? You will absorb and mirror the beliefs, behaviors, and actions of those you are around. You want to lead generate every day, then start associating with people who lead generate. You want to get up earlier, then make friends with people who are early risers. You want to maintain a strong mindset, then put yourself around those who have a strong mindset and have no room for complaining. You become who you are around.

# SHERRI SAAD

**Brokerage:** RE/MAX Leading Edge

**Age:** 43

**Location:** Detroit, Dearborn Heights, and Canton-Plymouth, Michigan

**Years in Business:** 17

**Best Production Year:** 2017—441 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was in southwest Detroit, a Mexican-town area, a two-family flat on Central Street. I called up a friend and said, “I’m in the business,” and the friend is like, “You know what, I have a two-family flat that I want to sell. You know what, you’d be perfect.” I had a friend that gave me an opportunity and had seen my drive and my passion for real estate.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I have about an hour or so for myself. I meditate just to clear my thoughts. Everything is tasked, so you always have your fire tasks, your red tasks, your medium tasks, and then your green tasks that you have to get through throughout the day. They’re not all as important as the red tasks. I have an assistant and people in the office, and they all do all their individual tasks and they’re able to assist me with clients, prospecting, and getting files closed. They organize and they filter my calls, so that way I’m actually physically talking to the client. The business is filtered, so that way I’m really just concentrating on real estate and concentrating on the clients

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I’d rather invest in the dirt, in the soil, versus putting my money in a bank in a CD or the stock market because you can never go wrong when you invest in real estate, whether

that's land, a building, or an apartment building. I do mostly land contracts; they're very popular here in Michigan. I probably have about thirty-five investment properties that I have for cash flow. Every realtor should always invest in real estate, and that's one thing that always keeps everybody afloat, especially in those slow months.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

It was in 2007 when the market was crashing. My business wasn't diversified, so I had to find another way to sell real estate or another way to diversify my business and not just say, "You know, I'm a buyer's agent, I'm a listing agent, I'm not going to go sell a two-thousand-dollar home. I'm only going to go out and sell a hundred-thousand-dollar home." I was able to diversify my business and say, "You know what, these five-thousand-dollar homes, these ten-thousand-dollar homes, are going to be paying the bills." So I actually physically would be doing ten to fifteen of them, and then at one point I got to thirty a month, and they actually paid the bills. And when you get a flat fee of \$1,500, you add it all up, yes, one big deal, but back in the day, nobody wanted to go out and sell them. Now, even today, everybody's fighting for those deals to sell. They are paying the bills. They're fast, they're cash.

Diversifying your business is the most important thing, especially when you hit rock bottom and you were just a listing agent. You should always be a buyer's agent, a seller's agent, never just strictly say, "I am this specific thing," you know?

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I paint murals on walls in some areas. I have a painting of a mural with my name and the RE/MAX balloon and my information on it, and it does very well for me.

Staying involved in the community, that's one big thing that I'm a big advocate about. Any time there's a back-to-school campaign for children in need, food boxes during Thanksgiving and Christmas, my name is always out there. I'm so involved in so many communities that it's always Sherri Saad, RE/MAX Leading Edge, and it gets out there.

I'll do a school presentation where I'll just go in there and give little books to kids with RE/MAX on it or my information on it, it's a great marketing tool. Facebook is great, accept as many followers you can, that's one thing. And stay involved in every community out there, and be a big advocate about helping people in need.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I just treat everybody equally. Whether they're buying a dollar home or a million-dollar home, I look at that person as equal to everybody else.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Set goals for yourself. Don't let one paycheck, one success of a closing, slow you down. Always be striving for more. Reach for the stars, never be content with what you have. In this business, you always have to be hungry and strive and hustle. Treat everybody equal and don't think you're above anybody or anything because, you know, you sell this many properties or you make this much money, and then a new agent comes in. Always be humble to help a new agent in this business, and don't ever look down on any other agent or anything like that.

**Coach's Notes:**

Diversification is key if you are going to have a sustainable and duplicatable business. Too many agents only have one or two lead sources that they rely on, and when the market changes (as it always does) and one or both of those lead sources stops performing, then that agent is left with a business that is in great peril. At Tom Ferry International ([www.tomferry.com](http://www.tomferry.com), the company I speak and coach for), we believe that an agent needs to have as a foundation the "Core 4." Those are your database of past clients and center of influence for repeat and referral business, online leads, open houses, and geographic farming. When you have systems, processes, and strategies in each, you insulate yourself from any change or decline in the market.



# STEVEN MADDOX

**Brokerage:** EDGEhomes

**Age:** 25

**Location:** Salt Lake County, Utah

**Years in Business:** 4

**Best Production Year:** 2017—85 Sales—Volume 22.5 Million.

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was a single widow who I had helped before. I helped her do a couple refi's on her primary residence when I was doing mortgages, and I helped her buy her first investment condo. That was the first deal that I did.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

The big thing for me is I have to go to the gym every single morning at 6:00 a.m. If I don't, my day is kind of wrecked.

I'm up at 5:45 a.m., and then I spend the next fifteen minutes going over any emails or phone calls or anything like that that I might have missed, just so I can kind of add them to my schedule for the day. Then the next hour and a half at the gym. So that puts me to about eight o'clock or so. Then my wife will go to the gym, and that's the time that I spend with my baby. I kind of turn my phone off, turn everything off for about forty-five minutes to an hour. I might read a book with her or do something like that, but just kind of spend a little bit of family time. That puts me right around 9:00 a.m., and I'm usually starting my day at that point.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I have two townhomes, probably worth about six to six-fifty or so. I have one of them rented out, and it's cash flowing about \$600 a month right now.

I want to try to have as much paid off as possible. That's the goal. For me it's just to get my single-family house paid off in the next five years and then as soon as the market turn comes, leverage that and then start buying properties for a lot cheaper than what they're going for now. So hopefully everything that I have into these three properties, I'll have within the next year.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

After every closing that we do, we have a survey. And I remember the very first survey that I ever got, they said that they thought I was just in it for the paycheck. Obviously that's a big portion of what we do, to make money at it. But I never want somebody to feel like my number one goal is to get them in and out of my system and my processes. So it completely changed what we do. I think us sales guys are so good on the front end, just getting people in, getting them excited about real estate, getting them excited about buying something, that sometimes we fall short in making the rest of the process enjoyable.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I've done a great job with my sphere of influence, I think. A lot of people my age are so afraid of buying houses. So showing them and just being completely upfront with them about what my monthly payment looks like, what my return on cash looks like, what my cap rate looks like. All those things, educating people my age and showing them how being a little bit more aggressive and maybe spending a little bit more a month is a benefit to them. And the capture rate that I have among my friends that are buying I think is higher than a lot of others.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Don't sweat small stuff. Do the absolute best that you can do to control the controllable situations, and let the uncontrollable situations kind of go.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Don't cheapen the process for yourself. I have a friend that probably calls me every two or three months with a get rich quick scheme. He's trying something else. He's doing something else. But now he's labeling himself as a real estate investor, and every single week I get emails from him about why pay rent, have someone else pay your rent. Stuff like that, right? We see all these types of emails. And he's renting a basement right now. He's renting a basement apartment. And so I guess what I mean is just rather than

trying to get rich quick, get into this, enjoy the process, know that it's going to be awhile before you see results and enjoy that process. Enjoy that grind. Enjoy that daily, "I'm going to go out and kill myself today."

**Coach's Notes:**

Having a feedback loop for client input to let you know how you are doing is absolutely critical in identifying the holes in your business and level of service to your clients. I notice that for most agents that when the transaction is over, they are moving on to the "next" deal or client. However, what Steven does with his client survey serves as a valuable tool in identifying what the client experience was. Having this awareness gives you the opportunity then to identify why it happens, solve the problem for your future clients, and then operationalize it so that those changes become a part of the systems that you have moving forward.

# TIM MACY

**Brokerage:** EXP Realty

**Age:** 31

**Location:** San Antonio, Texas

**Years in Business:** 3

**Best Production Year:** 2018—60 Units—Volume 15 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I was going to these investor meetups, and I didn't have my license yet. I was just trying to get in the game, and there was a guy that I could tell what he was talking about. I use my radar to pick up the investor at that meetup that I thought seemed like he really had his stuff together, really had a demeanor that was approachable. And I said, "Hey man, how do I help you in your business?" That's usually where I start.

If I want to work with somebody, I don't want to figure out how they can help me, I want to figure out how I can help them. He said, "Hey, you find me a deal, and I'll show you how we do it." I just went around to every wholesaler in town. I'm going to every meetup, every networking event in town. Soon enough I met a guy that was trying to get into real estate, and his buddy had a rental property. I just put the dots together and the guy bought the problem rental property from the guy. Cut me a check for a thousand bucks. It took like six months to flip it, and in that time I got my license and then I listed it.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I wake up before 5:00 a.m. I lead the 5:00 a.m. call for the central time zone. There's about fifty or so people in the central and east coast time zones that jump on at 5:00 a.m. I try to get right to the gym right after. Or if I'm meeting somebody at the gym, I'll get there at six. I try to make sure I get my day blocked out so there's no holes in my day. My calendar is full, and I know what I'm doing before I start my day. And then, reading and

writing out my day tends to also become the journaling a little bit because I'm going to write about what I have going on along with what I have going on in my day.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

Well, the first thing is learn from as many different people as I can while working for them before I started buying anything. Our goal is to buy a couple houses over the next two years because the market's softening. Where in the last two or three years I found some deals and we didn't flip them because we had investors that were willing to pay more for them. And so we did a lot of that. We've done a lot of consulting, and we've done a lot of sitting on the sidelines watching what other people are doing and waiting for our time. Our time's here. Over the next two years the goal is to buy, I think, ten properties or so, depending on how the cash flow goes.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I know the failure that I've been working on a lot this year is communication and overcommunicating. Especially because I started working with investors. Whenever you start working with investors, you think that people have a certain baseline understanding of a real estate transaction that they may not have. I just assume that they know costs and stuff that are associated with a transaction, or I assume they know what's going on. And now there's no assumption. We overcommunicate everything.

I don't think we talk in the industry enough about client needs and what clients want. Because, ultimately, that's what keeps us in business. And clients want communication and clarity. And so, I know I failed in my first year, probably in my second year, on giving communication and good clarity on the process to our clients. That's what we're really trying to key on now, is just being ultracommunicative. Ultraclarity, ultraeducational. Making sure that we have a video or some form of media, whether it's print, video, audio that explains every single part of the process. So if anybody ever has a question, they have a library of content they can go to and get that question answered, or they can call me, obviously, too.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I started in San Antonio. I'm not from San Antonio. I have no family, no sphere, I have nothing in San Antonio. But I have a big personality. I do well when I get belly-to-belly. When I meet people, I'm the same hand people are going to work with, people that they know and trust. We've heard that a million times.

There's no better medium to get people to know and trust you than video. I can cold-call you, but you don't see me, you don't get mannerisms when you talk to me on the phone.

I can send you a postcard, you can read my blog posts, but if you go on my YouTube channel and you stalk me for forty minutes and you watch a bunch of my videos, hopefully, you're going to know, like, and trust me. And if you don't know, like, and trust me after watching my YouTube channel for forty minutes, we probably shouldn't work together anyway.

So video has been for lead generation. It's increased my influence locally because I've done some videos that have done well locally. But it's also been a great closer before I even meet anybody. I send them my YouTube link before an appointment, or they've seen it and they're reaching out to me. And a lot of that rapport building is done.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I grew up boxing. You'll see a video on that if you go to my thing. I grew up getting punched in the face. When I get in and real estate punches me in the face, it's not as bad as getting actually punched in the face.

I was in the Air Force for seven and a half years. I was down here for paramedic training. I did not make it through. There's only an elite top few percent that make it through. I was not one of them. I was blessed enough, I mean, I had this unbelievable opportunity to go through some of the hardest training that the military has to offer.

And one thing that I would do when I was almost drowning or just ridiculously about to pass out and everything else, I would stop and I would remember, I would say, "I'm not in a foreign country. I'm not in a foreign country with a hundred pounds of gear on my back surrounded by an enemy that wants to kill me." And that would snap me back to perspective.

I'm sitting here in Texas in the heat getting smoked and I'm going to pass out and go to a med clinic after. I'm not going to die. And so, even in real estate when things get tough, I can stop and remember, "All right. I'm not in a foreign county with a hundred pounds of gear on my back, away from my loving family, with an enemy that wants to kill me."

I have a duty to make the most of the freedom that they're over there protecting.

Not only gratitude, but responsibility. Responsibility. You have a responsibility not to be bitching about your real estate day.

### **What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Figure out what you want your business to look like and design your business around that. I go to these conferences, and there's so and so on stage that's doing five hundred deals a year and they have the most successful team in wherever. I have no ambition to do that. That's not a business I want to design.

We looked at what we want. We're in the pursuit of cash flow; our definition of cash flow is any type of business we can run on a laptop. And so, we've designed our business goal to be 20K a month by 2020. Whether that's through rental properties, and maybe it is through real estate lead generation and referring business, and collection referrals. There's so many different opportunities you can have for cash flow.

That's because I like living in a little house. I'm not into expensive cars, and we live a pretty cheap life. We just want to be able to do stuff and have great experiences. That's what I'm designing my business around. I'm not designing my business around an income goal or a GCI goal or a production goal because it doesn't map to what the end goal is.

Figure out what you want, and then map it out to get there. Do it in a realistic way. You want the big house, you want a Benz, you want the private jet? I'm with it, man, go for it, map it out. But make sure that's what you want. Not because somebody else wants it, because you saw somebody else on a stage talking about it. Make sure that's what you want.

Some people are good at picking up the phone and calling a hundred people a day. God bless you, I'm not good at that. Your great-grandkids are going to ask you about the twenties, the 2020s. And you're going to have these stories of these people that just accumulated massive wealth.

There's going to be two things that those people do, or people that do well. And it's going to be putting out content. We literally have all these mediums that you can put out content on. And I know everybody's doing it, but it's still a tiny percentile of what's it's going to be. Everybody's like, "Oh, you can't make a YouTube channel now, it's too competitive." Trust me, it's only going to get worse.

But there's still a massive opportunity to put out content. So if you have any skills with putting out content, start putting out tons and tons and tons of content.

The second thing is, solve the problem. Real estate transactions and real estate in general has so many problems that tech companies and all of these people are coming to solve. So replace the agent, or make the transaction smoother, or whatever.

If you can figure out a couple ways to solve the problem, that's the big time stuff.

**Coach's Notes:**

Marketing is king and video is its queen. In today's world if you aren't engaged in video, then you no longer are relevant. I'm not talking about your property tours or drone videos (although they are critical and necessary); I'm referring to video that can be used to increase the client's experience. Tim's operationalized process of using video to "educate" his clients throughout the home buying and selling process is brilliant. If you are getting the same questions over and over again from multiple buyers and sellers, then a great way to add a layer of communication and support is to shoot a series of "Most Common Buyer/Seller Questions." Load that up on your YouTube station and then repurpose it when you start working with that client. The more communication and education you have, the more knowledge you show, the higher level of trust you will create with that client.



# TIMOTHY ANDERSON

**Brokerage:** C3 Real Estate Solutions

**Age:** 34

**Location:** Fort Collins, Colorado

**Years in Business:** 6

**Best Production Year:** 2017—48—51 Units—Volume 22.5 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I was working with a guy when I started out that had a busy business and had overflow, and he would give me leads that he didn't want to work that were in outlying areas, but he gave me this client. He was a pretty nice guy. I had him saved in my phone as "Arturo house on 85" because he wanted to live somewhere in a house on the 85 corridor, and his budget was under a hundred grand. He didn't have a vehicle in 2015. But you just had to drive a lot for it. I end showing him about forty-five houses over a period of two months. I eventually got him on contract, having found a place for 115 grand. I closed it, and disclosed it with my partner. I think I figured out after the closing gifts that I bought him, and all the miles I put on my car, I made about one hundred bucks.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

It has changed a little bit with my kids' ages, getting to grade school now. Get up, I cook them breakfast, I help them get dressed. I take them to school, and then I head to the office and start with my morning routine. If you asked me eighteen months ago, I would have said that I'm out of the house every day by 7:00 a.m. and I never ate breakfast alone, I would always have a breakfast meeting with someone. That transitioned with my kids' ages.

Throughout the day, I keep on writing to-do lists of both urgent and nonurgent items. I knock out the urgent items at the end of every day, and the not urgent next. First

thing I do when I get to the office the next morning is pull out my to-do list and start knocking out the rest of that list so that I can start each day with an empty to-do list. That's returning emails from overnight and knocking out the tasks from the day before that hadn't been done and the "must be done by end of day" category.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I have three rental properties right now. One of which is a short-term rental, like an Airbnb, and the other two are long-term rentals. I want to move toward liquidating my two long-term rentals and equalizing a 1031 exchange into multifamily. I think multifamily is an awesome way to invest long-term in real estate because it goes variably if something comes up with one of your rental units.

You need to remodel it, or a flood or something like that happens, you're not knocking out your entire rental income while the unit is empty. You're knocking out one portion of the four clicks or the six clicks. And you periodically go through and make up dates over time without like, knocking out your income stream, which pays for the difference and things like that.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

A couple years ago there was a deal where I worked with another agent and her conduct was just so egregious that I let myself get drawn into a level of conflict, and that situation I regret.

The funny thing was she could have lost her license over what she did, and I thought about making a complaint to her managing broker and I thought, "You know what, after all is said and done, I'm just going to let this go." And then she complained to my managing broker that my comments were really wrong.

I feel like I failed my personal goal, which is to have excellent relations with every agent I work with. But certainly what I learned from it was, no matter how they conduct themselves, all that matters is what's been agreed upon in writing and whether or not that is being fulfilled.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Most of my business comes from direct referrals now. It used to come from converting phone calls and online leads.

I don't really do typical market-viewed sphere-type activities. I don't send out a postcard, and I don't put them on drip systems or anything like that.

My strategy has always just been to do a really good job for my client, and then to try and remember them in organic ways going forward. If I drive to a street in an old town, and I see a house that I sold eighteen months ago, and I realize I haven't spoken with those people in a year or something, I might go pick up a loaf of bread from Great Habits food company. And write a quick note that says like, "Hey, I just drove past your house and thought of you guys, it looks awesome, I love it, you painted it blue. Hope you're doing well." Just a simple reminder that I sold you this house, and I hope you're doing good. Or if I drive past someone and I see them in their car, I'll shoot them a text and go, "Hey man, I just saw you driving down the road. Good to see you, I hope everything is good with the house."

I've always tried to stay in touch with my clients in natural, believable ways, rather than manufacturing these cheesy potpies and cheesy cards. It's been amazing for me.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I'm a practicing Christian, and when I do face adversity, I have to seek outside of the situation sometimes and go what's real here and what's really important? It doesn't really matter if I lose a deal or not.

What matters more is that I am serving my clients well. Calibrate your focus and your goals and your priorities.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

If you love houses and you love people, this is the wrong industry for you. You need to be a peacemaker. You need to be used to dealing with conflict and removing your emotions from it. Put other people's need above your own. Be prepared to be working long hours. Be near a phone when you don't want to be. Go out to show houses when you don't want to. Do a lot of things that are thankless tasks for a long time without making much money. The rewards will be great if you embody those attitudes and stick it out.

**Coach's Notes:**

As agents, there are so many tasks that are thrown at you every single day. Clients calling, leads to follow up with, inspections to attend, appointments to prepare for, etc. With so much “noise” in our world, it is easy to get overwhelmed, or when they do start to work through the list, they immediately start working on the easiest tasks (which normally don’t move the needle in their business). I’ve seen many agents make their “to-do lists,” only to feel more overwhelmed as the list grows. However, Timothy’s strategy of identifying those things that are most urgent and then working through them in a systematic process is highly effective. When you do this, your day becomes much more highly organized with those priorities that will have the greatest impact on your business growth and your profitability. It’s simple...not always easy.

# TOM TOOLE

**Brokerage:** RE/MAX Main Line

**Age:** 36

**Location:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Years in Business:** 17

**Best Production Year:** 2018—325 Units—Volume 100 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I was home from college, in between my sophomore and junior year. A seller was liquidating a rental property, and we sold it and closed it within the two and a half months I was home. It went pretty well. I think I sold the property in like seven or eight days, and I was nervous as hell, but I never had to meet him. That was actually a pretty cool thing. I did everything over the phone, and fax and FedEx and all that sort of stuff. Lot of pressure, let me tell you. I didn't know what I was doing.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I get up at 5:00 a.m. because I've got three kids that are five, four, and one and a half. So it's the only time I can really get up and get my day organized. I set up my call sheets for the prospect I'm going to do for the day, go through my emails, and get all of that handled. I also come up with a game plan for my day and go through my schedule. I know exactly what I'm doing. When I show up at the office, I'm ready to work. Eliminating that prep time is important because a lot of people waste time there. We're getting to work earlier. Then, I work out and I'm on the phone for two hours in the morning no matter what.

Expired listings are a big part of our business, For Sale by Owners. I do a lot of outbound prospecting, as well as follow up and calling past clients and people in our sphere of influence.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

My personal strategy is the act it has to perform. A lot of people make the mistake of buying based on appreciation rather than if it's going to give you a return or not. And you can make money with appreciation. However, the market turns or something crazy happens. That's not performing. Then you've got a problem, and it's actually costing you money. If it was a stock that was doing that, you would sell stock and get rid of it. So why is real estate any different? I have a partner that I invest with. We own twenty-two properties, twenty-two different rental units. Some are multiunits, some are single. My roommates and I have another three investment properties here where we live.

The strategy is we're actually going outside of my local market with my partner because we found that the acquisition was cheaper. And we could get the money to perform better than where I live, where right now in the market is a little overpriced. We went outside of our market and I leveraged my connections in the real estate world to find someone we can trust and handle the property management, handle the acquisitions. So, the legwork's being done. I can focus on my business rather than being my own property manager.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

We've had a really hard time recruiting other agents to join our team.

When I decided we wanted to really ramp up the team structure, I just brought anyone in if I thought they'd be a good salesperson, and it didn't work out. I didn't really get to know him because I find that if I don't like someone, I don't want to work with them. This is probably a mistake a lot of people have made that have started teams. So what I learned from it is that it's got to be really hard to join the team, and that the people I'm talking to will need our team more than our team needs those people.

When I adopted that mindset and started to ask the right questions, and take my time to get to know them, we brought in a lot of great people that I'm excited to be working with. I'm happy to be helping them grow their careers, and it makes me feel good when we do that. That's part of who we are. It's not only selling a lot of real estate but helping people have a career and develop a career when maybe they wouldn't have had one if they didn't join our team. Or, they have the same values that we have. People that want to succeed for the right reasons.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

One of the things that we do that's unique is we have a lot of case studies built out about expired listings. We really go after those people aggressively because they need help.

So we're showing them exactly how we helped other people that were in their exact situation. I truly believe we're helping people, so the fact that we can show them this is exactly what we can do for you, and then obviously there's a ton of follow up involved with that. We're calling constantly, texting, video texting. That's been really effective for us.

The other marketing strategy is a personalized video email to everyone that my team and I meet with prior to the appointment, to create the importance around the appointment. It also helps to show them that we care about their needs and goals, and that we're going to be really attentive to them or listening. That goes out before every appointment we go on, no matter what.

Right now our social media strategy is putting out massive amounts of content for not only the consumer audience but also the real estate space. So we cannot only recruit and find people that are going to be attracted to us because of who we are but also try to do the same with our clients. And really, just giving them information and doing a couple weekly video shows where it's three to five minutes. It teaches knowledge about real estate, and the reason behind why we do something.

It's all available on YouTube, the realtor one is called Agent Hacks, and it's things that we've done that are super easy to implement. People hack their business and become more productive. We're really trying to put content out there, and we rarely ask for the business in those. It comes back to us, obviously, with the other stuff that we're doing.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

When you face adversity, in the real estate space or in your personal life, very rarely do you need to make a decision right away. Okay, we've got this issue. We've got this adversity, this problem. Take a step back and really think through what's going to happen. You don't have to make a decision right away. It'll really help you kind of calm down and get it into perspective. If it's a major nuclear problem or it's something that's not quite a big deal, you can gauge that and make the appropriate decision rather than being reactive. When you're reactive, you're emotional. When you're emotional, you're not thinking things through. Anytime I've made a snap decision like that in the past, it really doesn't go well. I've tried to even remove that situation from happening.

### **What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

The thing that has driven my business more than anything else is the daily commitment to generating leads and filling my pipeline. Typically, millennials wait for the business to come to them, but I want to go to my clients. I want to go to our customers and go to the business to earn it, and the more you follow up, the more likely you are to convert.

That's where all the money is, it's in the follow ups. So if you get to no the first time, keep calling because those people will come around and when you make that commitment every day, you're going to get to a point where you're constantly setting appointments. You're constantly bringing on new clients, and then you're having a consistent real estate business, which is the number one challenge for any agent. But especially someone that's getting started because when you're getting started, you don't know what's going on. I've been there, I didn't know what to do. When I made that commitment, it changed my business and changed my life.

**Coach's Notes:**

So you want to call expired listings...Well, I can personally tell you there are very few people in North America better at this than Tom. Any agent can say, "We have the best marketing plan to get your home sold" or "We've helped other people in your same situation." This unfortunately only occurs to the consumer as "another salesperson telling me how great they are." What Tom does that is incredibly effective is to rely on the influence strategy of social proof. Instead of telling them, he actually shows them through the case studies of other clients (whose homes had previously expired with another agent) and what they did to assist them to sell their home. In today's real estate world, your social proof can't just be you telling clients what you've done. You have to show them the exact results that you have produced for others.



# TONY SAAB

**Brokerage:** Uptown Realty Group

**Age:** 32

**Location:** Denver, Colorado

**Years in Business:** 3

**Best Production Year:** 2018—12 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I had just acquired my license and my sister brought me on when she was a bit overwhelmed. I left my career in video production and within a week of getting my license, one of my college buddies reached out. He let me know that he and his girlfriend were splitting up, and he didn't want to use her realtor. He said, "I want to give you a shot." In three days we looked at several properties, put in an offer, got in a pretty sweet place, and he has since remodeled the place and turned it into a really amazing home. Also, it was invaluable to have my older sister as my mentor. She guided me through the process. They don't really teach you that much in real estate school. They teach you how to pass a test. You don't learn a lot about how to draft a contract, how to negotiate certain aspects of the deal, and having an experienced mentor in my corner was an absolute must. She showed me the ropes.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I start every morning with checking out the MLS. That's the first thing that I do, and I send properties to everybody that's currently looking. After that, I call. On Mondays, I typically call everybody that's on my one list, check in with them, and provide them with updates on their deal (or updates on the market if they are currently on the fence about buying/selling). Especially now, the market's mellowing out a little bit so I'm reaching out to people that I know may be on the fence. It is a perfect time for first-time homebuyers and investors to come out of the woodwork and snag that perfect deal.

Typically, in the afternoon, evenings, and weekends, I'm showing properties, and try to sneak in a mountain bike ride or a day on the slopes every now and then. I believe that a balance between work and life is essential, and I try to enjoy the wonderful outdoor lifestyle that Colorado provides.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

Right before I got into real estate, I purchased my first home. My sister was our agent, of course. It's a great two bed, two bath home in a budding neighborhood that I was able to purchase for \$300K (a rarity in Denver). Since I purchased the home over three years ago, it has jumped in value by \$115K. Not a bad investment!

This year, I purchased my first investment property. My sister and I went in on a three bed, one bath DSF home. I leveraged my broker commission (I don't want to pay taxes on the commission when I am buying my own properties), got a great price, and now we are cash flowing \$500/month with two great tenants occupying the property on an eighteen-month lease. I clearly remember reading an article right before I got into real estate about investment properties. The part of the article that really resonated with me was when the author said, "Owning your own property doesn't make you wealthy,, owning someone else's property makes you wealthy."

The next move is to upsize our primary residence. Our house is perfect for my wife, my daughter, and myself, but when we decide to have another child, we will outgrow it quickly. We have a great interest rate on our property, a low mortgage, and it would make the perfect rental. Right now we are looking into four-bedroom homes closer to the foothills, and we will rent our current property to counterbalance the new mortgage. The goal is to acquire ten properties before I am fifty-five, and I think that I am well on my way!

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

My wife introduced me to a few of her friends from when she lived in Pennsylvania, and they had moved out here and were starting to look for a home. I typically don't make people sign an exclusive right if they're friends and I trust them, and they seemed trustworthy. I showed them several properties. It was spring of 2017, and it was the apex of the competitiveness that Denver was experiencing. These guys got beat out several times and they were starting to get a little weird and freak out. They called me and got a little aggressive on the phone. I said, "You guys are doing everything right, you're just getting beat out by cash offers." And finally we found this house, very close to my house, and it had been on the market for a couple weeks. I was like, "Wow, okay, so this is over-priced." And, we came in and submitted an offer ten thousand below.

What the agent did was shop that around like any good listing agent would, and got a full-price offer. My clients claimed that I colluded to try to bring up the price, and I told them, I said, “Look, for ten thousand dollars more, I will make two hundred eighty dollars. So, no, I did not collude. No amount of money is worth my integrity, my reputation, and my license.” They ended up going directly to an open house and putting an offer in on another house. Which, in the long run, we don’t really want to deal with clients like that anyway, so no love lost there.

I now have people sign an exclusive right every time we start working together. Not only does that ensure that they’re not going to be using multiple agents, but it also holds me to a certain standard and makes sure they know what my duties are and how I’m going to treat them as my clients. This deal taught me to not let the “energy vampires” suck the life out of you. It is a fun profession, but it is also demanding, and you need to learn how to pick your battles. If something is taking away from you as a person, let it go.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

I’ve actually stopped now, but I was working with Zillow, and it’s funny because a lot of people at my brokerage firm say, “Zillow’s not working. Zillow’s not working.” And I think it works great for me. The way I treat it is when people call me up, I’m not Mister Businessman in their face. I’m not like, “Hey, let’s go. How about getting you in this house?”

Let’s meet up. Grab a beer. You’re a first-time home buyer. I will explain everything to you. You want to start looking, now that you know, I’ll show you some houses. If you like working with me, then we’ll move forward. I treat it in a laid-back, nonchalant, yet professional manner. People appreciate that. I had one client who went dark for a while. I didn’t hear from her, and then she called me a couple weeks later and I said, “Hey, where’d you go?” And she’s like, “I was feeling out other agents, and to tell you the truth, you were the only person that didn’t call me a million times in that two-week period. So I want to use you.”

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

It’s not personal, it’s business. So often in real estate people can take things personally, and that can fog their clarity. You can never let a personal issue get in the way of a good investment. We are at an interesting crossroads in the Denver market right now. Sellers are still holding on to the last bits of a “seller market,” and buyers are starting to realize that there are lots of deals to be had out there. This can create some conflict when trying to resolve inspection and negotiate a resolution that works for both parties. I always do my best to try and explain to my clients that the other party is looking out for their

financials as well. The last thing you want to happen is to take something personally, terminate a deal, and lose money. My job as a realtor is to advise my clients, guide them through a transaction, and put out fires so that they get to the closing table with smiling faces.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

They think that real estate is just this honey hole that they're going to just jump right into and everything is going to be great. And sometimes it does work out that way. I was very grateful to grow up in Denver and have a large network. Save your money and be ready for those first three months to not be what you expect them to be.

Real estate is the most expensive job I've ever had. You put in a lot of money, and there's no guaranteed paycheck. So save your money. Work hard. Be professional, and it will work out.

**Coach's Notes:**

How many times have you heard the phrase "Buyers are liars" or maybe even said it yourselves. Now, I am about to say something that may upset you, and I am fine with that. I don't think buyers are liars; I have found that most agents don't create reasons for buyers to work exclusively with them. They don't do a buyer presentation, they don't present all of the ways that they will go above and beyond the average agent, and they don't ask the client to sign a buyer exclusivity contract. Then when the buyer that they have shown homes to purchases with someone else or goes straight to the listing agent, instead of looking at "What could I have done better?" we blame it on the buyer. I personally require every coaching client to have a buyer presentation before they go out, and part of the presentation is a section where they lay out everything that they do that is their degree of separation from the normal agent. When this is done, it is natural then for the client to say yes to a buyer exclusivity contract. (If you would like to have access to that buyer presentation, it can be found at [www.tomferry.com](http://www.tomferry.com).)

# TRENT ZIMMER

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Premier Realty

**Age:** 29

**Location:** Saint Paul, Minnesota

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2017 Team—117.2 Million—406 Units

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I have a huge passion for serving others. My degree and past professional experience was in luxury hotels and resorts, which I loved, but it didn't take long for me to realize that being limited by large company policies and corporations was just not going to work out. I needed more freedom and knew that I had a ton to offer in terms of my level of service, communication, and ability to connect with people. Real estate was and is the perfect platform to put my love for people and service to work.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

My morning routine has changed quite a bit since having our firstborn child seven months ago. I typically am up between 6:00 a.m. and 6:30 a.m., and I like to be to the office around 8:00 a.m. 8:00 to 9:00 a.m., that time is spent catching up on miscellaneous emails or other tasks. My "work" day really begins at 9:00 a.m., which is when I close the door and spend the next two hours lead generating, following up, or just having conversations with people.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

My personal real estate portfolio is my next project. My wife and I were debating between an investment property or our forever home, and we decided to secure our

forever home while rates and prices were still attractive. Our goal is to secure our first investment property in the next twelve months.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I can't tell you how many times I would hang up the phone or walk away from someone's front door thinking, "What the HELL did I just say?!" Practicing scripts, perfecting paperwork (upside down because this is how you present it), and mastering your conversations will help so much. I also learned that it is okay to sound like an idiot sometimes. It teaches you what NOT to say, which is just as valuable as knowing what TO say! Don't take anything personally or too seriously, and remember to laugh at yourself from time to time or you will drive yourself crazy.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Relationship building and interaction! I am huge on connecting with my sphere and nurturing my database. As for social media, I keep it really light. I don't blast real estate all over my followers. I think people enjoy our posts because they are fun. I rarely hit people with the "If you're looking to buy or sell, CALL ME" line that everyone uses. Facebook and Instagram have been great lead generation sources for our team.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Persist! This business can be really stressful because we are unemployed until our next closing. Remember, what you do today will be reflected in ninety days. So often I see agents put in work for thirty to sixty days and then they give up, right before they were about to harvest the fruits of their labor! Stick to the plan, be persistent and consistent, and success will follow. Also, don't put too much stress on yourself. As soon as you get forceful with yourself, you're going to get forceful with your relationships and clients, and they can sense that. No one likes the used-car-salesmen approach anymore. Enjoy being in business and remember the important things in life: health, happiness, family, and friends. THINGS COULD ALWAYS BE WORSE!

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Forget about the money. If you're getting your real estate license because you want to make a lot of money, save yourself the time, headache, and stress. You'll be out of business in less than a year. Get into business because of the people, the lifestyle, and the relationships, and the money will appear. As soon as you start focusing on the money, you lose focus on what is really important, and that will put you out of business.

**Coach's Notes:**

Trent, you are speaking my language, brother. WHAT YOU SAY MATTERS. I have taught agents in my seminars for the last twenty-five years the most effective dialogues that they can have for generating leads, converting leads, and presenting powerfully. The best agents that I have worked with are masters at their script and dialogues. They spend fifteen to thirty minutes a day working on building their skills of conversation and then once they are strong with those scripts, they continue to keep them sharp by continuing to practice and role-play. I always say, either you are going to practice and role-play your scripts on your own (that only costs you time) or you are going to practice on your clients, and that will cost you hundreds of thousands of dollars (if not more).

# TYLER BACK

**Brokerage:** The Brokerage Real Estate Advisors

**Age:** 29

**Location:** Lexington, Kentucky

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2018—60 Units—Volume 10 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I remember being extremely nervous. I was super lucky to have a family that has been doing real estate in central Kentucky. We're from Lexington, Kentucky, and we have been here for a long time. My dad started it. He has been in the business for thirty-two years now. And my mom's been doing it for eighteen. My brother's been doing it for eleven. And I, of course, have been doing it for five. So, luckily, I had top-notch mentors.

I just remember trying to learn as much as I could. I had the help of my family during the first couple of months. And I just remember trying to learn as much, I guess, real estate verbiage. It can be a different language if you're not familiar with it. And just how to communicate. Make sure communication is the number one key, or one of the number one keys, in a real estate transaction. You want everyone to feel like they're not left in the dark. They want to know what's going on at all times. I just remember trying to learn as much as possible and do the best job that I could.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I used to not be very scheduled, or organized. And then I started asking, "What are all these top producers doing?" And every single one had a schedule that began about, I don't know, 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. So I schedule my day now. It's literally the same almost every day. I work out from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., come home, take a shower, in the office by 9:00 a.m. From about 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., I am lead generating, making



sure I am up on all my emails, texts. And then take a quick lunch. Then afternoon, basically from 1:00 p.m. to whenever is set for appointments or if I have a realtor function, I'm on some committees on our local board, I attend those.

I write birthday cards and anniversary cards, work on my database. The morning is kind of my "in the zone" working, I guess.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I have five rentals right now here in Lexington. If I see an opportunity, I ask myself, "Can I handle it myself? Is my wife on board?" Two, if I can't handle it myself, what investors do I know? I have some friends that do some real estate investing. I talk to them and I see if they want it. I present this opportunity to them first, and then usually I go to some investors and see if they want to do a joint deal.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

We have some older homes here in Lexington that were built in like 1900s, 1920s. They all have a cast iron sewer line. And we got a home inspection done. What I should have done is gotten a sewer cleaning company out to inspect the sewer lines because of the age, and stick a camera down there to make sure there's no breaks, tree roots through them, just making sure everything is okay. Yeah, it's extra money, but it's just part of the due diligence period. And I'm going to suggest doing this every single time now because I've had two clients close on a house, two weeks later the sewer line had a break in it, and it cost my clients about four to five thousand dollars.

When you get that callback and it's like, "Hey, this happened. The home inspector, was he supposed to see this?" I was like, "Well, they don't really inspect sewer lines." As a realtor, you're supposed to know everything from the get-go. But from now on out I'm like, "Look, you need to do this. And if you don't, well, that's okay too. But I just suggest going that extra mile just for peace of mind."

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Every Monday I write a week's worth of my database's birthdays. I have every single client of mine's birthday and home anniversary. So it's one thing to say, "Happy Birthday" on Facebook, yeah everyone does that. But not a lot of people take the time to hand write a card, put a one dollar scratch-off in there as a birthday present for something fun for them. And the same thing with home anniversaries.

I've gotten more posts on social media saying, "I've said it once, I've said it twice, if you're ever looking to buy or sell or invest in central Kentucky, Tyler Back is your guy."

He doesn't forget about you after the closing." When you get a birthday card, handwritten note, and then a home anniversary date saying just something simple. Just saying, "Hey, Joe and Sally, can't believe you've been in your home for two years. I hope you're still making wonderful memories. Congrats, again." And I just sign my name and throw my card and a one dollar scratch-off. It almost always gets a text or a post or something like that.

I think it's something cool and unique that not everyone's doing. It gets my name out there to multiple people that maybe I couldn't get out there without that post. I mean, I like doing that. I feel like that keeps me top of mind as well.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

Just do what's right. I mean, I always try to just do what is ethically right and at the end of the day, I usually come out ahead when I'm faced with something that is questionable.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

You have to hustle, period. I'm real passionate about this. I have some friends who say, "I need to get into real estate." I'm like, "Dude, it's not like you go show a home, write up an offer." It's like no one wants to see the boring stuff that you do that I'm talking about doing every morning. Being in the office, having that schedule is so important.

I think Gary Taylor says, "I love the monotony of success." It's like all the boring things you do; everyone else just sees the Facebook posts of the finished product. But no one wants to do the grunt work. The thing I relate it to is working out or getting in shape or whatever. Everyone wants the finished product, but no one wants to go through the tough part of it, which is diet and exercise. No one wants to go do open houses. No one wants to work nights. No one wants to work weekends. No one wants to do the boring things that are proven to get results.

You just have to make yourself do it, and it becomes a habit. It becomes a part of your daily routine. The past two years have been my best years. And that's kind of right when I got the schedule down and started to really stick to it. It's not just sporadic things all over the place.

**Coach's Notes:**

To succeed at a high level in this business, you must master “repetitious boredom.” What is repetitious boredom? Doing the same thing, following the same schedule, making the same type of calls, having the same conversation over and over and over again for days, weeks, months, even years. Granted, you must be innovating and remaining relevant in the business; however, the fundamentals of real estate do not change that you have to do every day...prospect, convert leads, go on appointments, and negotiate contracts. Those who can continue to run these plays over and over again are clearly the ones that end up winning championships (i.e., reach their business goals, serve clients, and earn an abundance of income).

# TYLER MEYER

**Brokerage:** Shorewest Realtors

**Age:** 27

**Location:** Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

**Years in Business:** 8

**Best Production Year:** 2017—61.3 Sites—Volume 12 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

My very first real estate deal was a floor call, actually, in 2010. The client at the time had a list of fifty or sixty homes that he wanted to see, and me being young and dumb, I thought that was a good idea back then. I ran around and showed him at least fifty homes, and he finally purchased something for \$77,000 after that.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

On average, my first three hours of each day is spent in my office responding to emails and staying on top of transactions with paperwork.

I do have a full-time licensed assistant as well that's doing a lot of that for me, but I think most of my success, I've found, comes from staying focused constantly, and being in the office helps me do that.

## **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I'm renting currently. But I'm actually in the process right now of figuring out what I'm going to do. I'm waiting because the market is so hot here that I don't want to purchase right now. I'm renting intentionally.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

My first three years in the real estate business, I started with a company that offered no training, no help. They just kind of threw you out there, and I didn't really have a mentor at the time. It was also at the bottom of the market. They wanted us to succeed on our own.

I had no business plan, and after my first two and a half years of selling less than a million dollars a year, it was not realistic. I had to sit down with my past manager and come up with a business plan.

When I switched to my new company in 2012, I ended up doing three and a half million my first six months there, which is not a lot for the California markets, but for Wisconsin it's quite a bit when your average is \$165,000.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Over the last five years, most of my business has come from an expired mailing program. In 2014, I listed fifty-three expired listings from direct mail and forty-five of them sold that year.

I've come up with a plan where if your property is expiring on a Monday, you're going to get seven follow-up mailings or a postcard from me over the next three weeks. I'm looking at about two to three calls a week that I'm receiving from that.

It's consistently working. It's not working as much in the last six months because our inventory has decreased considerably, but that will change and it'll start working again.

The first mailing that goes out is a full-colored brochure, it's about twelve pages, about my business. More so about me, what I've done in the past, and how the process works. Then, it's six follow-up postcards after that over a period of three weeks.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

We have to focus on our clients, and I try to do everything I can to make them feel satisfied, even when the deal closes. I follow up with them after closing, every two and a half weeks for the first six months, just to kind of make sure things are going well.

Definitely, in this business it's pretty cutthroat. You're always going to have adversity, so you just have to focus on yourself and focus on the real reason you got into this business. For me, it was helping other people and I tend to try to ignore the other negative comments if I can. Especially, when you're young, you're definitely going to have a lot of those.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Knowledge is crucial. I think that definitely when you're new you need to know your market, and you need to know where your market's located. It might sound like a silly thing, but I spent literally four hours, seven days a week, my first year and half in the market learning MLS and learning our best sales.

You need to be able to tell buyers and sellers what has sold on their street, what is currently on the market. I'm in a lake market, so I can definitely tell you every sale on the lake in the last five years and previous to that. I think knowledge is definitely crucial.

**Coach's Notes:**

One of the primary drivers to someone choosing you over the competition of agents that are in your marketplace is TRUST. I recently heard that 87 percent of consumers view the quality of trust as “extremely” to “very” important in choosing someone to work with.

How do you develop trust? The first step is to simply do what you say you are going to do. The second driver of trust is your level of knowledge. How well do you know your local market statistics, the national real estate forecast, what is projected with interest rates, the neighborhoods of your city, the comparables that you use on your listing presentation? The more knowledge that you have, the more confidence that your clients have in you and the easier it is for them to choose you and later refer you to their friends and family.

# VICTORIA MCGULLAM

**Brokerage:** EXP Realty

**Age:** 31

**Location:** Tucson, Arizona

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2018—120 Units—Volume 22 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

I was going to get a spray tan, and I had been reading a book about real estate and how to get started, they were saying that you need to talk to anybody and everybody. So I was standing in the spray tan booth, getting a spray tan, and if you know anything about that, you're in a very vulnerable state in life when you're getting sprayed.

And I'm just like, "Yeah, I'm in real estate. Do you know anybody who's looking to buy or sell that I could work with and help?" And she was like, "Oh, I want to buy a house," and I was like, "You do?" She was like, "Yeah, but I don't know if I can," I was like, "Well, let's find out. Let's get you connected with the lender. Let's just see what your goals are. Let's sit down and do a consultation." So she was my very first client, and she ended up buying a house, and she still sends me business to this day.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I am very organized, and it starts with the first thing in the morning. I'm up at 4:30 a.m. I drink my 9.5 alkaline water. I have my peace and quiet in the house because I do have two small children, and then I do my morning meditation yoga. I have my breakfast shake after that, and then I read a little bit of my spiritual stuff, and then I read a little bit of my personal development stuff.

And, after that, I wake up the kids. I get them ready. I'm still getting ready. Feed them breakfast, throw them in the car, and after about seven-thirty in the morning we

leave the house. Get them dropped off and to the office by eight in the morning, an hour before my team gets in. I am there from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. doing small things, getting my team agenda for our team meeting from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. I get my agenda ready, I follow up with some emails, put down my inbox, my six most important things, my next actions, my what am I waiting for, and what leads have come in that we need to follow up with.

From 10:00 a.m. to noon, I typically do my power hour or my same day calls, if you will. So I have specific people I talk to Monday through Friday. My call list is all ready to go because I have prepared that at eight in the morning. After the team meeting, we go straight into our prospecting.

After I make my calls and I do my morning prospecting, then I am in the field, taking listings, showing property. I have my entire calendar color-coded: yellow, prospecting. Green is money time. That's actually showing property or taking a listing or meeting with an influential business partner to be able to obtain new business. Purple is family time. Red is morning—this is what you do to get your day started. And then I have gray time, which is drive time. I'm also making calls during those times to make sure that I'm doing the maximum amount of productivity for the day.

### **What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

Personal strategy is definitely R, O, I. How much money is it going to cost if I don't have a tenant in that property, and depending on what it's going to be to buy and hold, or if I'm going to fix and flip. It just depends on what avenue I'm looking at. Strategy has to make sense. You've got to be able to make money. I can't get into a property with a 4 percent cap rate. It's going to take me years and years and years to pay off. I won't be able to retire at the time that I really want to. So it's just a matter of what situation you're in, if you will. In regards to our current portfolio, we're liquidating.

### **Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

I hired the wrong people. I've gone through different business models trying to structure and set up my team so I can delegate and have everybody work in their strengths. I have hired off of personal feeling instead of data. So I feel you have to have that connection with somebody to be able to work with them on a day-to-day basis, but I felt like for a long time I was always trying to save everybody and help them be better in real estate and try to get them where they need to be. Try to train them up. It was always the wrong people.

I didn't have a system. It wasn't until the beginning of this year that I cleaned house and I was like, "No, this is where I'm not going to fail anymore." The best way to think



about it is a college coach. I know that I'm going to have players who are going to be with me for a certain amount of time. What can I do to help them maximize the time of theirs on the team to be able to have both of us succeed and hit our numbers.

I know people are going to move on and spread their wings because true leaders create leaders, not followers. So I know their time will come for them to not be on the team any longer, but it's what we do in that period of time that you have with the people that you have around you. It's not just in sales or on the team, it's their personal lives as well.

I have a rock star team right now. I've switched my model up to where they're all salary employees and they have the option to bonus, and I can train them and put them in their strengths and not make them work on their weaknesses.

### **What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Being a millennial, we love our techy stuff, right? I love my techy stuff, but I do realize that being in Tucson, we have a lot of retirees and we have a lot of baby boomers. There's a lot of them that like their technology, but not all of them enjoy that.

So what we do is we split it right down the middle: 50, 50. We do 50 percent online texts. We do 50 percent face-to-face in-person meetings. And what I mean by that is I can do direct mail. I can target a specific area, demographic, person in that area, and do all of that electronically and send stuff out that way, but, as far as marketing, once I do that techy side, I'll go out and door knock and see people face-to-face.

I feel like with all of the technology we have, it helps us and supports us in our business, but I also feel that there are going to be those people that want to sit there face-to-face. They want to sit there and break bread. They want to be able to see that you are a real life person and not this Wizard of Oz behind a curtain.

So I split it 50, 50. Traditional marketing: door knocking, cold calls, stuff like that, and then I do all my online stuff as well.

### **What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

I think, in my mind, that this is happening for a reason, to prepare me for something that's going to be even more difficult than that, and before I step into a situation when I know there's going to be adversity if I'm not caught off guard, I ask God to give me the words to speak and teach me what to say, just as he did with Moses. And when I walk into that room, in my mind, what I'm thinking, pray to positivity, is just, "I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you." And with that, what happens is the energy that we put out into the universe, or the prayers that we send to God, they are answered.

It changes the wall that others will put up. Whatever that difficult situation may be, I feel I keep my mind positive, and no matter what, this is something I'm going to learn

from. And once I fail and go through this adversity, I'm going to grow, and I look toward the light at the end of the tunnel and not the darkness when you first step in.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

If there was one piece of advice I could give a brand new agent is don't ever, ever give up. Don't listen to people telling you, "You can't do it." Don't let somebody else's thoughts change what your future is going to be. Make your own decisions. Push forward, and don't let somebody else control what may happen positively for you in your future. Keep the negativity out and just keep going.

**Coach's Notes:**

The modern day leader is truly more of a coach and less of a manager. When Victoria says that she "thinks of her team like a college sports team," that is a true gem. Hire great talent, and then coach them up to be as successful as possible. There are many teams that I coach where there are A players who are selling over one hundred homes a year themselves as an agent on a team, and they never want to leave. However, there are other teams that I have seen where A players come in and are on the team for two to four years and then break out on their own. Both scenarios are successful. As a leader you must make it so appealing that someone on your team never leaves, that they can progress from fifteen sales to thirty and then thirty to fifty and then beyond fifty. Still, even with the right culture, training, support, and coaching, some will still leave. That's why you never stop recruiting for true talent...so when you lose an A player, you have others that can fill the gap.

# YASHA ALBRIGHT

**Brokerage:** Home Sweet Home Realty of Northeast Florida

**Age:** 28

**Location:** Jacksonville, Florida

**Years in Business:** 4

**Best Production Year:** 2018—27 Units—Volume 5.2 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

What's so funny is that my first real estate transaction was super crazy. My better half was my first buyer. He bought several properties from me. He was educating me through the process, which was so funny, telling me about the property appraiser side and all of those things. We even trespassed on a property. I didn't really know how to use my lockbox or anything, but I showed him this property. And we ended up putting an offer in on it, it ended up working out, a cash deal. And it was awesome.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

My morning routine entails waking up at 4:00 a.m. I usually eat a little meal. And then I start my workout. I work out for about an hour. Sometimes in the middle of my workout, I'll stop for five minutes. I am a part of the 5 AM Club, so I usually jump on that call or get on the line so I can hear while I'm working out. After that, I get ready for work. I drop off my kids to school and head into the office. Pretty boring, but it's a lot of moving pieces.

I hold myself accountable. I feel like this is a job, and I need to show up to work every day at a certain time. It's just nonnegotiable because I have to get in there and make my calls. And you get fired up in the morning, so I don't mess around with morning routines.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I don't really have an investment strategy. More so into my own brokerage, just pouring into my agents and helping them miss a lot of those road bumps that I had when I first got started or into the business. So that's where my investment strategy is in real estate as a whole or in general because I want them to be set up for success.

I have one investment property, but that's about it. I'm still trying to get my feet wet, but hopefully in the next year or so, I'll have more.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

There was a time when I was with a smaller, boutique brokerage. I just didn't really have any direction. I don't want to say my whole time there was a failure, but it just was an eye-opener. There was just no communication, and I think that definitely speaks volumes.

You have to have communication, whether you're in real estate or not. You want to make sure everyone is on the same page and on the same playing field. If you're not, you need to definitely get that addressed and fixed right away. I think it was a big failure because I feel like I missed part of my career at that time. That one year I was there, I didn't do a lot of business, just trying to wing it, but it helped me open up my eyes to move on.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

Zillow. I know a lot of people, maybe old-school realtors, they don't really favor the online leads, or they say, "I don't buy leads." But I buy leads. I've been part of some great teams who have bought leads, and I've had so much success. I would want to say 90 percent of my business is from Zillow. I mean, you can look at anybody I have, Zillow, Zillow, Zillow as the lead source. So I love, love, love online leads. I'm starting to even get some Instagram and Facebook traction, so I'm excited about that too.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

To take a deep breath and know that it's going to get better because there's always going to be challenges that you're going to be faced with, but if you just have that positive mindset and know that everything is going to be okay, you're going to be fine. You're just going to be fine.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

Don't give up. In real estate, you're not going to get the results immediately, and your repeated daily activities are what is going to get you to your big goal, fuel your why, and just keep you going. You're not going to see the results immediately. There's longevity to this business, and you have to be willing to play a part of that to get to where you want to go.

**Coach's Notes:**

It's always interesting to me when I hear agents talking about Zillow. It's really black and white in the feedback. They love it or can't stand it. What's truly interesting to me is that those that love it truly have a system of online conversion and those that hate it don't. I guarantee you that Yash has a quick speed to lead, an effective conversion conversation, and a long-term follow-up plan. If you do not have these in place, it doesn't matter how good the leads you purchase are. This is still a skill-based business.

# ZACH FAUVER

**Brokerage:** Keller Williams Realty

**Age:** 32

**Location:** Richmond, Virginia

**Years in Business:** 5

**Best Production Year:** 2017—65 Units—Volume 14 Million

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## **What was your very first real estate deal?**

It was one of my neighbors, a listing that I ended up double-ending, and it was a tough deal. There were really high emotions involved. The sellers had been there for a long time and put a lot of work into the home and into the landscaping. They didn't have kids and this house was like their baby. Every step of the way was treacherous and filled with turmoil, and I was wondering what I had gotten myself into by getting into real estate as I was about halfway through this transaction.

Single-family home in Virginia. It sold for \$240,000, which pushed the envelope in the neighborhood at that time.

## **How do you organize your day, and why do you do it that way?**

I'm an early riser. I get up between 4:30 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. and start with some quiet time and meditation and then spend the next forty-five minutes in whatever professional development book I'm reading at the time. Right now it's *Setting the Table*. Then I'll spend an hour in my inbox catching up from the day before and getting ahead on the current day. After that, it's about an hour with my family. I get in the office at 8:30 a.m. to get rolling with the team and to try and spend the first two hours of the day on offense, so making calls and being proactive instead of reactive in the business. Then, in the afternoon, I am in the files and doing home inspections and going out on appointments.

**What is your personal investment strategy with real estate? What does your real estate portfolio look like?**

I do about three flips a year just as the opportunities present themselves. It's not part of my business model, and I don't go after it, but when there's a seller who just wants out and I know it's a great deal, I go with it. If they're going to call We Buy Ugly Houses, then I'll just make them an offer and do it. But, recently, we are just in about month four of a short-term rental, so primarily Airbnb, VRBO, and some of the other sites, and that's been awesome.

I have three. My primary residence and the Airbnb and one other rental.

**Tell me about a time you failed; what did you learn from that failure?**

The biggest mistake I made was when I just gave a bad piece of advice regarding earnest money deposits. Just a day or two after this couple had put a house under contract, they realized there's going to be a nuclear power station going in almost next door and that permits were pulled and this was in the works over the next two or three years. They wanted out almost as soon as the signatures hit the page. I gave them advice to not turn in their earnest money deposit. I just kind of winged my advice and didn't research, I just said, "All right, if you're not going to get it, we're going to get you out. Don't even drop off your earnest money deposit." As we got through it, the language of the contract was that the buyers were automatically in default if they didn't turn in their deposit within three days, which they didn't. So all the avenues we would have had to be released were voided as a result of my guidance to tell them not to turn in their deposit. So that was a pretty costly mistake. I had to pay a couple thousand dollars to rectify the situation and make it right for my buyers.

**What is your favorite marketing strategy that has served you better than anything else?**

The best thing that I've done, starting five years ago, was taking a picture with my buyers at the final walkthrough. I bring champagne to all my closings and do a little video of popping the cork and taking the picture with them holding the keys to their new house, and share it on Facebook and Instagram, share it on their wall, and it's just consistent, it's fun, and has been just that constant reminder of I'm out here doing this all day, every day. It did two things. One, it let me connect with the sphere of my buyers. Everybody who congratulated them on that thread I would friend request, even had a couple of cases of, "Oh, I'm going to start looking for a house too," so obviously I grab them. But then, for my sphere, I didn't push out much, like really push out my new listings or any standard marketing, but people would just see me at the closing table having fun with my clients three to seven times a month.

**What is the one piece of advice you think of any time you face adversity?**

There's a lot of adversity in the transactions. It's so heavy with being such a personal and significant process in peoples' lives with so many things that can go wrong. When things go wrong in the transaction, it's easy to freak out. There's really two things that are going to happen. This person's going to be able to buy this house or sell this house or they won't, and it feels weighty, but they're not going to be homeless. The world's not going to end even though this really sucks. So to pull out and come at it with a view of abundance and gratitude and just know that in the big picture we've got so much to be grateful for that we can push through this challenge. It may go our way and it may not, but at the end of the day, we're all really blessed.

**What's one final golden nugget or piece of advice that you would tell all aspiring millennial real estate agents?**

There's two people that you need in your life to excel in this career. Most importantly is a great mentor. So whether that's someone you know or that's somebody that you follow really closely online, like Tom Ferry. But, even more so, is someone that has boots on the ground that you can actually follow. The mentality, especially in the beginning, you're ready to take on the world, but it's more important when you get into this business to work to learn than it is to work to earn. If you have an opportunity to work under an agent who's doing this at a high level, just by being in the office with them every day, watching them on the phone, having an opportunity to work in that person's business, will serve you so much better over the years. That's how I got my start, and I know that I wouldn't have the business I have now if I just went at this business by myself when I got into it.

**Coach's Notes:**

No one ever accomplished anything of value without the help and guidance of a mentor. I have been fortunate to have seven primary mentors in my life in areas of relationship, business, finance, health, and spirituality. There is no doubt that every one of these men and women in this book would achieve some level of success on their own. They are each driven, disciplined, and committed. However, with their mentors they have been able to dramatically collapse their growth curve, make fewer mistakes, and accelerate their business growth and income.



# FINAL NOTES

Thank you for taking the time to read this book and to learn from the best in the real estate industry. When I was conducting these interviews, I was so impressed by the work ethic and the drive that each of these New Wave Millennial realtors has for the industry. I knew that by doing this project I was going to be exposing myself to so many great agents, and I would be the one that learned the most. I had no idea just how much I would learn about an industry I care so much for.

I hope that these interviews have been helpful to you and will be a source for you to turn to as the markets shift and your real estate career plays out. I feel like this job is a completely different career today than what it was fourteen years ago when I started out as a little twenty-three-year-old bright-eyed kid. With all the technology that is coming down the line and all the changes to the industry, I am sure this will continue to be the case for years to come.

A few things that I hope stood out to you in this book: number one is the work ethic. There are definitely “best ways” to get leads and systems for following up, but the biggest takeaway of all is a simple one. Good things happen to those that just get up and go to work every day. You can’t replace good old-fashioned hard work and making the phone calls.

Another principle that stood out to me in these interviews is the ability to maintain a positive mindset when things go wrong. You have to be able to roll with the punches and not let the failures of a day hold you down and keep you from the next deal lying just ahead.

My hope is that we can create a powerful network of young, hungry agents that strive to help each other and hold each other accountable as we all try to better ourselves and our reputation as a profession with the general public. To this end, we have set up a Facebook group and we invite you to be a part of it. This is not a marketplace or a forum for complainers, but this is a place to come to hear ideas and thoughts that will help your business grow and improve the lives of you and those around you. We hope you will come and join and be a part of this movement. Feel free to reach out to me at any time; I love to mentor and help other young agents that are striving to improve their lives and the lives of those they serve.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Putting this book together has been harder than I expected it to be. It has also been one of the most rewarding things I've done the past few years. None of this would have been possible without the help of one of my best friends and the guy who keeps me on track, Brett Horrocks. He was the missing piece to all of these projects I've been able to complete the past two years, and his friendship has been invaluable.

I'm also so grateful for my real estate team that has stepped up the past eighteen months as I took on these projects. Never complaining, only looking for more ways to contribute to our business and take more and more mundane tasks off my hands in order for me to focus on the projects in front of me. Specifically, Chris Francis, the team leader of the Rex Real Estate Team and the one that keeps all of our clients happy knowing they are receiving an A+ service. To my brother Dale Rex and my other great agents, Tyler Bennett and Alex Hansen. You guys make my job easy, and I know that any client I hand over will be in as good or better hands than if the client was working with me directly.

Real estate has had so many ups and downs over the past fifteen years, but being in business with people I truly love and who bless my life every day has made all the difference.

To my family that has always loved me for me and has allowed me to be whoever I want to be. For accepting that change is part of life and for encouraging me to seek truth and love wherever it may be.

The book wouldn't even exist without all the great agents that took time out of their busy days to answer my questions and to open up to others about what makes them successful. Thank you so much for your dedication to your career, to your example in the industry, and for your contribution to this book.

Finally, to my real estate and life coaches that have inspired me and helped keep me in line the past several years. A big, huge thanks to Melissa Perdue, my life coach. She is the one that has helped me develop and re-create my huge "Why" over the years, and she always knows what to say to encourage me to reach the masses.



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JIMMY REX has been a top-producing real estate agent for the past fifteen years. Most widely known for his real estate coaching company, 100K Agent Blueprint, Jimmy is also a mentor, speaker, coach, angel investor, and host of *The Jimmy Rex Show*. Through the Child Liberation Foundation and Operation Underground Railroad, Jimmy has helped rescue more than one hundred children from sex traffickers. He lives in Salt Lake City, Utah, and recently climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro with NFL Man of the Year Chris Long and his charity, Waterboys.

