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▶ publisher's note

WHO IS ESSENTIAL?

Crazy times, right? I am writing this article at the end of March, as Collier County is trying to decide if we should lock down the whole county to "essential businesses."

Which brings up a good question, who is essential? But, more importantly, who is essential to Real Producers?



es-sent-tial

/e'sen(t)SHel

absolutely necessary; extremely important

Without a doubt, **you** are essential to me. Both the top REALTORS® and our preferred partners are extremely important to *SWFL Real Producers*.

Top REALTORS® are so important to the real estate market, since you, as a whole, do around 80 percent of the total real estate volume. Teaming up with other knowledgeable experts helps strengthen relationships and leads to more deals! It is so amazing to have such an influential group of people, and to be able to showcase the stories, struggles, and successes of each of you!

Preferred partners are key to me, but are also strategic partners to the REALTORS®. You have invaluable expertise that allows REALTORS® to continue to expand their markets. And without your collaboration and investment in *SWFL Real Producers*, none of this would happen. I love learning about your special knowledge and ways that you work hand in hand with REALTORS®.

I can honestly say I have no clue what stage COVID-19 will be at when you are reading this publication, but I know for a fact that America, as a whole, has dealt with so much worse, and we have always been victorious.

To all my essential partners, stay safe – and thank you!



Andrew Regenhard

Owner/Publisher

SWFL Real Producers

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FAQ

ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE

By Andrew Regenhard



We realize that *Real Producers* is a new concept here in SWFL, and some of you may be wondering what it's all about. That is why we have created a "FAQs About This Magazine" page. Here we will answer the most commonly asked questions around the country regarding our program. My door is always open to discuss anything regarding this community – this publication is 100 percent designed to be your voice!

Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The top 500 agents in SWFL MLS. We pulled the MLS numbers (by volume) from Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2019 in the SWFL area. We cut the list off at #500, and the distribution was born. For this year's list, the minimum production level for our group is \$9.5 million in 2019. The list will reset at the end of 2020 for next year and continue to update annually.

Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

A: It's really simple – every feature you see has first been nominated. You can nominate other agents, affiliates, brokers, owners, or even yourself! Office leaders can also nominate agents. We will consider anyone brought to our attention because we don't know everyone's story, so we need your help to learn about them.

A nomination currently looks like this: you email us at andrew.regenhard@realproducersmag.com with

the subject line, "Nomination: (Name of Nominee)," and explain why you are nominating them to be featured. It could be they have an amazing story that needs to be told – perhaps they overcame extreme obstacles, they are an exceptional leader, have the best customer service, or they give back to the community in a big way. The next step is an interview with us to ensure it's a good fit. If it all works out, we put the wheels in motion for our writer to conduct an interview and for our photographers to schedule a photo shoot.

Q: WHAT DOES IT COST A REALTOR®/TEAM TO BE FEATURED?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing, my friends, so nominate away! We are not a pay-to-play model. We share real stories of real producers.

Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS?

A: Anyone listed as a "preferred partner" in the front of the magazine is a part of this community. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine, attend our quarterly events, and be a part of our online community. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have recommended every single preferred partner you see in this publication. We won't even meet with a business that has not been vetted by one of you and "stamped for approval," in a sense. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network, not only for the best Realtors® in the area, but the best affiliates, as well, so we can grow stronger together.

Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A PREFERRED PARTNER?

A: If you have a recommendation for a local business that works with top REALTORS®, please let us know! Send an email to andrew.regenhard@realproducersmag.com.

MEET THE COMMUNITY

Check out some of SWFL's Top 500 Producing REALTORS® !



Nominate a REALTOR® you'd like to see featured by emailing andrew.regenhard@realproducersmag.com.



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ADDING LIGHT TO LIFE

► rising star

By Dave Danielson
Photography by
LaCasaTour



With her trademark positivity, Chloe says that in spite of a nationwide quarantine there are opportunities for agents to bring people together and strengthen communities, “even if we have to do so from within our own doors.”

“All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle.”

—St. Francis of Assisi

It’s not difficult to see the darkness around us. If you look for it, you can easily find a lot of it, especially during these times.

But there’s light out there too. If you search, you’ll see it.

One of those adding light to life around her is Chloe de Maleissye-Melun.

Chloe is a real estate professional with Premier Sotheby’s International Realty, in Naples. But that’s only part of the story for this month’s Rising Star.

“It’s all about community right now.”

When you first talk with Chloe, it’s clear that her focus is outward-facing, with her energy directed toward making the world around her better.

realproducersmag.com

On this particular day, amid an impending nationwide quarantine, Chloe strolled through a picturesque park, sharing ideas for bringing everyone closer to each other.

“As agents, we help sellers and buyers every day. But during trying times like these, we can show how out of the box we can be — how we can help to create and strengthen our communities, even if we have to do so from within our own doors,” she smiles.

As she reflects on the sweeping changes in the world, her light shines ever brighter.

“During a time like this, things are obviously more difficult, but it can still be a positive,” Chloe points out. “REALTORS® are so busy running around on showings and meeting with inspectors. This time gives us a big pause. People are walking and running outside, and taking the time to reach out to those they have not connected with, because they’ve been

so busy — making sure that they are doing okay during this time. Maybe this is a way for us to be even more of a community than we were before.”

Chloe’s sense of expression and bright positivity are lifelong gifts.

“When I was younger, I was always drawing or painting,” she recalls. “And I liked being out in the community. I remember knocking on doors and helping with local fundraisers.”

Pathways and Progress

As she came of age, Chloe explored different paths. But whether she was serving with executive financial advisers or working in insurance or the restaurant industry, her ability and passion for helping others were always evident. . . .

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“I never thought I’d get into real estate,” she says. “I was the last person in my family into the business. My mom, brothers, grandfather, and uncles have all played roles in the industry.”

She recalls the day a friend asked a pivotal question.

“He asked, ‘What would you do if I was looking for a house? If you get a license, I would buy a house with you,’” Chloe remembers. “That conversation made me think that this was an opportunity to try it ... so I went for it.”

So in March 2016, Chloe got her license and continued working in a boutique wine parlor.

“At first, I thought I could refer out people who liked to work with me in the wine parlor, and earn some extra money through referrals,” she says. “But it didn’t pan out that way; I wanted to be more involved. So then I thought, the only way I can be successful is if I’m in it 100-percent full time.”

She jumped in with both feet, reaching out and meeting with people in developments, and talking with brokers and builders involved with new construction.

For a moment, she considered tossing the real estate venture aside to begin work with Morgan Stanley. Then opportunity arose. She was hired as an agent’s assistant.

“I thought, there are times when you have to bet on your own success and achievements,” Chloe remembers.

Growth and Contribution

Soon, Chloe’s ambitions took her beyond her assistant’s role. She was given the opportunity to manage home resales in Talis Park. She began with overseeing a \$1.7-million deal, and she never looked back. In a year’s time, she had listed 17 homes in Talis Park, totaling \$30 million.

Thereafter, a new opportunity presented itself with Premier Sotheby’s International Realty. Chloe joined the organization, brought on a transaction coordinator, and has continued to grow.

“I have my own business, and I’m so grateful. It taught me that, sometimes, when you take those risks in life, there are top rewards,” she smiles. “And with the work I get to do now, I couldn’t have asked for anything better in life.”



Chloe took a chance on having her own real estate business, and it has really paid off. She says she “couldn’t have asked for anything better in life.”

Chloe’s life and career are full.

“I feel very grateful. I get to go into these beautiful homes, and I’m blessed to be in a community that has done a lot of new construction,” she says. “It’s nice to be surrounded by beauty, but really, when it comes down to it, I love what I do for people – providing a service and doing things for other people. In the process, I’m very



Chloe says that having her own business has taught her that when you take risks in life, sometimes there are great rewards — and that with the work she does now, she couldn’t have asked for anything better in life.

straightforward and transparent. If I’m not honest, I’m not doing right for them. And in a business where clients can feel stress and anxiety, I think the more transparent I can be, the more it will help them be able to see the options and steps in front of them, and reduce their stress.”

In her free time, Chloe has a passion for exercise and fitness. It goes hand in hand with her love of people — people like Jake and Holly at the cycle bar, designer Laurie Walter in Talis Park, who provides outstanding staging services, as well as Lauren Rossi, who has now taken on Chloe’s assistant role.

“I remember trying to hire Lauren for three years,” Chloe says. “She is so amazing, creative, quick and talented.”

Chloe also loves to travel. With half of her family in France, she always looks forward to time there.

“I also have friends in England and Monaco, so I love visiting there and spending time with them. I normally travel alone, but I really enjoy that. It gives you a sense of independence, freedom, and culture.”

Realizing Her Vision

In the early-morning hours, while many are still asleep, you can find Chloe in a cycling class. Being in class and deep in thought takes her off into a meditative state, she says.

“It really is a meditation for me — a daily affirmation,” she explains. “It is visualizing the future. It really keeps me focused on my path, and I get such a clear vision of what is ahead. It’s amazing”

What you focus on is what you achieve.

“My father would say, ‘If you look to the ground, you find dirt. Wouldn’t you rather look to the sky

and see clouds?’ And that’s the way I live. I’m a very optimistic person.”

Even the darkness of a worldwide virus is no match for this Rising Star’s glow.

“We go about our day-to-day not realizing what we have. Yet, today, I’m even more blessed because I see it, and I understand it. When you lose things, it leaves an opening for new things to come,” she asserts with a warm smile. “It’s a special time when we can choose to hone in on other skills, and think about how we can provide for our friends and clients. And I believe that we will all see a tremendous positive rebound when all of this is said and done.”

And so Chloe continues her work ... with strength and warmth ... adding light to life.



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Owner Jim Scarpa says Panther Home Inspection goes out of their way to make life easier for agents and customers, earning them a 4.9 Google rating and an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau.

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Knowing the landscape in any business makes a difference. You see it in the work you do with your clients through the experience you've gained and that you share each day.

The same holds true when it comes to selecting a partner that your clients can count on. And that's where Panther Home Inspection comes in, with a solid tradition of local expertise and experience.

Jim Scarpa is the owner of Panther Home Inspection and Florida Gulf Coast Home Inspections, and proud to deliver the difference to area residents.

"We're locally owned and operated," Jim says. "I'm a local resident, and so is everyone on our entire team. I think that's important, because it means that the money our clients spend is staying in the community we live in and serve."

That's just the start of the commitment Jim and his team feel for giving their best.

"We're crazy about making sure our customers are happy," he smiles. "We have a 4.9 Google rating,

and we're rated A+ from the Better Business Bureau. That means a lot to me, because we are really delivering something special to people. A lot of our customers are people who are new to the area, do not live here full time, or are buying investment properties. We maintain a really strong focus on customer satisfaction."

One of the keys to building and strengthening strong customer-service ratings is a truly localized approach.

"With our model, we have inspectors who are located and live in the various areas we do business in — from Fort Myers and Naples to Marco Island and beyond," Jim explains.

CONVENIENCE AND QUALITY

The Panther Home Inspection team works to make the entire inspection process as smooth and seamless as possible for clients.

"We have our own dedicated office team, and we are really diligent about coordinating our home inspections, whether it's the home-inspection

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services we provide or other services, such as termite, mold and radon inspections we coordinate with licensed affiliates. That means the REALTOR® or buyer only has to pick up the phone once. Plus, we do our best to get everyone there at the same time to make the transaction as easy as possible.”

It’s not unusual for the inspection process to reveal work that needs to be done. That’s where Panther Home Inspection works to stay involved, delivering thorough, thoughtful follow-up service.

“One thing we offer that I think means a lot to our clients is free re-checks,” Jim explains. “If our inspection uncovers repairs that need to be made, we go back in for free to make sure they were done and that any issues are resolved. Our competitors typically charge \$75 to \$150 for this service.”

A PERFECT FIT

Jim has always had a love for construction.

“I’ve always been involved in the industry in one way or another. My dad was an architectural designer, and he put a couple of additions on the house,” Jim recalls. “I’ve always enjoyed learning how things go together. I remember when my dad built a house from scratch



With Jim’s lifelong love of construction and always wanting to learn “how things go together,” he and Panther Home Inspection have been a perfect match.

on the weekends. I learned so much about building and construction.”

That love of construction continued for Jim as he grew older and pursued his own career.

“Throughout my life and career, I was involved in building several of my own houses and manufacturing facilities all over the world,” he says. “When I

semi-retired and came to Florida, the opportunity came up for me to acquire Panther Home Inspection. It really has been the perfect match for me.”

THOUGHTFUL EXPERTISE

The Panther Home Inspection team boasts five full- and part-time inspectors, including Jim, along with two office support professionals.

As Jim says, quality inspection work is important. But the way that it is communicated is vital, too.



After 35 years in the corporate world, Jim is now semi-retired and enjoys the freedom it allows him to spend more time with his family, on home-improvement projects, and offshore fishing with friends.

“We want to make the whole process as seamless as possible. We’ll coordinate everything for REALTORS® around the home inspection process. And when we provide our report, we share the facts of what we find. We don’t cross the line and give opinions,” Jim emphasizes. “It’s entirely up to the buyer and Realtor® to decide what will be done with that information.”

Service is available when it’s needed, too.

“We go out of our way to make life easier for agents and customers,” he says. “People call me at night and on weekends sometimes. And when that happens, I call back as soon as I can. We don’t turn the light switch off at 5 pm. Friday afternoon until Monday morning. Agents do a lot of work on weekends. I get all the messages that come in after hours to my personal cell phone, and I respond.”

One of the most rewarding parts of Jim’s work is about the quality of life it gives him with his family.

“I spent 35 years in the corporate world. There was a lot of travel and time away from home involved with that,” he recalls. “I had always wanted to slow down and semi-retire, which I was fortunate enough to be able to do. Now, with this role, I’m able to spend a lot more time with my family. It means a lot to have that opportunity to spend more time with them and help people in our community at the same time.”

In his free time, Jim has a passion for his own home-improvement projects, along with offshore fishing with friends. He also has a passion for supporting community efforts, including the local Fraternal Order of Police organization supporting underprivileged children, and fundraising for the Kola Phillips Memorial Scholarship, honoring his friend and mentor.

As Jim looks to the future, he sees more opportunities to help others.

“I want to continue to grow this business,” he says. “This industry is generally very fragmented, so there’s an opportunity to continue to expand what we’re doing and to deliver a really high quality of inspection and service work to our community.”

For more information about Panther Home Inspection:

Phone: 239-389-0996

Web: www.PantherHomeInspection.com or www.FloridaHomeInspect.com

Email: Office@PantherHomeInspection.com

WHERE TO FIND YOUR Ops Boss™

By Christy Belt Grossman

Do any of these scenarios sound familiar?

- You've hit a ceiling. You can't possibly sell any more homes alone.
- You want a life. You're tired of working 24/7.
- You want to raise the service level to your clients. When you're this busy, you can't possibly respond as quickly as they'd like.
- Your broker is on your case about getting your paperwork turned in, but that's the last thing you have time for.

If so, that means you're probably ready for an assistant. With today's unemployment rates at historic lows (and even lower locally than they are nationally), where in the world will you find one?

Most likely, the person you're looking for is not looking for a job. They're already working, and have hit some sort of ceiling. (The ceiling might be an income ceiling. It also could be a need for flexible hours or shorter commute; or they're bored and have no room for growth.) Or they are not currently in the workforce. So you'll need to be resourceful.

Here are a few places to mine for gold:

Sphere of Influence and Past Clients

This is the number-one source for top teams and agents around the country. What better place to find your Ops Boss™ than with people who know you, know your values, and know your business? These are the people most likely to direct you to a good match. They might even be a good match themselves.

Stay-At-Home Parents

There are *many* stay-at-home parents in our area who have incredibly talented backgrounds in business and all sorts of fields that translate well to real estate. At some point in time, often when kids hit high school, they come back into the workforce. This can be a rich source of talent. (Yes, I said stay at home "parents," not "moms," because my own husband was a stay-at-home dad by choice for 10 years.)

Mortgage, Title and Bank Employees

My own background includes 10 years in the mortgage business. I was

burnt out and looking for a "regular" job. You might be surprised to think of real estate with "regular hours." But for an assistant, it can be. There are *tons* of people in these industries that are ready for a change. Keep your eyes peeled for people who are looking for the opportunity to create a life. Help them do that, and they will be loyal forever.

As your business grows, and you need a Director of Operations or even a COO, you'll want to widen the net you're casting. There was a recent poll done in my BE A BOSS Facebook Group (which is overflowing with talented Ops Bosses™). The question was what people did *before* they took their operations job in real estate. Their answers might give you some hints as to where to look.

I'll give you mine first:

Regional Ops Manager for a national mortgage company. Led seven offices in three states. (Moved to that after doing all roles in the mortgage biz: loan

officer, closer, processor, underwriter.) Before that, was a teller for State Department Federal Credit Union. Before that, I was an intern for two California congressmen on Capitol Hill (before Monica Lewinsky messed that up). Before that, I worked at a library!

Here's a peek at some of the others:

- Stay-at-home mom for 14 years – before that, a chemist
- Stay-at-home mom for three years – before that, a third-grade teacher for nine years
- College professor (business and communication) for 12 years. Executive coach and trainer for six years. Operations in various industries for the past 12 years.
- Movie theater management for eight years
- Senior account manager and, before that, project manager for a market research company that worked with Fortune 100 clients
- Office manager for a restoration/new residential construction com-

pany. Before that, I stayed home with my kids for eight years. Before that, HR Assistant at a large manufacturer of construction equipment.

- Receivables portfolio manager for tech company
- Advertising marketing events
- Worked in the pharmaceutical world for five years
- Stay-at-home mom for 11 years. Before that, I worked HR, was an admin for a foreign education center, and worked in a contract and finance office.
- Director in Child Protective Services
- Hotel management
- Ops director for a law firm
- Food industry — bartending, shot girl, cocktail waitress
- Apartment management
- Real estate paralegal for eight years

- Elementary school teacher for 15 years
- I had literally zero professional experience. I was a full-time nanny for my first rainmaker before he brought me into the RE world.
- Director of Ops for a YMCA swim team. Before that, stay-at-home mom, and before that, electrical engineer for GM.

Bottom Line: There's incredible talent all around you. Your future Ops Boss™ is out there. Just open your eyes *wide* so you don't miss them!



Christy Belt Grossman is the CEO and owner of Ops Boss Coaching™ and a Director on the Board of the National Association of Real Estate Professionals. Christy's passion for raising the bar for Ops Bosses™

was fueled by her past experience as COO of one of the nation's first real estate teams to sell \$1 billion. Ops Boss Coaching™ provides classes, a video resource center, coaching and an annual conference focused on real estate operations professionals. Free reports and resources at www.OpsBossCoaching.com. Contact: Christy@OpsBossCoaching.com



▶ celebrating leaders

By Dave Danielson
Photography by LaCasaTour



HEATHER CAINE

VALUES AND VICTORIES



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When you consider the victories each of us achieve in life, most of them come down to a handful of values that we live by — those founding principles of our existence that guide what we do and shape who we are.

When it comes to Heather Caine, you don't need to look any further than the quatrefoil on the logo of her company, Caine Premier Properties, for clues about the keys to her success.

“Our logo has four squares, each of them representing a different value, including loyalty, integrity, trust and putting others before yourself,” explains Heather. “They’re the same values that the U.S. Marines succeed with.”

It's no coincidence that Heather chose that set of qualities to spotlight.

“I grew up in a military family,” she says with pride. “My father was a helicopter pilot in the Marine Corps. In fact, he flew President Reagan aboard the Marine One helicopter.”

Heather says the four core principles aren't just meant for customers.

“It's the same commitment I give to my team members. We have 41 of us working together right now and growing, and we're growing together every day. It's been so phenomenal. We have such a great group of professionals, with outstanding camaraderie,” she says.

A NEW HOME

The story of Caine Premier Properties, in Southwest Florida, actually started 15 years ago and half a continent away, in Texas.

“When I was 21, I bought my own home,” Heather recalls. “Shortly after I got my real estate license, my business just started to grow organically.”



Six years ago, Heather and her husband, Andrew, were living in Texas and bought a home in Naples with the intent to move in, renovate, and flip it; instead, they fell in love with Naples and have been here ever since.

Heather worked her way through deal after deal, making a difference based on her values. In time, she became a Top Producer within the brokerage as she and her husband, Andrew, invested in properties. With

the advent of technology, Heather and Andrew started purchasing properties online.

“We found quite a few on sites like Auction.com,” she explains. “We typically did a lot of flips, then one day we saw a pivotal property.”



Heather Caine with her husband, Andrew, daughters, Makayla and Reagan, and Rosie, their Miniature Australian Labradoodle.

“We saw this property in Naples, placed a bid on it and, after a lot of negotiations, we won the bid. The plan was we were going to purchase it, move to the area, renovate the home, sell it, and then go back to Texas,” Heather recalls.

Life had other plans.

“We fell in love with Naples,” Heather shares. “During our first two years here, we worked on the house, and I explored the market and focused on our girls and cultivated friendships. After those two years, I decided to get my broker license here. In the meantime, my husband and I have purchased more properties.”

That was six years ago. Today, she and Andrew cherish time with their two children, including their 11-year-old daughter, Makayla, and their 8-year-old daughter, Reagan.

The Caine family stays extremely active in their time away from real estate. When not taking part in and supporting the girls and their competitive sports teams, you'll likely find them playing golf or tennis, or boating.

“One of the big reasons we moved here was because we wanted to be able to be outdoors all year and never be bored. And we are always finding plenty to do,” Heather laughs.

SPREADING SUCCESS

Heather is a natural at finding ways to give back as well. She launched a “Let's Get Moving” initiative three years ago — a powerful initiative that partners charities with fitness centers to encourage movement, fitness, and community support. She explained that Naples has been voted the happiest, healthiest city in America a few years in a row, and she feels her brokerage is the happiest, healthiest brokerage in

SWFL. In fact, over \$16,000 has been raised to help. Heather is also the co-chair of YogaCan — an organization that supports cancer patients with funds for rent, groceries, and utility bills through a partnership with the Cancer Alliance of Naples.

Caine Premier Properties also makes its presence known on TV; the brokerage has been featured in nine episodes on HGTV. In addition, Heather has a segment on Fox 4 called “Homes with Heather” that airs Friday mornings, from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m., that discusses real estate in SWFL along with “Let's Get Moving” initiatives.

A central part of Heather's success is her drive — a quality that has always fueled her.

“When I was a child, my mother could never get me to slow down or stop,” she remembers. “As I got older, I worked in property management. In fact, I managed a 365-unit property. I got my rent free, and it put me through college.”

After school, Heather continued growing in real estate. She helped open up a series of executive suite

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units, and also worked with a construction and home warranty company to learn how homes are built, structurally, and how they run, mechanically.

“I’ve always had a burning desire to learn more,” she says. “I’m also a huge believer in building communities. And I know that positive energy can cultivate so many things.”

IN THIS TOGETHER

It’s that spirit of community that also drives the success of Caine Premier Properties.

“Everyone feels like a family member here. When every agent joins our brokerage, they are paired with an ambassador who helps them,” says Heather. “And to support our team and make our processes as streamlined as possible, we have a director of marketing, a director of operations and a director of technology. In that way, we can offer a wide range of tools while still being a smaller brokerage.”



As Heather considers her future, she remembers the words from her father that have helped to shape her and her desire to support others and make a difference.

“My father has always said, ‘If you support your troops, your troops will support you.’ And that’s the same kind of team approach we work to maintain through everything we do,” she says.

“Success, for me, is seeing others succeed. I learned at a young age that I can only do so much. So the meaning of success is helping others learn and succeed. I think of duplication — teaching and training others so they can also realize the benefits of what we do.”

At the end of the day, the victories in Heather’s world have been powered by her values.

As Heather says, “Kindness always wins.”

» upcoming events

SWFL
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LAUNCH PARTY

Date/Time: To Be Announced as soon as stay-at-home orders have been lifted

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Be on the lookout for your exclusive invitation coming to your inbox soon. We look forward to seeing you at the launch party!

SWFL Real Producers
Connecting. Elevating. Inspiring.

For more information or questions about *SWFL Real Producers* events, email Andrew Regenhard at andrew.regenhard@realproducersmag.com.



Chris Lecca has had a stellar rise to number one, top producing agent in his office at Downing-Frye Realty, and ranks in the top 1 percent of over 6000 Realtors® in Naples.

CHRIS LECCA

Passion for the Profession

Every REALTOR® has their own unique approach to real estate. There are no right ways to achieve and maintain balance. And, when it comes to this business, one size definitely does not fit all. However, for many, the line between work and personal life is defined and clear-cut.

Then there are those like Chris Lecca. For Chris, who is a REALTOR® with Downing-Frye Realty, there doesn't seem to be a line at all. His is a true passion for the profession.

"Real estate is really just part of my life, and part of who I am," Chris says. "If I get a call from someone who wants to go look at a house right away, it doesn't feel like anything out of the ordinary. To me, it feels like a very natural part of what I want to be doing. For me, a day without my clients feels incomplete."

LIFELONG LOVE

Some find their path in real estate after exploring other directions in life. But it seems like real estate was the only direction Chris had been heading his whole life, even as a boy growing up in Massachusetts. A big part of Chris' success story began with his examples at home — his mom, Diane, and his dad, Jim.

"I grew up around real estate," he recalls. "My parents owned and maintained over 100 rental properties in and around Massachusetts when I was younger, and they always tried to involve me in what they were doing.

"My parents always pushed me to do my best, and I've always believed that mom and dad know best, so I tended to follow their suggestions. I didn't always like to hear what

they were saying, but taking their advice always helped me," Chris recalls. "Along the way, they gave me options. They would give me their opinion, and then let me choose another path if I wanted. But since I always emulated my parents, following in their footsteps by getting involved in real estate had been a dream of mine ever since I was 12 years old."

As Chris got older, the dream took on more energy.

"When I was 15, my parents retired early and we moved to the Naples area," Chris remembers. "When we arrived, I realized all of the possibilities in real estate that existed here. The idea of becoming an agent really caught my eye. I began to look forward to the time when I would turn 18 — not for the typical reasons of any teenager, but so that I could get my real estate license."

And that's exactly what he did.

"As soon as I graduated from high school, I obtained my license. That was 11 years ago," he smiles.

REWARDING RESULTS

The rewarding feeling Chris gets continues to build.

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“I really enjoy working with people to buy or sell their homes, and to be the one to work behind the scenes to facilitate a smooth, easy deal for my clients. As a REALTOR®, there are so many things we do behind the scenes that our customers are unaware of. I want to do whatever it takes to help them reach their goals,” Chris emphasizes. “To get to that goal, you end up spending a lot of time with your clients and building relationships with them. I’ve made some lifelong friends along the way and that really makes everything worthwhile.”

The passion Chris feels for this business and his clients has created impressive results all the way around.

In both 2018 and 2019, Chris finished as the number one REALTOR® in his 600-person office, based on sales volume. In 2019, Chris was recognized as “Naples’ Best REALTOR®” by *Naples Daily News* readers. In the process, last year, he completed a staggering 93 transactions, representing over \$56 million in sales volume — and he did it as an individual agent.

While the numbers are heady, Chris likes to always keep perspective.

“For me, success is about being well-rounded in all aspects of life, including business, social life, family



Chris’ pet Chihuahuas, Chi Chi and Rico, enjoy rides in the golf cart.

Real estate is really just part of my life, and part of who I am... For me, a day without my clients feels incomplete.

life and health,” Chris says. “I’m definitely not perfect. There are some weeks where I feel like I’m all work and no play, and there are others where it may be the other way around. I just try to do my best to maintain that balance in all areas of life.”

SIGNS OF SUCCESS

In his free time, you’re likely to find Chris on his boat with his friends — enjoying time on the water under the sun. But even the name of Chris’ boat, *Contingent-Seas*, evidences how blurred the line is between his career and the rest of his life.

As Chris thinks about his journey and the passion he has for what he does, he has advice for newer agents jumping into the business today.

“There are many trials and errors in this business,” he admits. “I think one of the big things new agents can remember is to do what you say you’re going to do, and don’t be afraid to do more than what’s expected from you.”

Attention to detail matters.



“In any given deal, 99 percent of what you do can go flawlessly, but if even one percent goes wrong, that might be the only thing that your clients remember and talk about. People remember how you make them feel,” Chris emphasizes. “That might mean paying out of your pocket to have a house cleaned, or it may mean dropping off a favorite bottle of wine as a closing gift. I think a big part of success is figuring out those little things that make a difference for your clients.”

Undoubtedly, Chris’ clients feel his all-in spirit, his honest, straightforward energy, and his tireless drive to serve.

As Chris says, “Real estate is my life. It’s not just a job. It’s who I am.”

That passion for the profession continues to create results — day in and day out — for those around him.

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