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If you are interested in contributing or nominating Realtors for certain stories, please email us at don.hill@realproducersmag.com.

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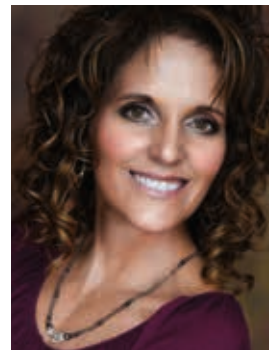
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NATHAN BROWN

Breaking New Ground



NATHAN BROWN HAS BEEN BREAKING NEW GROUND IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

It started four years ago when he began a new career as a REALTOR® with Park Property Group in St. Petersburg.

When the opportunity to enter real estate knocked on his door, the knock came from his friend and broker, Andy Park.

And it continues today with the work he and his team do each day connecting clients with opportunities, including deals between the development community and new home buyers.

As he says, “We’re friends, through a lot of mutual friends. He also owns a construction company, and he built my house for me, then ended up building a house next door, so we became even better friends. And he always was poking and prodding to get me to come work with him in the industry. It’s due to Andy and an uncle I have in Georgia, who is a Century 21 Broker, that I had a passion to learn the industry.”

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Before entering the real estate field, Nathan owned an online health insurance company selling a blend of life and health insurance products.



➤ rising star

By **Dave Danielson**
Photo Credit: **Sherry Keenan** of Best View Photography, LLC

...



“Each year, we try to take a day off and encourage all of our 15 agents to join together for a Habitat for Humanity project day. It’s fun to do that as a team.”

••• It worked. In 2015, Nathan got his license and joined the Park Property Group. Since then, he has grown into a leader in representing his clients in development projects.

“When it comes to the development opportunities we represent, we’ve taken a big focus on finding anything from one lot to vacant land or old homes, and building new homes,” Nathan says, “And we’ve also taken our focus from that to also include bigger projects.”

Nathan says his work is also including the development of a 36-unit villa project, an 8-unit villa project, and 8- & 5-unit townhome projects, spread from Downtown St. Pete to South Tampa.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Nathan estimates that 75 percent of his business comes in the new construction segment.

As he says, “I enjoy the process of work with these opportunities, where I’m working with a developer, and it’s very strictly numbers-driven, and making those numbers make sense for them. Then, it’s satisfying to be part of giving them a good product at the end, and then turning around and selling it for a good number.”

Nathan works to package the process in a way that works well for everyone involved.

“I specifically went after those types of clients, I went after the builders,

and went after the developers to create an atmosphere where others including the title company, as well as the staging and design company can all take part in that,” he explains. “It also makes it easier for the developer to make it more of an all-in-one package.”

SIGNS OF SUCCESS

In just his first four years in the industry, Nathan has earned a place among the true Rising Stars in the region, recording nearly \$100 million in volume over that timeframe, including \$20 million in 2018 volume.

“I think the most rewarding part is sitting at a closing with the client on the listing side, and watching them finalize a closing on a project that they made money on and enjoyed the process we put in place for the project to be successful.” Nathan emphasizes. “It’s knowing that you sold a

great product, at a good price for him and they’re happy about it and are ready to tell all their friends about it.”

LIFE’S PRIORITIES

When he’s away from work, Nathan and his wife, Ashley, enjoy spending time with their 3-year-old daughter, 9-year-old son and 10-year-old son.

“We have a busy family. There’s the full schedule with kids’ sports, ballet, church activities and still try to play golf when possible,” Nathan smiles.

In addition, Park Property Group also takes a team approach to giving back.

As Nathan says, “Each year, we try to take a day off and encourage all of our 15 agents to join together for a Habitat for Humanity

project day. It’s fun to do that as a team, and some people even invite their family members to come and help out, too.”

Like most high achievers in real estate, Nathan’s commitment to achieving work/life balance is a daily challenge. But, as he says, the important thing is to keep trying.

“That’s probably my biggest struggle is turning off my work. It’s hard to turn it off, because it’s the nature of the job. So there are a lot of Saturdays and Sundays and evenings,” he says. “The main thing I do that helps with that is just literally having to put the phone somewhere else. Your mind’s still going, but at least you can be without your phone with family time. So at dinner time, I don’t bring my phone to the table, and we also try to spend a little bit of time together after dinner without it, as well.”

As Nathan says, his team continually looks for ways to add value and stand out in ways that make the experience better.

“We do put electronic lockboxes on houses, but we’re also there for the showings. We’re there for at least 95% of showings so we can encourage and show clients all the value that they are getting for our asking price,” Nathan explains. “A lot of times with new construction, these things are behind the walls, or are under the roof and not easy to see. So that’s why we make a point to be there to help the buyers see those advantages and all the benefits of buying new construction.”

As Nathan looks to the future, he anticipates the opportunity to continue to break new ground and achieve continued success for his clients.



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They are REALTORS® and leaders of The Howe Property Group with Coastal Properties Group/Christie's International Tampa Bay.

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When you meet Don and Sarah Howe, that fact comes through loud and clear.

GAINING EXPERIENCE

Before they joined the ranks of the real estate industry, Don and Sarah enjoyed other suc-

cessful corporate career paths.

As Don recalls, "From an early age, I was drawn to the creative process of advertising and wanted to have a career like Darrin Stevens, the character from *Bewitched*. I always thought I would go into advertising, but after graduating from college and interviewing with some agencies in Cincinnati, Ohio, I accepted a position in radio sales in 1983 with Cincinnati Broadcaster, Taft Broadcasting who owned 95 YNF in Tampa."

Don continued his career in media, rising to Senior Vice President at Clear Channel (now iHeart Media). More recently Howe was SVP/General Manager for CBS Radio's 9 stations in Tampa and Orlando until the end of 2011 when he retired from media. Then, in 2012, he started working as



cover story

By Dave Danielson
Photo Credit: Carol Walker/
Thomas Bruce Studio



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the Associate Director for Advancement at The Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg where he had responsibility for development, membership and marketing, bringing fresh ideas to the MFA on how to better connect to the community.

As Sarah reflects on her path, she says, “I was always very highly driven and motivated, even as a child. I always wanted to excel at everything that I took on.”

Sarah worked eight years for an IBM company in both Paris and London as International Marketing Director. Sarah took on another role in 2007 developing Salon Lofts in Tampa Bay for seven years as Vice President of Sales and

Marketing. She grew that to 12 locations before leaving SL.

“It was about 10 years ago when Don and I had talked about how it would be great having a business together someday,” Sarah remembers. “We both had a great corporate experience to draw on, and our collective skill sets were a perfect match to build a business together.”

Don and Sarah looked at their combined experience and saw a path ahead together.

PUTTING PAST LESSONS TO WORK

As they transitioned into the business, they drew on their extensive experience outside of it.

As Sarah says, “We thought residential real estate would be a really good way for us to merge our skills and background together, as we’re both super driven and motivated, so we knew it would come together well.”

Sarah started in real estate in 2013 and Don followed closely behind in 2014. Together, they make a formidable team and have reached a high level of success on behalf of their clients, doubling their production numbers each year.

Starting out, Sarah earned Rookie of the Year honors from the Pinellas County Board of REALTORS®. Over the past few years, they consistently rank as the

number one team in St. Petersburg in their brokerage. And last year, they recorded volume in excess of \$32 million.

It has been a great partnership all the way around.

“We’re having a blast,” Sarah smiles. “As married business partners, we live together, work together, play tennis together, and continue to grow our value proposition for our clients. We are highly competitive in business and in life. There is no letting up — even over a ‘friendly’ game of ping pong!”

“We’re very goal-oriented and build annual plans to meet our goals. From there, we execute from a bar we set very high, regularly measuring our progress and success. We work morning, noon and night (we wouldn’t know a Sunday from a Tuesday!) to achieve the goals of our clients while continuing to nurture our relationships,” Sarah says. “This is a referral business. One good transaction leads to another referral, and we feel very thankful that exponentially we’ve been able to establish a good reputation in St. Pete.”

Sarah points to the fact of commonalities that apply across industries.

“One thing we’ve learned from different industries in terms of what it takes to be successful comes down to the same approach,” she explains. “It’s about setting a goal,

being driven to achieve it, and then being willing to execute on that solid plan.”

Don remembers Sarah’s first experience in real estate — one that demonstrates the level of commitment they feel for each of their clients. Sarah had picked up a listing from a gentleman selling a bungalow in the Old Northeast neighborhood.

Sarah got the house into contract, but the buyer canceled during the contingency period.

“That is a buyer’s right. But it devastated Sarah, and she was in tears. And she felt so bad — not for herself, but for the seller.” Don says. “We were all rolling up our sleeves at our seller’s house, including Sarah’s Mom and Dad who were visiting at the time. It was all hands on deck for our seller getting the house show ready.”

She ultimately got the house back under contract and sold,” Don recalls with pride in Sarah. “That’s an example of how with every listing and every buyer we work with, we get very emotionally attached to that deal, and if something goes wrong, we will find whatever way we can to make it right. We invest entirely in every deal we get involved with.”

“From the very get-go, Sarah and I help people transform their houses to get top dollar. Our slogan is ‘From stale to sale,’ as we believe in spending money to make money, and for different home sellers, that can mean anything from painting to

power washing to new countertops, etc. We are very transparent about what they need to do,” Don says.

GIVING THEIR ALL

The Howe’s are also totally invested in their family, including sons Griffin, Harry and Alex, as well as their parents who Don and Sarah credit for their ongoing support through their lives.

They also have a passion for connecting with the needs of the community. Between them, Don and Sarah are involved with a wide range of groups, including Ready for Life, The Museum of Fine Arts, The Stuart Society and others. Don is a board member of the James Museum of Western and Wildlife Art, as well as the Downtown Waterfront Parks Foundation. Don says. “Running a successful business here means we have a responsibility to give back to our community, and we very much enjoy doing that through any way we can.”

Through time and all of their successes, Don and Sarah continue to invest themselves fully — to give their best to others.

As Don says, “Sarah and I are trying to make an impact on people’s lives. We want to make a true, positive difference.”

“It means a lot to us for people to know that if they need anything, they can count on us,” Sarah emphasizes. “Because we’re just always going to be there for them.”



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KEN BROWNLEE

Ensuring Lasting Relationships



▶ featured agent
 By **Dave Danielson**
 Photo Credit: **Allie Serrano** of Allie Serrano Portraits, LLC

When people feel appreciated and taken care of over time, they will continue to show you their appreciation, as well

One of those who continues to create success for his clients and himself by following this truth is Ken Brownlee, head of the Brownlee Group with Keller Williams Realty.

Ken has a long history of ensuring success and building relationships. In fact, he literally helped people insure their success as a Financial Coach & Planner and In-

urance Agency Owner for nearly 13 years before making the move to the world of real estate in 2007.

A NEW PATH LEADS TO CHANGE
 Ken's transition to becoming a real estate agent happened as he was planning for his own future.

"I was working in insurance, and while I was doing that, I wanted to start building a retirement plan with rental property," he says. "My idea was to have rental properties

for the income, and I would also do the home maintenance to keep me busy. So my wife and I started investing in real estate and loved it. It was a combination of two things I really like to do ... insurance and homes."

One property led to another, which led to ... a discovery.

"As we were buying homes, and fixing them up, it just got so busy that I thought why don't we just get a license," Ken remembers. "We were selling 12 townhomes. And I



“

I DEFINE SUCCESS WHEN I LOOK IN THE MIRROR, AND I KNOW I'VE DONE EVERYTHING I CAN. I CAN'T MAKE EVERYBODY HAPPY.

brought the buyer, put everything together in the package, and brought it to an agent and said, 'Would you just write this up for me?'

That was Ken's decision point.

As he says, "I decided to go get a license, thinking that would help my business grow and help the bottom line. I got my license, and I started working on the residential side in 2007."

Ken's business took off quickly. In fact, during the one-year anniversary of new agents who had been in his class, Ken had recorded more business than a lot of the other members of his class. Naturally, they asked his secret.

One isn't a secret at all. As a true believer in Keller Williams and its training approach, Ken can personally vouch for the company's status as the top education organization.

But there was another answer, as well.

"The bottom line is make phone calls, contact people and talk to them. People don't know that I'm a real estate agent unless I tell them. A lot of people like to keep it a secret. They get a license and then sit behind a desk, and they think the phone's going to ring. It just doesn't happen that way. I can also tell you some things not to do," he smiles. "Because I learned from my mistakes. I failed forward after trying a lot of different things."

TEAM-BUILDING

As he gained traction, Ken picked up speed as he built and added to his team.

"I'm a big believer in finding others who have different skills and bringing them on. We have a wonderful team. We

specialize in what we love to do, which then really doesn't make it a job, because we like doing certain things," he emphasizes. "My primary focus is sellers; Joe manages the office with Nicky, and he also works with the buyers' agents, Amanda and Nicole. Tammy serves as a Buyer's Agent and Property Manager."

The recipe has produced mounting results. In fact, last year, the Brownlee Group recorded over \$26 million in volume on 121 units. About 80 percent of the team's business comes from referrals.

As he says, "We do very little advertising for the team. If we're spending any money to advertise, it is to get the home sold or to help a buyer find a home."

REFERRING SUCCESS

Ken has advice for new real estate agents who want to enter into, and thrive, in the business.

"I just find if you're working off of referrals, it means somebody knows you and likes you. So they're going to refer you. It's like Gary Keller says, you can get two pieces of business from 12 people you know in a 12-month period, or you can get one piece of business from 100 people you don't know," Ken points out. "I think it's a matter of contacting past clients, and letting them know you're in the business. If they were happy with you, let them know you'd like to help their friends the same way you helped them."

In his time away from real estate, Ken believes in sharing financial planning principles that will enable

anyone to better manage money and reach their goals. He leads Financial Peace (developed by Dave Ramsey) and Quantum Leap (developed by Keller Williams for young adults) seminars. Ken and his wife are active in their church, help support the Wounded Warriors organization events and F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Down Syndrome West Florida.

Whenever he can, Ken reaches out to help people help themselves.

As Ken says, "I just hate seeing people struggle and hurting, and you just want to help them."

Part of that self-help he applies to himself. One of his favorite books is entitled, "Building Wealth One House at a Time," by John Schaub, a local real estate investor.

One satisfying way Ken helps others is through real estate.

"The thing that makes my day is knowing that somebody got what they wanted, and knowing I took care of it. I can't tell you how many people have said, 'Thank you' to me. That means a lot, because I literally want to make this process as easy as possible. I do it every day, so I can fix things. I'm a problem solver or a fixer," Ken says. "I define success when I look in the mirror, and I know I've done everything I can. I can't make everybody happy. But knowing I did everything that I could do and that I did it to the best of my ability."

By helping others and giving his all, Ken ensures relationships that work for everyone — today and tomorrow.



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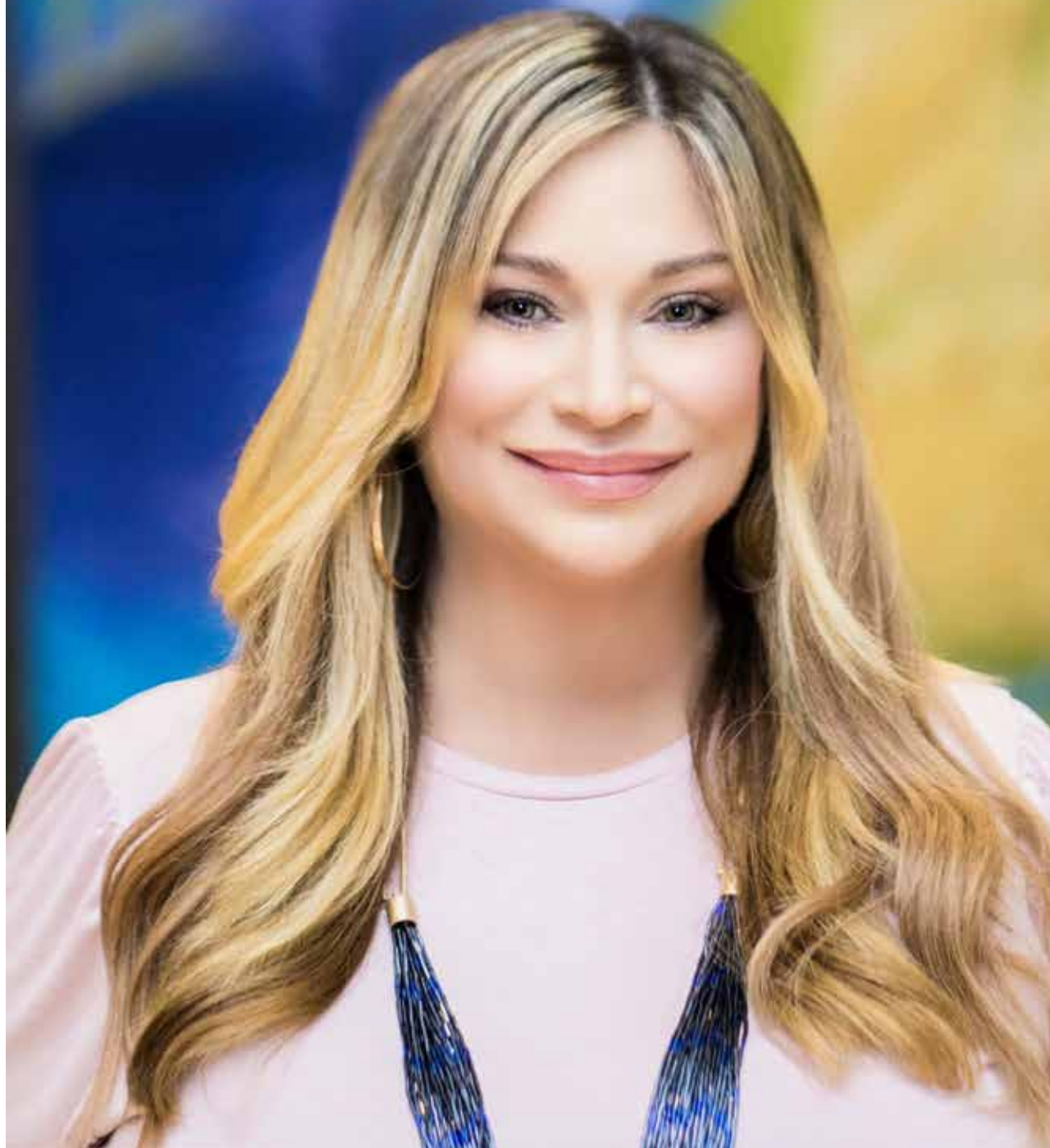
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FULFILLING THE NEED

Lori LaCoppola is Area Manager at Choice Home Warranty. With significant experience in the industry, even serving for 11 years as a licensed real estate agent, and with an eye for what it means to provide quality coverage for clients, Lori was proud to join the organization almost two years ago.

"Choice Home Warranty has been around 12 years. And we're the second-largest consumer home warranty company in the country. In fact, we cover every state except California, Oklahoma and Washington state."

Lori says one of the big advantages that Choice Home Warranty offers is the fact that it is right-sized to deliver the correct and best level of service.

As she says, "We're large enough to handle our claims for our clients, and yet we're small enough to still really care for our customers and to come through for them when they need us."

That commitment begins on the individual level, with each person on the team.

"I always try to put myself in the customer's situation and make sure I'm treating everyone honestly and fairly. You have to have emotion in what you do, or you shouldn't be doing it," Lori emphasizes. "Our clients call us when they're upset. We're not the fun part of the transaction. But one thing we really try to do is educate those we work with. We want to make sure that we set the right expectation about how a home warranty works and what it covers."





“For me, it’s about having that reputation that agents know I have their back. An agent can call me, and they’ll know I’ll jump in and do my best to make sure things go as smoothly as possible,” she smiles. “When you have that, everything else falls into place. I want people to know I truly cared for their customer and that I worked with integrity and fairness.”



VALUE AND PROTECTION

As Lori explains, a home warranty provides real value.

“A home warranty isn’t always the quickest answer, but it is the most cost-effective, and that’s obviously important for those who want to be able to protect themselves against costly loss for their covered home systems,” she says. “When we look at the process of placing a claim, we always remind people not to go out and get their own technician and then call us to file a claim. We have a process in place to make sure every claim and every customer is taken care of with the best possible service.”

Lori enjoys being a resource for her real estate partners and working with their clients.

As Lori points out, “I’m here to take that burden off the agents and onto myself. I go through the ins and outs of the home warranty with clients, so we can be in communication and set expectations properly. I explain the claims process and how it all works, including what’s covered and what’s not.”

Making the difference when it matters most is a key part of the commitment Lori feels for homeowners.

“We know that for most people, this is their largest purchase, and many of them are first-time homeowners. The last thing they need is something going wrong,” she says. “For me, it’s exciting when the process works exactly the way it’s supposed to, and we can take that stress off the homeowner. And I always tell the real estate agents I work with that we’re on your side, also, and it’s our role to do whatever we can to make sure everyone stays happy.”

ELEVATED SERVICE

Things don’t always go as planned. But when they don’t, service is equally as important.

As Lori explains, “When all the processes go the way they should, everybody remains happy, and that’s important to me. If it doesn’t go perfectly, I step in to make sure people are being treated fairly, and if something is denied, I really take care to explain why that’s the case.”

While home warranties aren’t usually a fun thing to think about, they are extremely valuable when there’s a need.

“Home warranties are another facet of the transaction that can be very positive,” she says. “If possible, a home warranty should be part of every transaction, because what it’s doing

is taking the liability off the transaction and putting it in our hands. That’s what we’re here to do — to relieve the liability and stress off everyone else in the process.”

When she’s away from work, Lori enjoys spending time with her friends and family, but especially her 16-year-old daughter, Soleil Willow. They enjoy cooking together and trying new restaurants. Lori also loves travel — especially on cruises, South Florida or anywhere tropical.

Lori defines success around being there for others.

“For me, it’s about having that reputation that agents know I have their back. An agent can call me, and they’ll know I’ll jump in and do my best to make sure things go as smoothly as possible,” she smiles. “When you have that, everything else falls into place. I want people to know I truly cared for their customer and that I worked with integrity and fairness.”

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making a difference

By Dave Danielson

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AS A QUARTERBACK ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD, BRANDON RIMES GOT THE BALL ON EVERY PLAY. WHETHER HANDING THE BALL TO SOMEONE ELSE, THROWING IT DOWNFIELD TO A TEAMMATE, OR KEEPING IT HIMSELF, THE GAINS BRANDON REALIZED WERE ALWAYS ON BEHALF OF OTHERS.

Brandon's same winning ways continue today. As a real estate agent, radio and TV host, author and speaker, he sets the stage for others to shine.

WINNING WAYS

Brandon grew up in LaBelle, Florida. Winning became a habit early and often.

When he was 10 years old, he was quarterback on his Pop Warner team that went undefeated and played in the first-ever Pop Warner Super Bowl

As Brandon says, "Dads who coach are normally tougher on their kids, and the kids are better for it. And that's the way it was for me. He taught us how to win and be tough."

Sometimes, children who achieve sports success at a high level at a young age lose their passion for the game.

Not Brandon.





As a high school senior, his team again finished their season undefeated and played in the Florida state championship game. Brandon was named team MVP.

Moving on to college, Brandon became part of the inaugural football team at the University of South Florida. Although he had played quarterback at a high level, Brandon's coaches had a different role in mind for Brandon.

"They moved me to play as a defensive back and punt returner," he recalls.

Being a quarterback isn't something Brandon just did. It's part of his DNA. So with collegiate playing eligibility remaining, he transferred to another school — and a familiar position in the offensive backfield — at quarterback for Ferrum College in Virginia.

Again, Brandon had a powerful impact. As a junior, he led his team to an undefeated mark through seven games. Then injury struck. Brandon rolled his ankle, and the team lost three in a row, ending his playing career. Once again, Brandon was named team MVP.

AN MVP SHARING VALUE

By now, you see the clear pattern. Brandon gives his all to whatever he has a passion for. In turn, he masters what he does, he contributes at a high level, and he is recognized as an MVP.

But the MVP award is more than a designation or some dusty trophy. It is the symbol of someone who is truly valuable as a resource who helps others around them win. And that describes Brandon to a tee.

"Through the years, I've been in the underdog role. At 5'8", I feel like I was always underrated a bit," he says. "But I bring that effort of achievement to everything I do. No one is going to outwork me."

Like other high-performing athletes, the playing days on the field ended for Brandon. But his competitive fire and knack for making winning plays continued in another field.

It wasn't long after college before Brandon talked with friends who were excelling in the world of mortgage lending. They recruited Brandon, he joined the team, and for seven years built a successful career helping others achieve their homeownership dreams.

Brandon made the transition to become a real estate agent. That was about a decade ago.

With time, Brandon studied, learned, worked hard and excelled. He continued developing himself in all ways, including becoming an Anthony Robbins Business Mastery graduate. He created and built his own team four years ago with his wife, Lindsay. Appropriately, it's named Platinum MVP Realty. Last year, the team joined the Keller Williams organization.

Family time is Brandon's priority, and he enjoys a strong, close bond with Lindsay, who has made her own mark as an accomplished entrepreneur, business owner and, as of a year ago, a rock-star real estate agent on the team. When he's not working, Brandon is busy enjoying time and mentoring his 13-year-old daughter, Braelyn.

Today, Brandon, Lindsay and the team are definitely on a winning streak. The Platinum MVP team at Keller Williams is on pace to finish 2019 with \$30 million in volume.

"It's exciting to see the way our team is growing and adding more momentum as time goes on," Brandon smiles.

SHARING THE SIGNALS



IT'S EXCITING TO SEE THE WAY OUR TEAM IS GROWING AND ADDING MORE MOMENTUM AS TIME GOES ON

One of Brandon's passions delivers results for a wider audience — literally. You'll find Brandon spreading his helpful advice far and wide as an author, and as radio and TV host of "The Real Estate QB Show," and "The Consumer QB Show." In the Tampa area, you can hear him each day during the 5 p.m. drive-time slot on iHeartRadio AM 1380 The Biz "The Wall Street Business Network" and FM 99.9, and again on Sundays at 7 a.m. on FM 102.5 The Bone. His popular show is also syndicated via AmazonTV, AppleTV, Roku and 85 other outlets worldwide!

Brandon uses his day-to-day work and his media presence to be a genuine resource and supporter of others, including his work with the Children's Cancer Center and interviewing guests such as former NFL player, and "Walter Payton Man of the Year" Warrick Dunn and spreading the word about his charitable work.

"As I got started, I thought about ways I could differentiate myself from other agents and help others," he says. "And I've found it's a lot like being a quarterback, where you need to look ahead, set up the next segment, and pivot from one topic and guest to another."

Brandon brings his work as an agent to his audience each day.

"The number one takeaway of doing the show is innovation. That's what I feel strongly about," he emphasizes. "As part of my daily show, I feature multiple real estate listings. I think my highest duty for my sellers is to get the maximum exposure, which leads to maximum profits and a shorter marketing period."

DRIVING AHEAD

People recognize Brandon in the super-market and tell him they've heard his show. It's gratifying to the man who wants to reach and support more people.

"I love being that consumer advocate. It's something I feel a strong moral responsibility for. There's a lot of clickbait out there, with people are trying to sell you something," Brandon says. "Everything I do is geared toward consumers to give them what they need to make an informed decision — not commission-based advice."

Working together, Brandon and Lindsay incorporate a variety of elements that set them apart. Lindsay spent 12 years as the owner of

a sales firm, building up to \$40 million in annual production. She brings her expertise and experience to the Platinum MVP TEAM, as well. In fact, in the past six months, the team has grown with 11 new people!

Lindsay has trained with five master healers across the nation for the past six years, along with energy healing and Feng Shui. She brings this healthy focus to the Platinum MVP TEAM and her clients.

As Lindsay says, "Adding this aspect in for our clients on the real estate side gives us an edge, because people are becoming more aware of energy and they're looking for ways to decrease stress from their lives and create good energy in their space.

That goes for their team members, as well.

"Coaching meditation and doing healing also helps our team," she says. "And I incorporate in coaching sessions how our agents can achieve that work/life balance, which also helps them stay fresh and on top of their game."

Together, Brandon and Lindsay are clearly making a difference each day in the lives of those around them.

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- Interview Coordination
- Media Buying +
 - Contract Negotiation
 - Strategic Partnerships
 - Community Development
 - Event Promotion

OUR CLIENTS

"Working with Evolve&Co has elevated our brand. Through their strategic partnership building, creativity, and press pitching, the revenue speaks for itself." - Sea Dog Brewing

"We contracted Evolve&Co to design a timeless, iconic logo for State Theatre, a historic music venue, and they absolutely nailed it!" - State Theatre



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