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Following the strategies of Realtors Rupert and Karen Irby as they try to make their mark in the upscale market in Naples. BY JUSTIN PAPROCKI

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Cover photo courtesy of Michelle Reed Photography.



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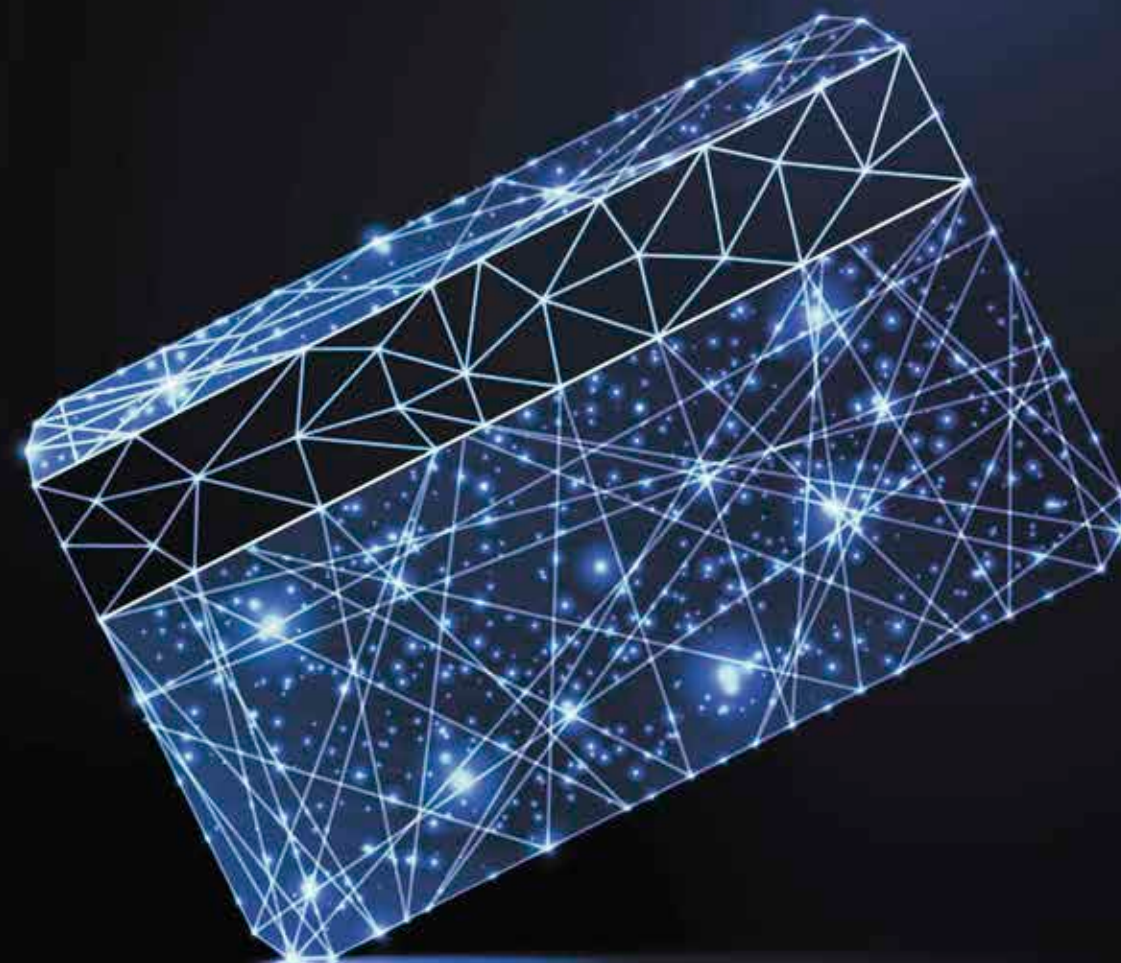
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SWFL Real Producers had a great quarterly event at Ferrari of Naples on March 11, 2021.

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Dear SWFL Real Producers and valued Partners,

It was wonderful to see so many of you at our event at Ferrari of Naples on March 11th! It was a great event, and so much fun to be able to get together again and celebrate the crazy journey we've been on over the past year. For those of you new to SWFL's Top 500 who made it to the event, welcome! We're glad you could make it out and have a chance to see what a great time SWFL Real Producers have together. There will be a lot more to come!

I know this has been a challenging environment for all of you, with low inventory, high demand, new paradigms ... I just want to take a moment

to let you know how impressed I am with this community. When I have an opportunity to get together with you, I constantly hear how crazy the market is and how much chaos you're all navigating. You make it look easy! Seriously, though, with everything that's going on, thank you for taking the time to come out and cut loose from it all, relax a little, and socialize with us on March 11th. We appreciate you!

A huge thank-you to **Ferrari of Naples** for the awesome venue. We are especially grateful to our amazing platinum sponsor, **Lauren Maxwell** and **Maxwell Mortgage Team**, and to our gold sponsors, **Conditioned Air** and **Seaview Title**. We couldn't have done it without you! Thanks also to our media sponsors and affiliates,

Artistic Science, **Salt + Light Media Group** and **Corrafilm**, and to our fantastic valet service, **5 Star Valet**, and our caterer, **M&G Farm Stand Cafe & Catering**.

Be sure to check out the photos from the event on pages 84-89 in this issue.

Here's to a very successful Spring Market for everyone and more great get-togethers to come!

Very respectfully yours,



Andrew Regenhard
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▶ MASTER THE MEDIA



Are You a Real Estate A-Lister?

By Christina Daves

Are you the agent people recognize because they've seen you on TV or in the local paper? And this doesn't mean in an advertisement. You didn't pay to be seen. You were asked to provide your expertise about the local real estate market. That makes you an A-lister. People love to work with the "famous" real estate agent!

How Do You Become an A-Lister?

You want to pitch newsworthy stories that are valuable to an audience. What's your expertise in real estate and how can you create a story that will be appealing to an audience? During COVID, agents were landing in the media for safety protocols for open houses, how financing changed, the increased value of outdoor spaces, and the exodus from city to suburbs.

Ask, what's trending now? Then, follow the number-one rule for pitching the media: what value can you provide their audience? Use what's trending and come up with a story idea that people will want to learn about. Remember, landing in the media has nothing to do with you, per se. It's what you know and what information you can provide. Then, you get to reap the benefits of

being in the media because you are seen as "famous," as an industry A-lister, and you get to share it with the world.

Take the media you land and share it everywhere. Send it out in your newsletter. Add it to your website, including the media logo. Pin it on Facebook and/or Twitter. Share it on Instagram and LinkedIn. Post it on Pinterest. Wherever you are online, that's where your media should be. Write a personal note or email and send it to potential sellers or buyers. SHOW them you are a real estate A-lister because you're the one featured in the media!



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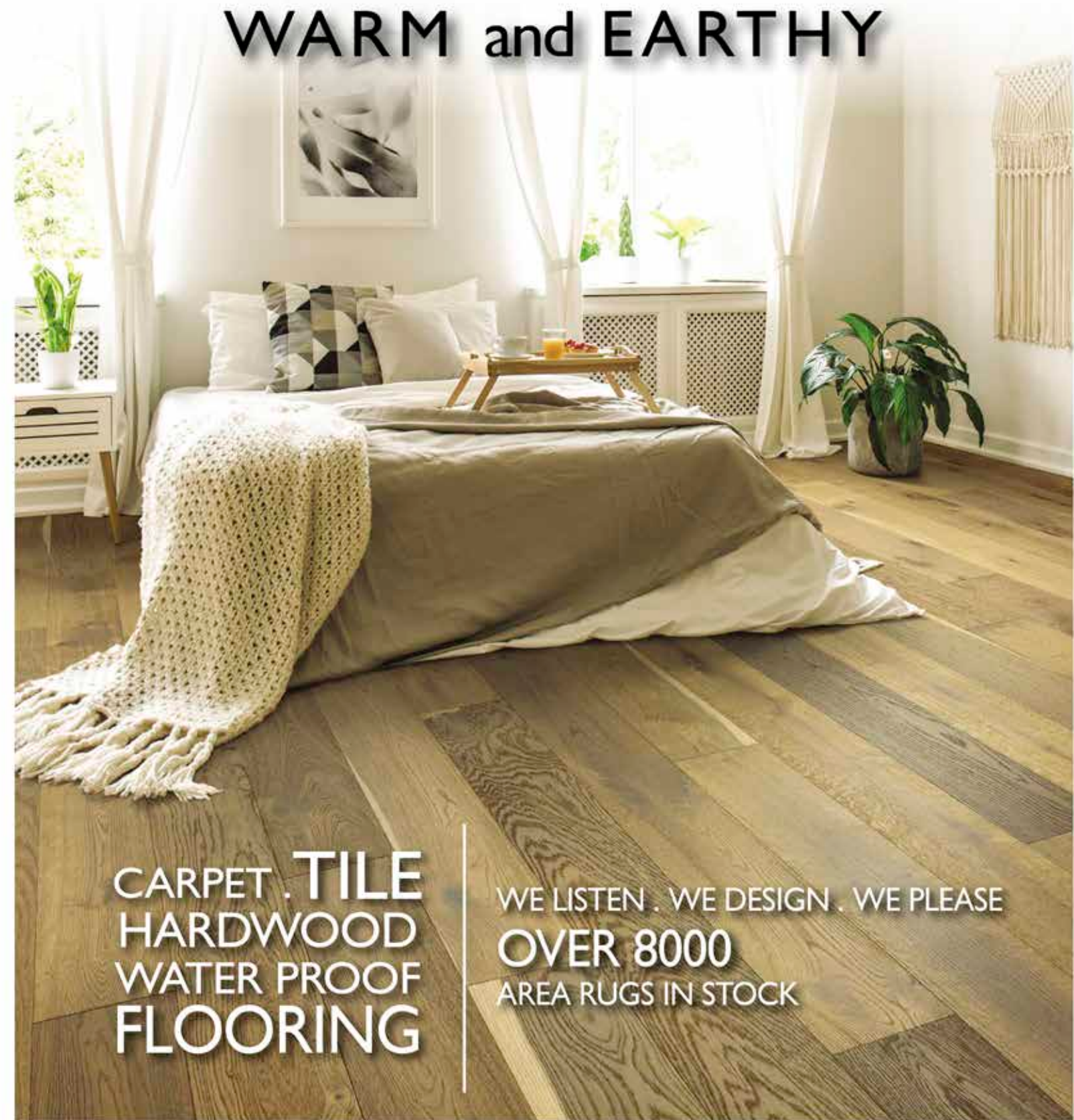
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SLOW DOWN TO SPEED UP

By Michael Dill

There are 24 hours in a day, which equates to 1,440 minutes — each one of those minutes being very valuable. If you are sleeping an average of seven hours, or 420 minutes, nightly, you are now spending 1,020 minutes awake during the day.

Now, there are some of us out there who say, “There is just not enough time in the day.” Is it that there isn’t enough time ... or are we not spending or prioritizing our time correctly?

If you would be so kind as to entertain an exercise of just stopping for one full minute by doing absolutely nothing — that’s right, do nothing for one full minute ... Don’t do anything outside of breathing for one full minute.

If you do this exercise, you will find that a minute can sometimes seem like a very long time. Now, realize that you have 1,020 of these minutes to allocate and prioritize what’s most important.

I have a phrase I use, “Slow down to speed up.” What exactly does that mean? It means exactly what it says: *Slow down to speed up*. Slow down for a minute to get clear on your next move. Slow down for a minute when you are in a conversation with someone and really be present to that person. Slow down for a minute and just breathe deeply and slowly to calm yourself to clear your thoughts. Slowing down and getting clear for just a minute can be the difference between making the right or wrong decision.

Make a conscious decision of how you are going to invest your minutes. You could invest in telling someone you love how much they mean to you. You could invest in telling a team member the value they bring to the organization. You could invest in telling a valued client how much you enjoy doing business with them.

One minute. 1,440 of them in a day, 1,020 of them, on average, awake. Each one minute invested correctly and intentionally could reap you rewarding and fulfilling results.

Just in case you’re one of the challenged ones when it comes to

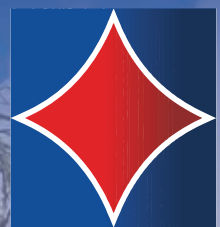
managing your time, I have added a few pointers to keep you on track.

1. Utilize a pre-written calendar (Default Diary), where you block out days and times for specific tasks. Minimize unplanned activity. Every day should be planned in 30-minute blocks, from beginning to end of the day. Use different colors for different tasks. Remember to also schedule “YOU” time!
2. Do not react every time you get a text, call, or email. Schedule time on your calendar for returning calls, texts, and emails. Position your prospects and clients accordingly on what times those will be.
3. Make a list of the next day’s tasks at the end of each and every day. This “to-do” list should be the last activity of the day.
4. Take that list and break into A, B, and C priorities. Plan accordingly, based on the importance of those priorities.
5. Practice the W.I.N. formula: “What’s Important Now?”
6. Utilize the 4 “Ds”: Do it, Delegate it, Defer it, or Dump it!

One minute. 1,440 of them in a day, 1,020 of them, on average, awake. Choose wisely how you are going to invest your minutes and it could just be the best investment you ever make.

Coach Michael Dill is an award-winning, certified business coach, speaker, and trainer. He brings more than 40 years of business and entrepreneurial experience in leadership, team training, and mentoring practice. Michael’s passion is to both encourage and challenge business owners and entrepreneurs to become their best selves, both personally and professionally, to obtain all they want in their business and life. BusinessCoachMichaelDill.com





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Pro Tips for a SMOOTH CLOSING!

By Michael Michetti, Esq.

The real estate market in Southwest Florida has never been busier. The steady increase in the number of transactions being closed in this region has put incredible stress on REALTORS®, as well as closing attorneys, title underwriters, surveyors, lenders, property management companies, home inspectors, and any other vendor associated with a real estate closing.

So how do we ensure a smooth closing? In reality, it is impossible to guarantee anything, but using these five tips may result in a closing that crosses the finish line with the least amount of drama.

1. Set expectations!

I would type these two words 100 times if I was not on a word limit. It is incredibly important to set expectation levels with your customers concerning all matters related to the closing: closing date, wiring funds, fees, inspections, etc. If your customers have reasonable and accurate expectations as to what will transpire during the closing process, the chances of them being disappointed by something greatly decreases. And, after all, a happy customer is a repeat customer.

2. Help the Closing Attorney.

Don't just drop off a contract and a check and say "see ya at closing!"

When you provide the contract to the closing attorney, give that office as much information as possible, including all the contact information for all parties that you know are involved (attorneys, lenders, clients, etc). This will save time and increase efficiency.

3. Make a Timeline.

There is no easier way to cause problems for yourself than missing a deadline. So make a timeline of important events contained in the contract. If you provide the customer with a timeline at the beginning of a transaction you make it impossible for them to say, "You never told me I needed to do that by then."

4. Pick appropriate dates.

This goes hand in hand with Tip number 1. Use reasonable dates within the parameters of the contract and the current market conditions. For example, providing a contract to a closing attorney on May 1, 2021, that is set to close in seven days is probably a bad idea. You need to analyze what needs to be done to accomplish financing, inspections, association approval, and third-party searches, surveys, appraisals, etc., in order to close the transaction.

5. Know the Contract and Communicate with Your Customer.

It is really important to communicate with the customer to

know what they want and what they need. This sounds obvious, but you would be shocked by the number of Realtors who never discuss whether a customer needs financing and ultimately present a cash offer, only to learn that the customer cannot come up with funds...or who never discuss inspections with the customer, only to learn they have an allergy to mold but have them sign a standard contract. Communication is key to a smooth transaction.

Top-Secret Bonus Tip

Most Realtors don't realize that the number of closings increases on the 15th and on the last day of each month. So here is a top-secret tip...

pick a different day. Try to push a closing to a day you know will not be the closing attorney's busiest day. Heck, it can't hurt!



Attorney Michael Michetti is a partner and founder of the real estate department at the law firm of Woods,

Weidenmiller, Michetti & Rudnick, LLP. Michael has been practicing real estate law in Southwest Florida since 2003 and focuses on residential and commercial real estate transactions, as well as bank representation. Michael also serves as General Counsel to Bonita Springs-Estero REALTORS®, Inc.

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TIFFANY MCQUAID



Tiffany McQuaid opened her brokerage, McQuaid & Company Real Estate Services, in May 2013.

▶ leader of the month
By **Lindsey Wells** | Photos by **Jon Kreider**

The Incredible Power of a Dynamic Team

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” We’ve all heard that quote, but not everyone is lucky enough to live it. For Tiffany McQuaid, real estate isn’t merely her job; it’s her passion — one she has had for many, many years.

An Ohio native, Tiffany ran a successful marketing promotion and special event management business there for many years before trading in The Buckeye State for The Sunshine State. Her family acquired a home in Florida in 1997. “We were just back and forth (between Ohio and Florida) at that time, a few weeks here and there,” Tiffany says. “Then, it started becoming harder to go back home. Whenever my time was up, it was

like, ‘Oh, I don’t want to go back.’ Our trips became longer and longer, and we finally pulled the trigger in 2001 to be here full-time.”

It was after the move to Naples in 2001 when Tiffany realized a career shift was in order. She has always possessed a love for design, architecture, and decorating. Before making real estate her career, she went to open houses for the fun of it. For Tiffany, real estate allows her to utilize all of her gifts at once. “It gave me this incredible opportunity to take all my little dabbles and pull them together to make what I believe to be one great thing that our customers can be proud of,” she says. “I was able to take all of those things that I love

and combine my real estate passion with what I know very, very well, which is marketing and promotions.”

Tiffany knew that she would have her own brokerage one day, as soon as she got her real estate license. She intended to be the Queen of Quail Creek. “That’s the community where I live, Quail Creek Estates,” she says. From square one, Tiffany began farming, documenting, and figuring out what worked and what didn’t. “I used to get up and walk my community every morning. I would walk it with my headset on, listening to Zig Ziglar, who was a big sales coach and trainer back then. I would memorize the front elevation of all the homes in the community and the names on

...



...



From left to right: Sonia Nadotti, Nicole Hogue, Adam Brown, Tiffany McQuaid, Nicholas Jankowski, Jane Johnson, Carlos Mendez.

the mailboxes because I wanted to be ready when that day happened when I finally got a call to list a property. I took great pride in that.”

Tiffany was a partner at another firm before opening her own brokerage, McQuaid & Company Real Estate Services, on May 1, 2013. The brokerage is now up to 29 agents and

seven staff members, all of whom Tiffany considers family. She says she plans to start recruiting and growing her company even more in the coming months. One person who has been instrumental in the evolution of Tiffany’s business is businesswoman and *Shark Tank* star, Barbara Corcoran. In McQuaid & Company’s early years, Tiffany would read every

“

I was able to take all of those things that I love and combine my real estate passion with what I know very, very well, which is marketing and promotions.

real estate book she could get her hands on, including Barbara’s book, *Use What You’ve Got & Other Business Lessons I Learned from My Mom*. “I ordered the book and read it cover to cover in a day. I just couldn’t believe that her mind, the way she marketed, and the things she did for her brokerage were so very, very similar to how my mind works,” she says. Barbara sold her New York-based real estate brokerage in the early 2000s. After reading the book, Tiffany did something she had never done before: she reached out to Barbara via email and got a response right away. They communicated for many years, and Tiffany eventually traveled to New York City to meet Barbara. They are still friends today. “I’ve called her my fairy godmother ever since. She’s been an amazing mentor for me.”

And today, Tiffany is a mentor for others. Her “why” and “how” for what she does in her business, she

...



says, lies with her amazing team, or, as she calls them, her hand-selected family. The team, several of whom have worked with Tiffany for over ten years, consists of Adam Brown, Nicholas Jankowski, Nicole Hogue, Jane Johnson, Sonia Nodotti, and Carlos Mendez. “Great things in business are never done or achieved by one person, but by the incredible power of a dynamic team,” Tiffany says.

In a business where it’s hard to flip the off switch, Tiffany appreciates her down time in the evening hours when she goes home to relax with her sweet little miniature dachshund, Penny. “I live on a golf course, and I love just being able to sit outside and enjoy my home because I’m never there,” she says, laughing. On the weekends, she enjoys frequenting farmer’s markets and going on nature walks and to the beach to clear her head and wind down.



“Great things in business are never done or achieved by one person, but by the incredible power of a dynamic team.

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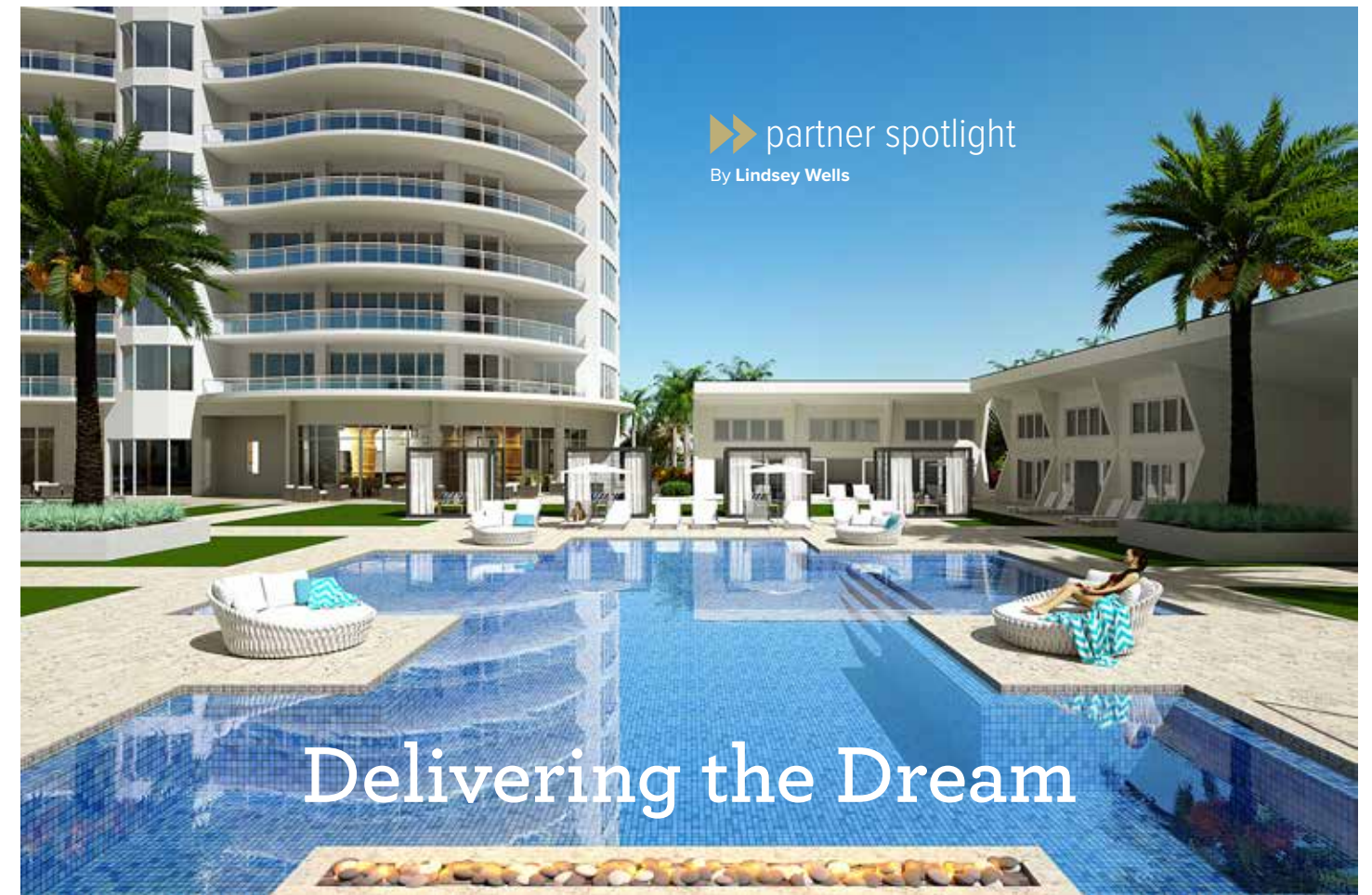




Anthony SOLOMON

THE RONTO GROUP

Photo by John Paul Buchanan



▶ partner spotlight
By Lindsey Wells

Delivering the Dream

Now under construction, The Ronto Group's Omega Bonita Bay will be the most luxurious tower ever built in Southwest Florida.

Statistics show that the average lifespan of a company has steadily decreased since the 1960s. Business leaders are tasked with continuously reinventing themselves and their product to stay above average when compared to similar companies. For The Ronto Group, however, such has not been the case. This Naples-based development and construction firm was founded in 1967 and has since blazed an impressive trail in the industry, winning countless awards for the development of numerous communities and single-family homes across Southwest Florida.

The Ronto Group was founded by A. Jack Solomon in Toronto, Canada, and expanded into the United States in Florida in the mid-'70s and into the burgeoning Southwest Florida market in the mid-'80s. Their first venture there was Hideaway Beach,

an exclusive residential community at the northern end of Marco Island, which was a huge success. Solomon's son, Anthony Solomon, took ownership of the company 12 years ago and has continued his father's legacy in the industry.

The Ronto Group has completed over 10,000 high-rise units, 2,000 single-family homes, several shopping plazas, and a hotel. "We are almost exclusively residential now, although sometimes we have some commercial stuff associated with the residential," Mr. Solomon says. The company is engaged in large-scale land development, such as gated communities ranging from 700 to 2,000 units apiece. The Ronto Group does everything from installing the roadway and sewer and water systems to building the communities' clubhouses and golf courses. They also do a lot of mid-rise

and high-rise buildings, some of which include Naples Square, Eleven Eleven Central, Omega, and Seaglass at Bonita Bay, and they sell residential home sites to single-family builders.

The Ronto Group's newest and most exciting upcoming development is set to be built on Lido Key in Sarasota. "We'll be bringing that to market in the coming years. It's spectacular beach-front property," Mr. Solomon adds.

Something that certainly sets this company apart from others is the positive way in which its leaders work with its partners and employees within the company. "We have a lot of employees that have been with us 20, 30 years. I think we're unique in that we're a small core group that does a lot of very large projects. Everybody in the company is empowered in their own area rather than being

...

The Ronto Group does everything from installing the roadway and sewer and water systems to building the communities' clubhouses and golf courses.



The Ronto Group's Naples Square has become one of the most desirable addresses in Downtown Naples.



Twelve years ago, Anthony Solomon took ownership of The Ronto Group, a company started by his father, A. Jack Solomon, in Toronto in 1967. (Photo by John Paul Buchanan)

micromanaged," Mr. Solomon says. Additionally, The Ronto Group is extremely selective in the projects it takes on. "We're not driven by growth goals. If we like it, we do it. If we don't find anything we like, we don't try to force it just to do something. We don't have the time to waste on things that we don't absolutely love or think will matter."

The company places the utmost importance on its repeat customers who move with them from project to project, which stands as a testament to their commitment to quality and their buyers. "You don't see that unless people are happy with the product and happy with the quality," Mr. Solomon says. "People are taking a big risk when they're buying a home from you, especially a mid-rise or high-rise they can't see, feel, and touch. You're telling them the dream and they have to believe that you can deliver that, and we do our best to do so."

The Ronto Group takes great pride in being able to provide a safe and sound place to live for families in The Sunshine State. "When you build a building or community, you can drive through it and realize that there are 1,000 homes there, and, depending on the community, anywhere from 2,000 to 4,000 people living there. You've given them homes, you see the kids running and playing. Or, you drive by a condominium building and you realize you're giving all these people shelter and they're enjoying their lives," Mr. Solomon said. "You're able to figure something out that others couldn't. There's a sense of pride in seeing a finished product that I think is very gratifying."

The group's desire to help others doesn't stop at developing and constructing. The Ronto Group donates to and supports numerous foundations and organizations, some of which include the Make-A-Wish

Foundation, the Holocaust Museum, and the Jewish National Fund. Anthony's wife, Ashley, is involved in the Guardian Ad Litem program as an advocate for children who have experienced abuse, abandonment, and neglect. Their goal is to help children find their way to a safe, loving, and permanent home.

Anthony and Ashley, both originally from Toronto, will celebrate 20 years of marriage this year. They have two children, Aidan, 16, and Margot, 12. Though the couple stays busy with the kids' extracurriculars, they like to go out for dinner and enjoy a nice glass of wine when time allows.



To learn more about The Ronto Group, call (239) 649-6310 or visit them online at www.ronto.com.

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►► featured agent

By Dave Danielson
Photos by LaCasaTour

BLAZE ZDRAVEV

Where There's Willpower

REACHING YOUR WILDEST DREAMS BEGINS WITH A PLAN ... AND IT TAKES ROOT WITH ACTION. THAT'S A REALITY BLAZE ZDRAVEV BRINGS TO LIFE EVERY DAY. AS A BROKER ASSOCIATE WITH JOHN R. WOOD PROPERTIES, BLAZE IS LIVING PROOF THAT WHERE THERE'S WILLPOWER, THERE'S A WAY FORWARD.

"One thing that made me feel very good was when one of my clients said, 'Your willpower is something I really admire,'" Blaze says. "Everybody has a bad day now and then. But the thing that is important is that you push through it and get out and do it."

Land of Dreams

For the past 10 years, Blaze has made his dreams come true in the

United States. "I came here as a legal immigrant in 2011 with just \$20 in my pocket," Blaze remembers. "I was born and raised in a small town in Macedonia."

From a young age, Blaze's path was solidified with a strong work ethic. "I remember even when I was 8 or 9 years old, my dad would wake me up, and I would help him with his

work," he recalls. "My father was an entrepreneur. He had a couple businesses that are still running 33 years later. It was always in my blood to serve people, work with them, and make them happy."

Drive to Achieve

As Blaze came of age, he continued his drive for achievement. "By high school, I was working to raise money

“ One thing that made me feel very good was when one of my clients said, ‘Your willpower is something I really admire.





A legal immigrant from Macedonia, Blaze Zdravov signed on with John R. Wood Properties and had his first listing in two weeks.

for high school presentations and seminars, going to business owners to negotiate sponsorships. In college, I worked three jobs and paid for my college. I even ran a small printing business out of my room. In the process, I knew I was very good with people.”

Blaze graduated from college in Macedonia with a degree in criminal justice. In the meantime, he had opened his own coffee shop. In time, he sold that business and moved to the U.S. with Emilia, the lady who was his girlfriend and who would become his wife.

When Blaze and Emilia moved to Naples, he started working as a bartender. He also worked as a restaurant manager. As he did, he came in contact with many people. Blaze was looking ahead to his next steps. “My dad had planted the seeds to invest

in real estate,” he says. “When I was bartending, I was meeting a lot of successful people and some of them were in real estate. I thought this is something I could see myself doing too.”

Moving Forward

Blaze had no fear. He moved forward with real estate while he maintained his part-time bartending role for a time. “My wife and I had come here, but we didn’t know anyone,” he says. “Yet we built everything together.” It took a bit to get going, but once he did, there has been no slowing down.

“Most of the brokerage firms I talked with didn’t want to hire me because of my accent at the time,” he remembers. “But John R. Wood hired me and I had my first listing in two weeks. I started cold-calling multi-million dollar for-sale-by-owner listings.”

Signs of Success

During his first two years in the business, Blaze continued bartending. At the same time, he closed over \$20 million in sales volume. That has continued in a big way. In 2020, Blaze had his best year yet. But that was just the start. In fact, in the first two months of 2021, he had already surpassed his sales volume for the entire year of 2020.

“The chance to help people is very special, and I was dreaming of a market like this,” Blaze explains. “Now, there are multiple buyers on a property, so when you work with a buyer and you’re able to win the deal, it feels good ... like you have proven yourself. It’s the same feeling when I work with a listing and I’m working with a client to successfully field multiple offers.”



Blaze Zdravov surrounded by a bevy of his clients (his wife, Emilia Miteva, directly to the right).

Fulfilling Life

Away from work, Blaze beams when he talks about his family, including Emilia and their 6-year-old daughter, Bella. “Emilia used to work at the Ritz Carlton and at a real estate law firm, and joined me in real estate two years ago. We’re high school sweethearts and very good friends. We really know everything about each other,” he says with a smile. “I think we are a perfect couple, and I definitely couldn’t do what I do without her.”

Family is at the heart of life for Blaze. “There are favorite moments that I experience every day with my daughter, whether it’s cooking breakfast for her in the morning, or taking her to school, or picking her up from school at the end of the day,” he says. “She is my fuel every day.”

In his free time, Blaze has a love for going places with Emilia and Bella. “We’re big believers in experience over everything else. We love driving. We get in the car and go,” Blaze says. He also enjoys working out and staying active with pursuits like tennis, rope jumping, and running on the

beach, and has a passion for cooking, golf, good wine, and cars.

Speaking His Clients’ Language

English is the fifth language for Blaze — right behind Macedonian, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Croatian. But at the end of the day, Blaze definitely speaks the language of those he comes in contact with, including his team members. “I’m expanding my team. I like to bring new people on. As I say, you can always make a salesperson. The main thing is hiring for attitude ...

finding those who love and understand people,” Blaze emphasizes. “In fact, I’d say I’m not in the business of selling houses. I’m in the business of understanding and helping my clients.”

There are no shortcuts in life. But there is opportunity. It’s a truth Blaze understands and uses to his advantage in service to others. “I’m a machine, going 24/7. I just don’t stop. It takes time,” he admits. “No one can do everything in 24 hours. But if you do the right things over time, anything is doable.”



Blaze’s client’s 1966 Ford Mustang GT350 convertible won Best Classic Car at the 17th Annual Cars on 5th show this year.

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► rising star
By Dave Danielson

Evan Correale

A Love of Freedom

There's no greater reward than seeing the direct results from hard work. Pursuing excellence comes with ease to Evan Correale, a real estate agent with Compass Florida. Every morning, he wakes up and chooses to be more creative, more innovative, and more involved than the rest. The freedom that accompanies being a REALTOR® is a driving force for Evan to make an impact on the lives of his clients each day.

"The most rewarding part of what I do is about living out a real sense of freedom," Evan says. "After graduating from college, I was still looking for a job that fit what I wanted, and I knew a corporate job wasn't it. I like freedom — the freedom to work the way you want and to treat your clients the way they should be treated."

Following a Feeling

Evan delved into real estate after graduating from FGCU, even though he did not have family ties to the industry. "I was naïve, but being naïve worked to my benefit," Evan smiles. "As I got my start, I hung my license with a smaller, boutique brokerage. In fact, it was just the broker and me."

When Evan entered the business, he felt like he found his niche. "I got my license in 2015, and something just clicked for me. I started selling," Evan says. "I got my own leads and didn't really



Four-year-old Goldendoodle Charlie often accompanies Evan Correale to work and job sites.
(Photo by Rachel Correale)

have a lot of mentoring. It was like jumping in the deep end. I was on my own. But, I started making sales."

Intentional Results

That early success led to more business — intentionally. "As I made my first few sales, I took my commissions and put all the money back into marketing," he says. "I just kept following that model ... I stayed focused on growth and not so much the celebration."

Building Volume

Evan's efforts and determination

make a difference for clients throughout the region. Averaging 70 deals per year, Evan has been able to expand his small business. Today, Evan has added Danielle Allen, who serves as his Coordinator. "The whole reason I got into real estate was for freedom. Yet, it is obviously very time-consuming. In order to keep up with the growth, I brought Danielle on. She does a great job and takes care of the full range of back-end details so that I can focus on being out in the field," he says.

Family Foundations

Away from work, Evan is grounded

“The most rewarding part of what I do is about living out a real sense of freedom.”



Photo by Rachel Correale

and inspired by his family, including his wife Rachel, parents Benn and Robin, and step-mother Debbi.

Outside of family, Evan's favorite companion is his 4-year-old Goldendoodle Charlie. Charlie's favorite part of real estate? Accompanying Evan to work and job sites, always greeting clients with a smile.

You are likely to find Evan and Charlie out running in the afternoon, Charlie's second-favorite pastime. Working out is essential to Evan's daily routine. He starts each morning with a heart-racing workout and ends the day with tennis or golf. Other stress relievers include cooking, shooting, and boating.

Even with a wide range of hobbies, Evan's main focus and favorite pursuit revolves around the Southwest Florida community. "That's something I try to do as much as possible — supporting other small businesses

in town that aren't part of some large, mainstream corporation," Evan says. "In fact, I'm looking to invest in a local small business."

Positive Spark

Those who know Evan see his optimism. It serves as a positive spark for clients as he navigates them through the homeownership process. Evan shares this approach with others that are considering a career in real estate.

"With this business, I believe it is essential that you allow becoming successful to absolutely overtake your life. You need to have this mindset with every breath you take, every thought you have ... not how to get there necessarily, but having the feeling of success itself," Evan emphasizes strongly. "It should be that way 365 days a year, including holidays. If you make it a 24/7 commitment, you will get there. Not just in real estate, but in life. If you are obsessed with it, then you will make it happen."

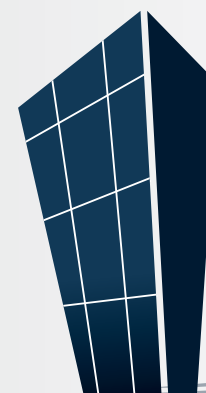
Those who have the chance to work with Evan can attest to the difference his approach makes. They understand how his love for the freedom his career in real estate affords him continues to drive both of them towards achieving their real estate dreams.



(Photo by Rachel Correale)



In business just five years, Rising Star Evan Corrales averages 70 listings per year. (Photo by LaCasaTour)



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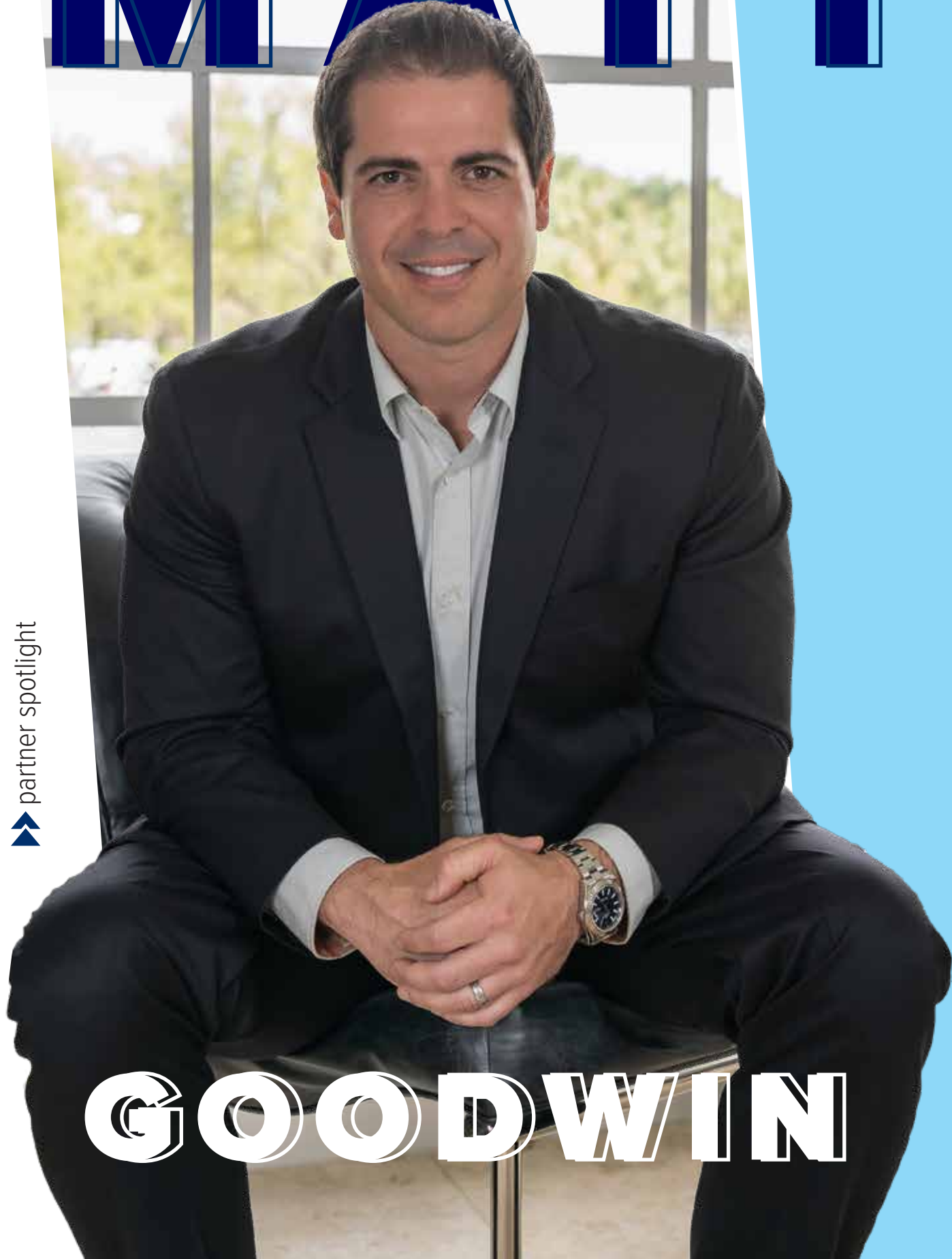
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MATT

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partner spotlight



GOODWIN



Matt Goodwin is the Principal Attorney at Goodwin Law, P.A., a firm with offices in Naples, Fort Myers, Tampa, and Palm Beach Gardens.

By Dave Danielson • Photos by Jon Kreider

THE QUALITIES YOU SEEK IN YOUR PARTNER REFLECT THAT SOLID BOND YOU ENJOY WITH YOUR CLIENTS.

That's why it means so much when you are able to join forces with a partner like Goodwin Law, P.A. — a firm that focuses its efforts around building firmly grounded long-term relationships with clients and referral partners by being available, responsive, and diligent.

DEDICATED EXPERTISE

Matt Goodwin is the Principal Attorney at Goodwin Law, P.A., a firm equipped to meet a wide variety of needs with its dedicated, professional team of employees and independent contractors located throughout Florida.

“We work with our real estate partners and clients in a focused segment of the market providing service solutions in the areas of residential and commercial real estate transactions (including title and escrow services and representation of buyers and sellers), probate administration, and estate planning,” Matt says.

...

Goodwin Law, P.A. serves residents throughout the state from offices in Naples, Fort Myers, Palm Beach Gardens, and the firm's newest office in Tampa.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Matt was born and raised in South Florida. Through time, he moved to various locations around the country for school or work, including New York and Michigan.

In 2015, Matt and his wife, Dr. Nancy Goodwin, moved with their oldest son Justin to Naples. As they arrived in the area, Matt immediately engaged with the community he has come to love. "From the start, I got to know people as much as I could. I cold-called lawyers, started meeting with referral partners, and got involved in organizations in the community."

Among those have been the Naples Area Board of REALTORS®, as an active member of the Legal Resources Committee. "We work together to revise the contracts for the local area, give classes, and do things to keep real estate transactions together and educate the real estate community."

In 2016, Matt participated in Leadership Collier's Growing Associates in Naples (GAIN) class offered through the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce.

RELIABLE RESOURCE

Matt is a resource that the real estate community trusts to be there for their clients — and with their questions. "I think that's one of the things that I enjoy the most: talking with people. If you have a question, it's okay to call me, and I'll do my best to support your needs," he emphasizes.

FAMILY TIME

Away from work, Matt's world is centered around family, including his wife and their children, 9-year-old Justin and 4-year-old Jaden. In their free time, Matt and Nancy enjoy time with their boys and support them in their active schedules that include soccer and jiu jitsu.

Matt likes to cook, and has an emerging love of amateur race car driving. "In 2020 I bought a Lotus Evora GT, which is hand-built in England to be a racing machine. I'm enjoying the opportunity to try different tracks, but this is definitely an amateur endeavor for me," Matt says.

Matt also has a musical chord that runs through his life. In fact, he plays the drums (Latin percussion) and recently started teaching himself to play the piano.

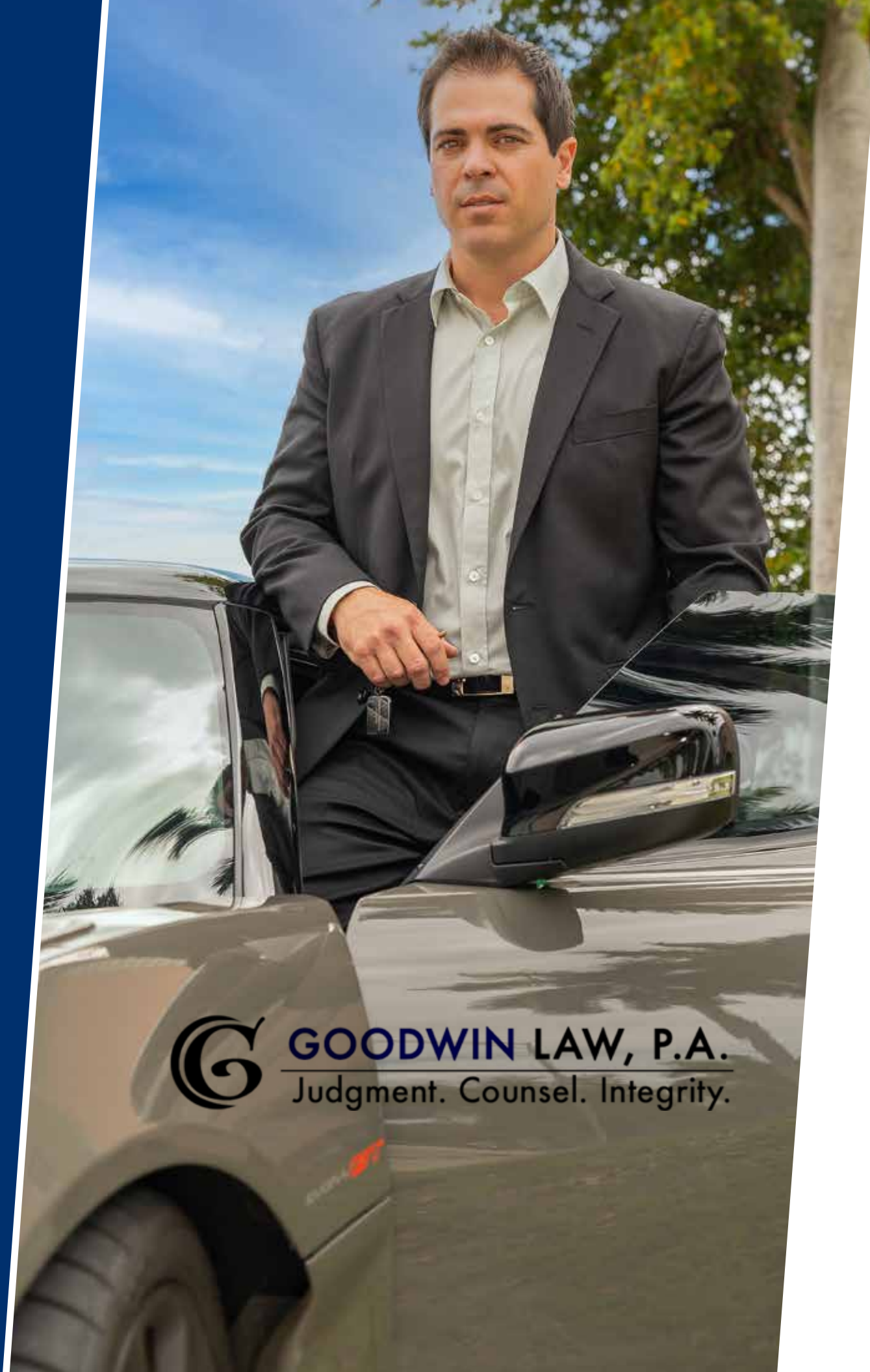


He likes to stay active, too. CrossFit is something Matt started several months ago. "I'm really enjoying that. I do it three to five days a week," he says.

Giving back is also an important part of his life. One of his favorite forms of support is the Immokalee Foundation and its outreach efforts in that area. In addition, Matt enjoys time giving back to the industry that has given so much to him.

As Goodwin Law grows, Matt emphasizes the bonds he and his team build. "What we do isn't about a transaction," he explains. "It's a professional working relationship. We're here to be responsive to requests and to be available when things come up. The agents I work with know and respect that."

For more information about Goodwin Law, P.A., call (239) 207-3403 or visit them online at www.FLestatelaw.com.



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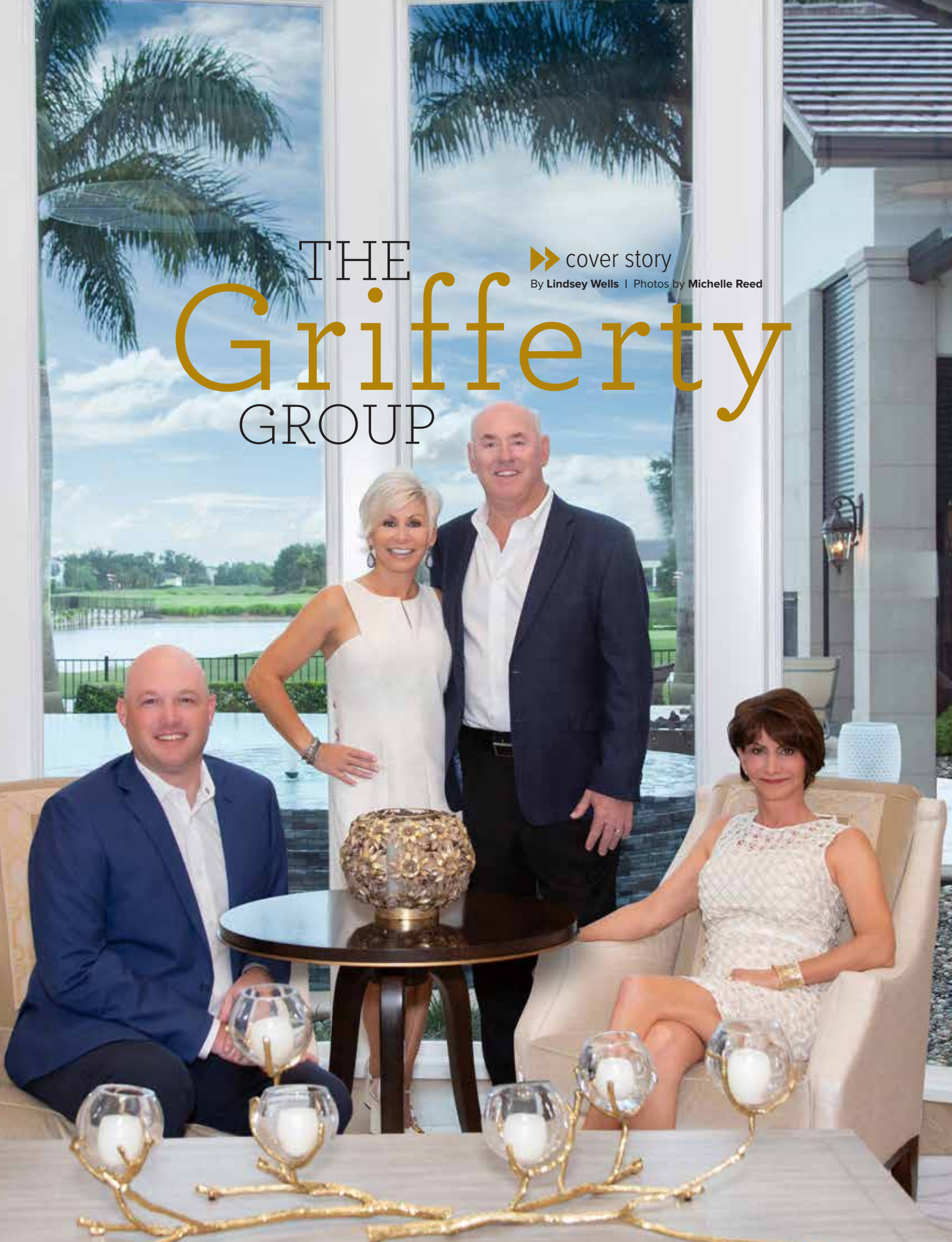
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THE Grifferty GROUP

» cover story
By Lindsey Wells | Photos by Michelle Reed



Tom Grifferty, Co-Founder of The Grifferty Group.



Carmen Grifferty, Co-Founder of The Grifferty Group.

BLAZING A PATH TO THE TOP

When Tom and Carmen Grifferty founded The Grifferty Group in 2014, they never dreamed their business would reach the level of success that it has in just seven short years. New to Florida at that time, the then-retired couple got licensed and had every intention of making real estate a part-time gig; maybe they'd sell a couple of homes a year within their community. Tom and Carmen quickly realized that would not be the case. They were blazing an impressive path to top producer status when they met Kim Basa, an experienced real estate agent who would become The Grifferty Group's third partner and equal owner in 2017. Since then, this award-winning trio has remained steadfast in its commitment to not only its clients but their community.

Tom and Carmen both grew up in Canada. After high school, Carmen attended and graduated from college and was Vice President of Operations for a Canadian insurance firm. Tom's path after high school led him to be an air traffic controller, which he did for 13 years before founding Canada's first title insurance company, First Canadian Title. He was their CEO until his retirement in 2013 when the couple moved to Naples.

As it turned out, neither Tom nor Carmen was any good at retirement. "I felt like I needed to do something else, so I told Tom that I was going to get my real estate license," Carmen says. After a short while, Tom decided to do the course with his wife to keep her company. After getting their licenses, they interviewed with several firms and ultimately found that their values aligned perfectly with John R. Wood Properties. A couple of years later, Carmen ran into Kim at an open house, and they immediately hit it off. "When I went home, I told Tom that I had met this woman who I absolutely loved and felt that she had the same values as us," Carmen says. "He met her, and the rest is history."

Originally from North Carolina, Kim Basa graduated from college with a bachelor's degree in journalism with an emphasis in advertising. She worked in advertising before spending a few years at home following the birth of her first daughter. She became licensed in real estate in 1996, after returning to the workforce, and spent 22 years as an independent agent. Then, she met Tom and Carmen and joined the team as their business

IF THERE IS ONE THING THESE FIVE HAVE IN COMMON, IT'S THEIR PASSION FOR CONTINUING TO LEARN EVERYTHING THEY CAN ABOUT THE BUSINESS WHILE PROVIDING ONLY TOP-NOTCH CUSTOMER SERVICE TO THEIR CLIENTS.



Kim Basa became a full partner with Tom and Carmen Grifferty in 2017.



Matt Wood, Tom and Carmen's son-in-law, joined the team in 2019.



John Burdick joined The Grifferty Group this year.

partner. "Meeting my partners, Tom and Carmen Grifferty, was a stroke of good fortune," Kim says. "It is indescribable how much better it is to run a real estate business with partners, especially those with the same attitude about life and work. We do for each other without having to ask; it's amazing."

The Grifferty Group is currently in the process of becoming Quail West Realty to better reflect the team, which has grown to include two other agents, Matt Wood (Tom and Carmen's son-in-law) and John Burdick. Matt and his wife moved to Naples from Las Vegas in 2019, after

the birth of their son. He started his real estate career in 2019 with Keller Williams Realty and soon moved over to The Grifferty Group. "Unless you start selling real estate right out of college, this is a career change," Matt says. He was a golf professional for 15 years before real estate. "When we decided to leave Las Vegas, there was no guarantee of what the future held. We just went with our gut, and this has been the best decision I have ever made."

John Burdick graduated from college with a degree in economics in 2018, and worked at a startup in Chicago as an account manager before joining

The Grifferty Group this year. "When Tom, Carmen, and Kim presented the possibility of working for them, I knew there would be no better trio to learn from," he says. "Their combined experience and knowledge of the market and beyond made my transition into real estate a no-brainer."

If there is one thing these five have in common, it's their passion for continuing to learn everything they can about the business while providing only top-notch customer service to their clients. "I had a mentor early in my advertising career who told me, 'You don't know what you haven't learned,' and I took that to heart,"





The Grifferty Group is in the process of rebranding to Quail West Realty (from left to right: Matt Wood, Carmen Grifferty, Tom Grifferty, Kim Basa, John Burdick).

Kim says. In addition, the group is involved in the community through its philanthropic efforts. The Grifferty Group allocates a certain amount in its budget each year to support various charities. Integrity is also a huge part of this team's culture. Tom

says, "Don't ever do anything that you would not be proud about doing. If you don't have impeccable integrity, you have nothing."

While Tom, Carmen, and Kim continue to enjoy the success of their

group, they are also focused on building the Quail West Realty brand so they can hand the reins over to their younger associates in the future and spend more time out of the office and with family. After all, time spent with family is priceless.

“

IT IS INDESCRIBABLE HOW MUCH BETTER IT IS TO RUN A REAL ESTATE BUSINESS WITH PARTNERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH THE SAME ATTITUDE ABOUT LIFE AND WORK. WE DO FOR EACH OTHER WITHOUT HAVING TO ASK; IT'S AMAZING.

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By Robin F. DeMattia

Blue Zones Project

Brings Well-Being to HOA Communities

What began as a New York Times best-seller by National Geographic Fellow Dan Buettner has evolved into a global movement that's inspiring people to live longer, more active lives. From Sardinia, Italy, to Okinawa, Japan, to Loma Linda, California, people are living vibrant, active lives well into their hundreds. Buettner calls these areas Blue Zones and they're the inspiration behind his book, *The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who've Lived the Longest*. Buettner's research, along with a global longevity study, has led to the Blue Zones Project — a program that helps people live longer, healthier, and happier lives.

Brought to Southwest Florida by NCH Healthcare System, in collaboration with Sharecare, Inc., Blue Zones Project is a community-wide well-being improvement initiative to help make healthy choices easier for everyone in Southwest Florida. When the entire community participates — from worksites and schools to restaurants and grocery stores — small changes contribute to huge benefits: lowered health care costs, improved productivity, and a higher quality of life.

It's no wonder more than 70 local homeowners associations (HOAs) are partnering with Blue Zones Project.

People who live in HOA communities are perfectly situated to benefit from the Blue Zones Project's Power 9® principles, shared by the longest-lived people in the world: they likely have walking paths, there are probably volunteer opportunities, and there might even be a restaurant where they can have "Wine at 5" and enjoy a "Plant Slant" dinner.

"An HOA is one of the places where we can get many people engaged with Blue Zones Project," says Chante Pemberton, Faith-Based Organization and HOA Lead for Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida. "I love that I get to represent

something that helps people raise their well-being and helps improve the overall well-being of the Southwest Florida community."

HOAs can become part of Blue Zones Project by completing a checklist of items they already do and easily adding some other elements, such as installing bicycle racks, organizing a walking group, or planting a community garden. "The list of best practices is very simple but meaningful," Pemberton says.

Natalie Lewis serves on the Blue Zones Project engagement committee at Vanderbilt Country Club and took part when her community first became involved 10 years ago. "Health was a big issue for us," she says. "We thought with our beautiful gym and very active people here, we could do something. The Blue Zones Project team gave us a fireside chat, and residents pledged to participate. Management was behind it, which made it easy. I truly believe in Blue Zones Project. It has allowed me to socialize with people I probably would not have met," Lewis says.

Erika Rohde, president of the HOA in Delasol, says she, too, has always been a fan. "If you are socially engaged with other people, you'll live a better life," she says. When the board realized that many neighbors didn't know each other and the community needed more activities, they reached out to Pemberton at Blue Zones Project. "Once we engaged with Chante, we took off like a wildfire."

Almost 70 percent of Delasol residents signed the Power 9 pledge, a series of action steps to increase well-being. "Once we joined Blue Zones Project, we saw a huge change in our community," says Rohde. "We saw a much more positive outlook. People want to live longer and happier lives." The board organized walking "moais" (groups of five to eight people who meet weekly to walk together and socialize), yoga and bone-builders classes, pickleball leagues, men's and ladies' social groups, and food and clothing drives for charity.

"Blue Zones Project has really taken off and changed our community," Rohde affirms. She even

attributes the community's increased real estate sales to its positive social environment, which makes the community more attractive to potential buyers.

Barb Swendiman, who lives in VillageWalk of Bonita Springs, created a fun challenge with 23 activities to get neighbors involved, and gave prizes as rewards for participating. "It was simple stuff to do," she says, "like go for a walk with a friend at least once a week, try a Blue Zones recipe, take the age test, or give someone an unexpected gift — easy things you could do that are good for your well-being."

Barbara Mariano lives in the latest Blue Zones Project community, Del Webb Naples in Ave Maria, and says it's a perfect fit. "The community is very active. People are walking, biking, swimming, and playing pickleball and tennis and golf. We're a very, very active community. Blue Zones is the life we live out here."

To optimize well-being in your HOA community, and to partner with Blue Zones Project, contact Chante.Pemberton@sharecare.com or visit www.southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com.



Blue Zones Project members at Twin Eagles organized an Moai® walking group around the golf course at their ribbon-cutting celebration.





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HOW AN OPS BOSS® CURES OVERWHELM

By Christy Belt Grossman

Elizabeth Gilbert is a seasoned Ops Boss®. She's been in real estate for 14 years, leads Ron Henderson & Associates in Kansas City as their COO, and loves coaching less experienced assistants for us at Ops Boss® Coaching. Here's what she shared with me recently about why assistants feel overwhelmed and what to do about it. (It applies to agents too!)

"Let's just agree on one thing. The reason you feel overwhelmed is because you *think* you are overwhelmed. Ever hear the saying, 'What you focus on expands'? Well, it's true."

Do you find yourself thinking thoughts like these?

- I'm so busy. I don't know how I'm going to get everything done today.
- Aw, crap. Why do these agents keep bringing me more work? Can't they see how busy I am?
- I'm never going to get to everything today. I'm so overwhelmed.
- Can't a girl get a break? I just need time to finish this stuff!
- Le sigh. I don't have time for this.

What happens when you think these thoughts? You feel bad, unhappy, angry, anxious, or overwhelmed. And when you feel these negative feelings, you start taking negative actions, like avoiding work, procrastinating, ruminating about how awful it all is.

Now, your results suffer. You actually *don't* get to everything you wanted to. Your relationships with your rainmaker and teammates start to sour. You're known as "difficult to work with." If it goes far enough, the clients notice and instead of working with you like they are supposed to, they go back to their agent for what they need and your agent starts to think about letting you go.

This could end very badly. So let's reverse-engineer all of this.

What's the result you want? To be a kick-ass executive assistant who gets things done with a good attitude so that clients and teammates enjoy working with you (an Ops Boss®!).

What actions would you have to take to get that result? Accept new work with a smile and thank the person who asks you to do it. Time-block your day so your most important action items get accomplished. Take breaks to refresh your spirit and your mind.

What feelings would you have to feel to take those actions? Inspired, motivated, and determined.

What thoughts would you have to think to generate those feelings?

- I am a capable, kick-ass executive assistant.
- I do it now.
- What else do you have for me? Bring it!
- I'll put that task in my schedule so I make sure it gets done.
- I run my day; it doesn't run me.
- I only have to focus on one thing at a time.

As an Ops Boss®, you should be good at creating and following systems. **Following a time-blocked schedule is a system.**

But what about the people who come along and try to wreck your system? How do you deal with that? The work keeps coming in, and I can't handle it.

You can deal with interruptions a couple of different ways:

1. You can build interruption time into your time block. Say you are working through your listing checklist for putting a listing in MLS. Normally, this activity takes about 45 minutes. So book an hour into your schedule instead. Now, when your rainmaker hands you a new listing agreement he got signed last night, you can take a moment to write down any verbal instruc-

tions he's telling you, block time in your schedule to process that new listing, and then get back to your listing checklist. BOOM – interruption accounted for!

2. You can deflect interruptions by creating a separate block for them. Let's say you schedule "office hours" for your team. Every day, from 11:30 to noon, and again from 2:30 to 3:00, you are available to your team for their questions, new work assignments, or just general BS-ing. So as you're working through your listing checklist and your rainmaker comes to you with a new listing, you can tell him, "I'm on a deadline. Can you bring it to me at 11:30 or would you rather [email, Slack, GroupMe, text] the instructions to me?" BOOM – interruption deflected!

Once you start *thinking* like a capable, smart, kick-ass Ops Boss®, you will actually *become* a kick-ass Ops Boss® who gets things done with a good attitude so that clients and teammates enjoy working with you.



Christy Belt Grossman is the CEO and Owner of Ops Boss® Coaching, and a Director on the Board of NARESP

(National Association of Real Estate Professionals). Prior to that, Christy was the COO of one of the nation's first real estate teams to sell \$1 billion. Ops Boss® Coaching provides classes, a video resource center, group coaching (coached by Elizabeth Gilbert), elite 1:1 coaching, and an annual conference focused on real estate operations professionals. For more information: www.OpsBossCoaching.com.

FAQ

ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE

By Andrew Regenhard



Real Producers is celebrating our first anniversary in SWFL this month. If you just made the 2021 Top 500 producers in SWFL list and are new to our publication, you may be wondering what it's all about. "FAQs About This Magazine" answers the most commonly asked questions around the country regarding the Real Producers platform. My door is always open to discuss anything regarding this community — this publication is 100 percent designed to be your voice and to connect, elevate the industry, and inspire!

Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The top 500 agents in SWFL. We pulled the MLS numbers (by volume) from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, in the SWFL area, cut the list off at number 500, and our new 2021 Top 500 distribution list was born. This magazine is free exclusively to the top 500 agents in the area each year. This year, the minimum production level for our group was \$12.9 million in 2020, based on data reported to MLS.

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 REALTORS®, affiliates, brokers, owners, or even yourself! Office leaders can also nominate REALTORS®. 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 photoshoot.

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.

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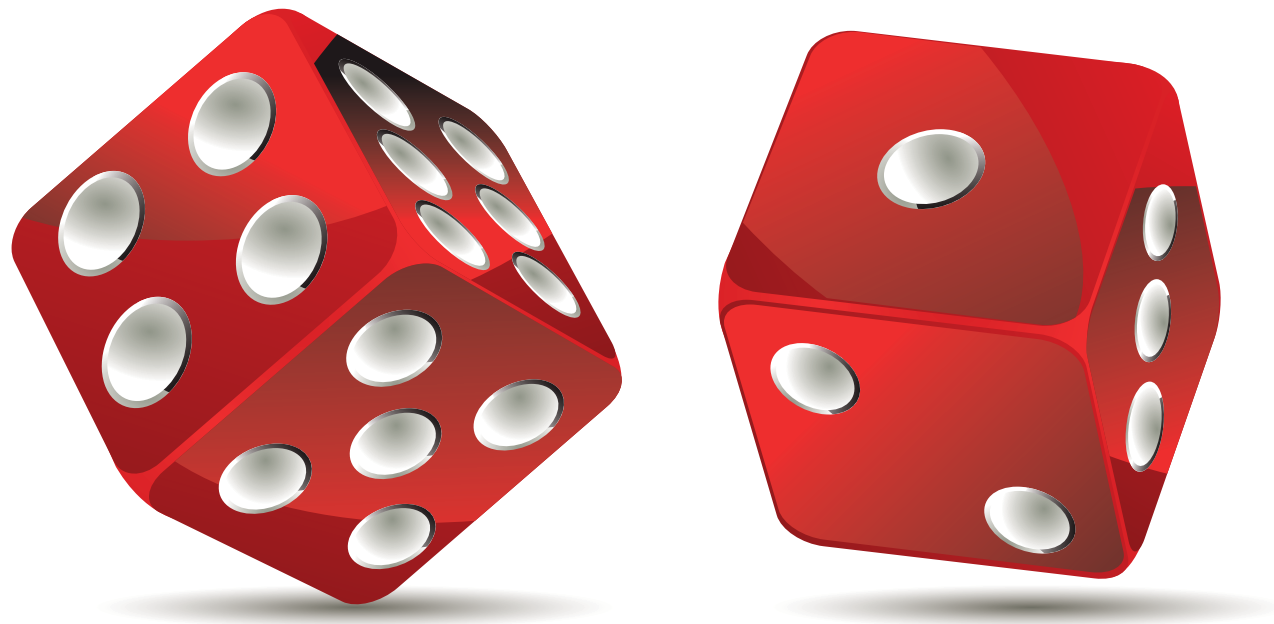
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Aren't Actuarials like Playing Craps?



Actually, yes. But in a good way.

First, what is an actuary? An actuary is a business professional who deals with the measurement and management of risk and uncertainty.

One classic example of applied actuarial science is your neighborhood casino. Do they know when you are going to throw a seven, or know when you are going to throw craps? No, but they don't have to. What they do know is that after 1,000 throws, craps and snake-eyes are going to come up more often than seven or eleven. Casinos aren't built on winners.

Another example of businesses based on actuarial science is insurance companies. Do they know when you are going to have an accident? No, but they know given a group of clients, a certain percentage will have an accident this year. Same premise with life insurance. Do they know when you're going to die? No, but they

know out of 1,000 people, a certain number are going to die each year, and they set their rates accordingly. Now, let's look at real estate. Do you know when someone is going to decide their home is too big or too small? Or when they get transferred and need to sell to move? Or when they decide to live on the beach rather than on a golf course? Unless you have a crystal ball, probably not. Fortunately, you don't have to. It's really just a matter of applying actuarial thinking to your real estate business.

This starts by farming, and here's why: NAR says homes sell on average every ten years*. Be careful, because that doesn't mean you should only target people who've been in their home 10 years or longer. What if one home is lived in 20 years before it is sold, and two have sold that have only been lived in five years each? That's a 10-year average, but I'm sure you can see the problem here... playing the averages, you would miss two listings.

Now, let's apply actuarial science. Take a farm of 1,000 homes. Using NAR's number, if homes sell on average every 10 years (actually, whenever I ask that question in Florida, I'm told five to seven years), that means that farm will have 100 homes go on the market in any given year. No one knows which ones, but you don't have to. You just need to be the real estate professional they think of first, and let them call you once they make that decision. Creating a top-of-mind brand to 1,000 people is very doable.

Will you get them all? NO! A certain percentage will have a friend or relative in the business; or they were happy with an agent they used in the past; or someone got lucky and got a tip. But, let's look at another NAR stat* – 90 percent of home sellers that list only call two Realtors*. Seventy-five percent only call one. So if you've properly marketed yourself, and you are perceived as the best agent in homeowners' minds, you're going to get your share.

And farming an area not only gets you more listings calls, more listings mean more buyers, more referrals, and a shot at the coveted, double-sided commission.

So when you map out a marketing strategy for your business, you don't have to guess who is going to sell and when someone is going to sell. Play the odds by aggressively marketing to a fixed number of homes and, over time, watch your brand and your business grow.

*NAR's Profile of Buyers and Sellers 2019.

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An amazing time was had by all at *SWFL Real Producers'* first in-person event of 2021 on March 11th! Ferrari of Naples was an awesome venue for us to get together and cut loose a little after a very challenging past year. It was great to see all the movers and shakers and best of the best in the SWFL real estate community once again. Check out all the great photos from this special event on the next several pages. Thank you to those who came out ... and for those who couldn't make it, we missed you and hope you will join us at our next event!

Thank you, **Ferrari of Naples**, for hosting us. We had a great time at your exciting showroom! A huge

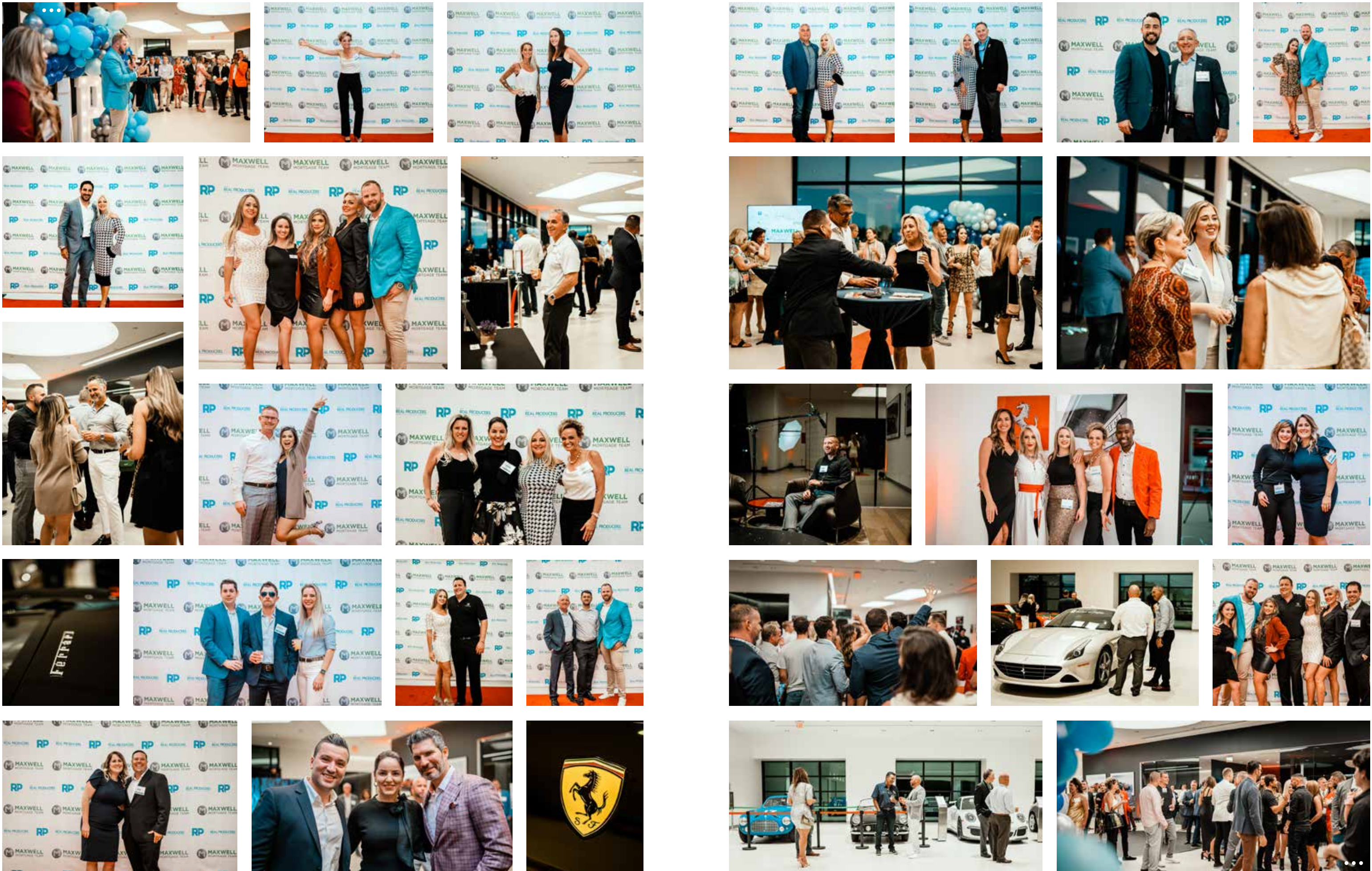
thank-you to our Platinum Sponsor, **Lauren Maxwell of the Maxwell Mortgage Team at CrossCountry Mortgage**, and to our two Gold Sponsors, **Conditioned Air** and **Seaview Title**. We appreciate you! Thanks also to **Balanced Images** for providing the exquisite print for our live auction that netted \$1,100 to benefit the David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health. And finally, a big thank-you to our media sponsors, **Artistic Science**, **Salt + Light Media Group** and **Corrafilm**, as well as to our

valet service provider, **5 Star Valet**, and our wonderful caterer, **M&G Farm Stand Cafe and Catering**. We couldn't have done it without you!

SWFL Top 500 agents, be on the look-out for your exclusive invitations to our upcoming events! See you next time!

For more information on all SWFL Real Producers events, email kim.curry@realproducersmag.com.









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