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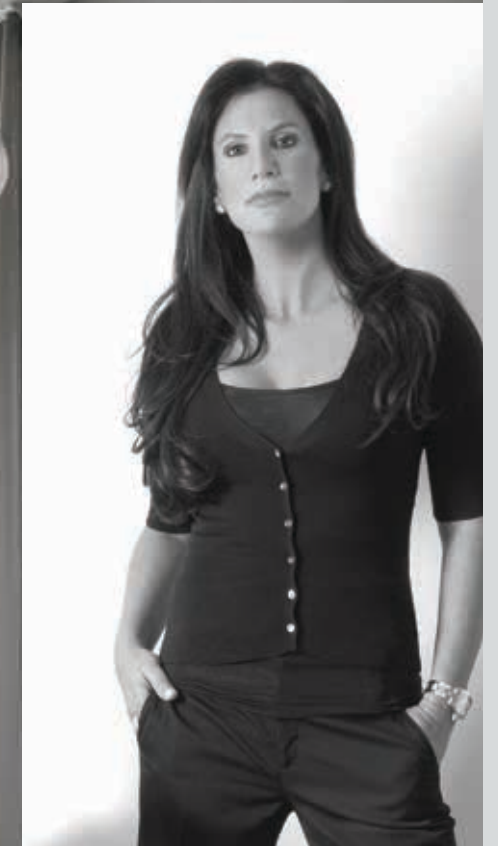
Following the strategies of Realtors Rupert and Karen Irby as they try to make their mark in the upscale market in Naples. BY JUSTIN PAPROCKI

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» publisher's note

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY!

Dear Real Producers,

The Fourth of July has always been a favorite holiday of mine, its meaning near and dear to my heart. With all that's gone on over the past year, it feels like an even more special Fourth this year.

In my last career, as a military contractor, I was deployed overseas with some of the great men and women of our military. I was privileged to develop close, one-on-one relationships with many of them and am always humbled by and grateful for their amazing dedication to our country and the sacrifices that they make for all of us. I think of them as we celebrate the Fourth of July — the special service members who actively guard and protect the freedoms we enjoy as Americans.

I hope everyone has a happy Fourth of July celebration with friends and loved ones!

Our next big quarterly event is happening very soon, and we can't wait to see everyone again for another exclusive *Real Producers* networking party! If you haven't received your invitation, please reach out to me at andrew.regenhard@realproducersmag.com.

Very respectfully yours,

Andrew Regenhard

Owner/Publisher
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MEET THE COMMUNITY

CHECK OUT SOME OF SWFL'S **TOP 500** REAL PRODUCERS!

Photos were taken at our May/June Magazine Release Party, held at the offices of Resolutions Title. A huge thank-you to all who came out — and a big thank-you to our partner, **Aaron Barnes, of Resolutions Title**, for hosting our event and for the wonderful food and drinks! Thank you, **Blake Becker, of Becker Home Maintenance**, and **Murat Dorkan, of Dorkan Financial Group**, for the beautiful framed articles of our featured agents!



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TRANSACTIONS


7,781
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TRANSACTIONS


\$29,857,874
AVERAGE
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PER AGENT


40.2
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*Information is based on residential sales in 2020 in Lee and Collier counties by the top 500 agents by sales volume in these counties.

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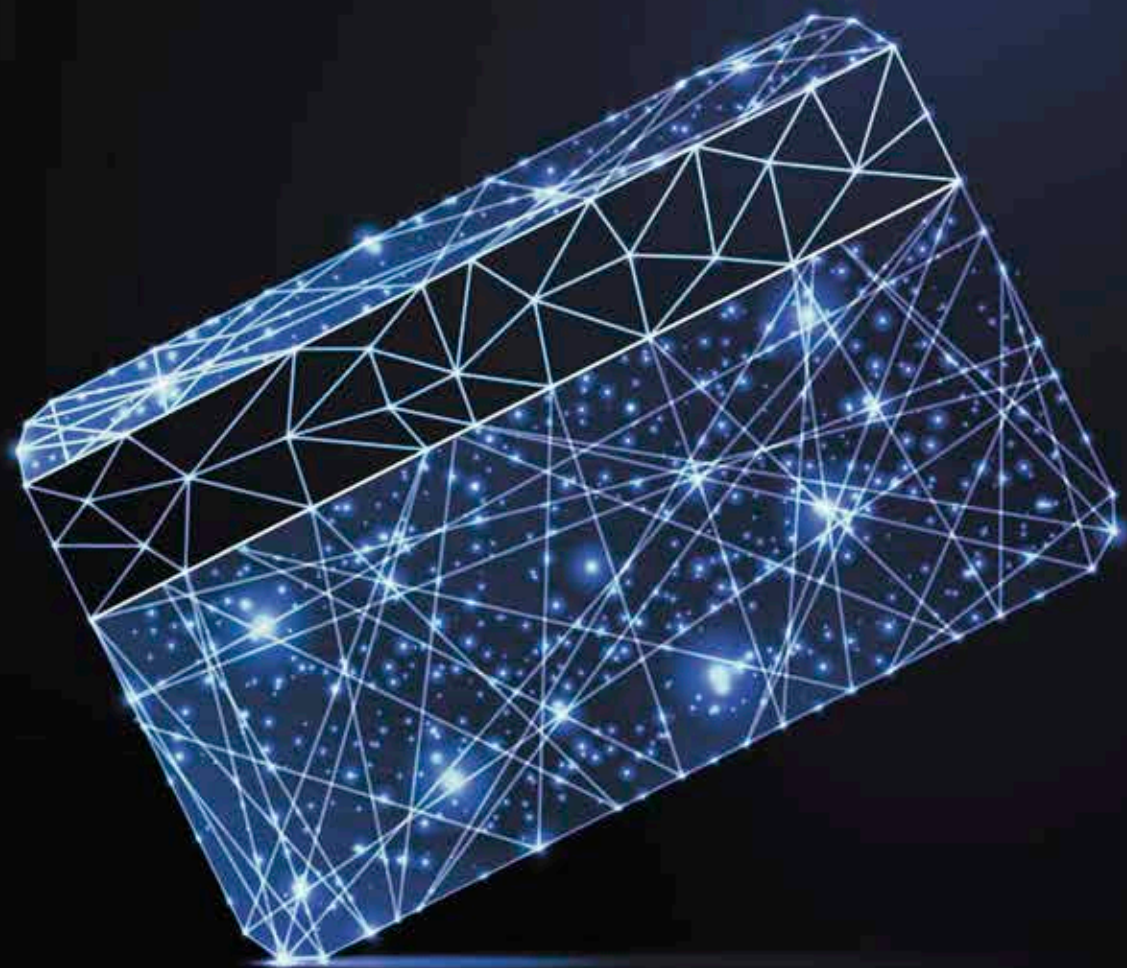
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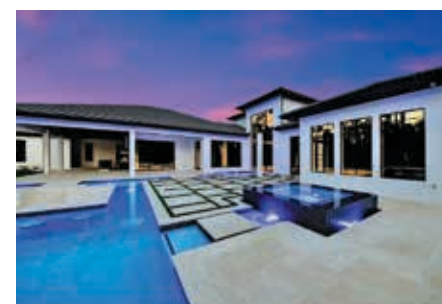
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ARE YOUR EVERGREEN Media Pitches READY TO GO?

An evergreen topic is something that never changes. It's something you can pitch year after year. It doesn't change based on current events. It's just a topic that is always relevant at a certain time.

Examples of evergreen topics in real estate include: Spring Market, best-bang-for-your-buck upgrades before selling, selling before school starts, and backyard amenities (should you do the outdoor kitchen?).

Seasonal topics could include: Swimming pool — does it help or hurt the home's value? Should you list your house over the holidays? What should you do to your home for the best curb appeal in spring? Summer? Fall? Winter? Focus on real estate-related topics that have to do with seasonality.

Another evergreen topic is holidays. This includes traditional holidays that don't change and then non-traditional holidays, like National Neighbors Day, Fair Housing Month, Lawn and Garden Month, Vacation Rental Month, and Roof Over Your Head Day. These are all real estate topics you can pitch to the media year after year.

Go through a calendar, and put these pitching ideas into your annual calendar. Having this list of media pitches ready to go will make the pitching process so much easier. Set alerts in your calendar allowing you enough time to pitch: two weeks for local media, two months for regional publications, and four months for national publications.

Take the time in between to make sure you have the right journalist to pitch your story to. Once you have all the tools in place, you should be able to pitch the media at least once per month with an evergreen story and additionally throughout the year on trending stories, hot news, or real estate-related studies that are released.

Landing in the media allows tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, even millions of people to learn about your real estate business. It also positions you as an instant expert in real estate and people love to work with the "famous" agent. Start building your evergreen media calendar now so this can be you!

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P + T x A x A + F

Your Personal Success EQUATION

We're going to share an equation today for you to gather some perspective. It's called "Your Personal Success Equation." This equation is $P + T \times A \times A + F = \text{Your Personal Success Equation}$. What is this all about, and what do all these letters represent?

Start with a "P" for Passion.

How passionate are you about what you do? Do you show up with a natural enthusiasm day in and day out in the representation of your brand as well as in your interactions with others? Are you all about delivering on your why? Are you even clear on your why? Do you do what you do because you want to serve the greater good to get others what they want, in addition to building your business and wealth? When you bring true passion to the game and your business, more people will naturally be attracted to you, and things will work out very well for you, your business, and those you serve.

Add a "T" for Talents.

Some of us possess God-given talents that we work on and enhance to get even better. Some other talents we can acquire and master along the way. We need to continue to concentrate on and leverage these talents, as this is where we shine the brightest.

In this equation, the drive always comes from our passion. Next, we work on and leverage our talents, and then, we multiply them by our associations.

Multiply by an "A" for Associations.

Your associations are the people and groups you associate with. Who's in your network? Who are your most valued strategic alliances? Who are the people and associations you're working with? Are those relationships lifting you up? Are your associations challenging you to get better, go outside your comfort zone, and grow? Remember that it's your network that builds your net worth.

When you're passionate about what you do, you're enhancing your talents, and you're leveraging your associations, then you will have the ability to take action.

Multiply by an "A" for Action.

Take action to really go after the success of what you want. You can be a very passionate person, you can possess unequalled talent, you can be associated with great people and mentors. However, if you are not leveraging these and taking action, it all simply becomes useless.

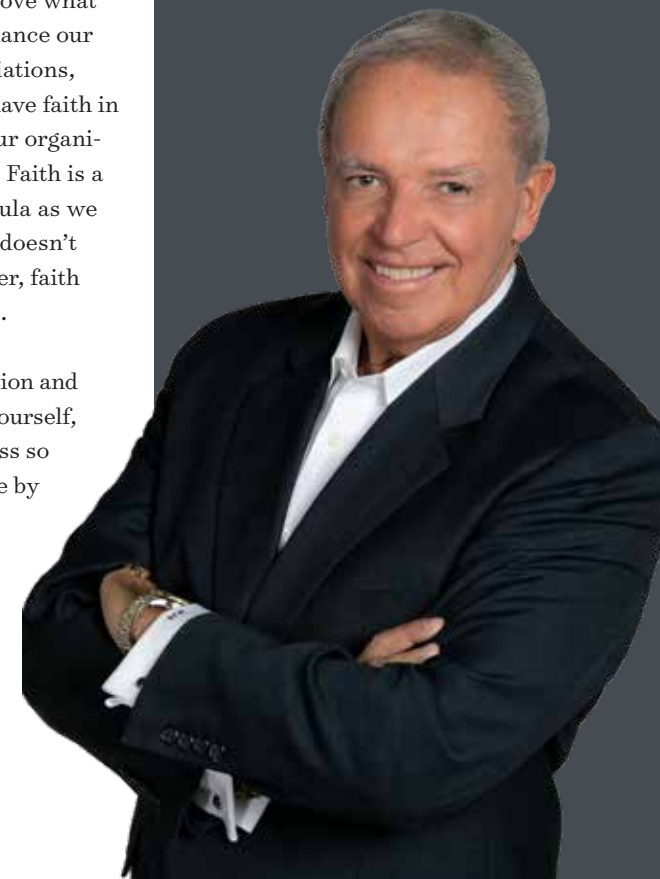
In addition, and most importantly, there's one final ingredient left. As you master the other areas, you must always back it up with faith.

Add an "F" for Faith.

Let's face it. There's a lot of noise going on in the world, and business doesn't always go as planned. However, we really need to continue to drive with our passion, love what we do, do it for others, enhance our talents, leverage our associations, take the right action, and have faith in ourselves, our team, and our organization that we will do well. Faith is a key ingredient to this formula as we must always believe. Faith doesn't always make sense; however, faith sometimes makes miracles.

Follow and apply this equation and you will continue to grow yourself, your team, and your business so you can all reach abundance by mastering "your personal success equation."

Coach Michael Dill is an award-winning Certified Business Coach, professional speaker, and trainer. He is the president of Power & Ice Wealth Creation, a strategic leadership company that works with business owners, leaders, teams, and entrepreneurs to develop a systematized and structured organization while accelerating their mindset, efficiencies, and effectiveness to grow both personally and professionally to achieve extraordinary results. He brings more than 40 years of business and entrepreneurial experience in leadership, team training, and mentoring. BusinessCoachMichaelDill.com










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FLOORING

THE
“PERMANENT ART”
OF A HOME

Furniture, fixtures, appliances, and paint; all of these items personalize a home, but what gives you the WOW effect that makes it unique?

Floors make a statement! Empty or full floors can be one of the top-selling points of a house. They play a role in making the home appear smaller or bigger. They are the “permanent art” in the home that buyers will connect with, based on esthetics as well as functionality. Floors can make a home appear old or new regardless of the age of the home, and with such an important role, it is imperative to give them the attention they deserve.

When getting a home ready for sale, look at the flooring and consider these questions:

Are the floors functional? Are they durable?

There are many choices when it comes to flooring; one can have porcelain, stone, carpet, laminate, wood, vinyl or ceramic, and each has a different longevity. Porcelain is likely to outlive all of the choices mentioned. Unlike its competitors, it is highly water- and shatter-resistant. Additionally, it comes in infinite sizes, colors, and textures, which allows for any look, including that of wood.

Are the floors installed properly?

Improper installation of any type

of floor decreases its longevity and esthetics. Porcelain tiles, for example, can split when their foundation is inadequate. To test an already-installed tile, one can simply knock on the tile to listen for hollowness. If it sounds hollow, the adhesive applied was likely not enough and these floors will need replacing sooner than anticipated. On another note, grout joints on hard floors make a huge difference in giving the home a high-end appearance. Large grout joints make the room look choppy, whereas tiny grout joints give you an endless ongoing look and sophistication.

How many types of flooring are there in the same house?

While using more than one type of flooring throughout a home is acceptable, having too many different kinds is not appealing to buyers. On the same note, using two types that are very similar but not the same is also uninviting. Instead, be sure to have one or two types all throughout the home, and be sure they are neutral colors that would go well with an array of décor styles. Consistency and neutrality are key to appealing to a wide range of likes.

Overall, floors can be a huge deciding factor for a buyer, therefore they are a “must-consider” for the seller. Flooring in the home can make or break a deal ... so pay close attention to every detail, and choose wisely.

Christopher Torres, owner of Master Touch Tile & Stone, strives to provide his clients with passion, craftsmanship, and elegance in remodeling their homes. A career firefighter, a sergeant in the United States Army, and an entrepreneur, Chris is dedicated to the community of Southwest Florida; he and Master Touch Tile & Stone have been serving the SWFL community since 2005, and continuously follow the latest trends and techniques in tile and stone installation. Chris and his team work with clients to turn their flooring and shower ideas into a beautiful reality, treating every project as a unique masterpiece.
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ADRIAN SABATINO, BECKY COLBURN, & BRUCE MITCHELL

Keller Williams Realty
Naples and Marco Island



Bruce Mitchell (left), Team Leader of Keller Williams Marco Island; Adrian Sabatino (middle), Operating Principal of Keller Williams Naples and Marco Island; and Becky Colburn (right), Team Leader of Keller Williams Naples.

Adrian Sabatino

Operating Principal of the Keller Williams Naples and Marco Island offices, Adrian Sabatino became licensed in Naples in 1999 and was immediately hooked on real estate after his first sale. Within the first year, Adrian moved to the other coast of Florida and opened his own small brokerage, which he operated for 10 years before moving his family back to Naples. Life changed for Adrian when he joined Keller Williams Realty in 2017. "I thought I knew what I was doing," he says. "Turns out, I didn't. Not until I understood the real way to do business."

As Operating Principal of the two offices, Adrian is just as passionate about his agents as he is his real estate clients. "When someone joins Keller Williams, they're automatically business partners. We all have the same mindset and goals and helping mentality. When one of us profits, we all profit. When one of us is doing well, we're all doing well," he says. "Every agent wants to help the other. It's this mentality that has made our growth so tremendous. It's also helped agents really prosper individually because everyone around them is surrounding them with care and help. That's what drives me — I know how this company has changed lives."

Adrian and his wife, Priscilla, have been together 20 years and have two sons, Ayden, 12, and Dylan, 10, both athletes who play hockey. As a family, they love to travel and have visited nearly 20 countries. Adrian and the family are also very involved in their church.

Bruce Mitchell

Team leader of the Keller Williams Marco Island office, Bruce Mitchell got his start in real estate in 2012, when he opened his own LLC buying real estate for investment properties. He joined Keller Williams in Georgia in 2014. Bruce met his now wife during Hurricane Irma, when he was

Growth Through Shared Vision and a Culture of Helping

A company's culture results from organizing its goals around solid, positive core values and then cultivating them daily. The largest real estate company in the world, with almost 200,000 agents worldwide, Keller Williams Realty stands firm in its dedication to God, family, and business — in that order. Keller Williams' Naples and Marco Island offices are no different. With approximately 300 agents between the two branches, their mission is not just about selling houses, it's about humanity and giving back to the communities they call home.



Adrian Sabatino, Becky Colburn, and Bruce Mitchell lead the Naples and Marco Island offices of Keller Williams Realty with positivity, vision, and a dedication to support their agents.



“When someone joins Keller Williams, they’re automatically business partners. We all have the same mindset and goals and helping mentality.”

in Florida helping with the hurricane’s aftermath. He convinced her to leave Naples and move to Georgia, and the couple officially blended their families in 2018. When COVID hit, God began dropping subtle hints, and Bruce realized he was being called back to Southwest Florida.

“I talked to my wife, we made some arrangements, put our house on the market, and found a place here,” he says. Amid everything, Bruce and his wife found out they were expecting a child. Shortly after settling down in Florida, the opportunity arose for Bruce to interview for his current position at Keller Williams. That same week, they found out their middle daughter, Morgan, had a brain tumor.

“We had just found out our daughter had a brain tumor, we were relocating our family and our business, and we had a baby on the way. Literally, this opportunity came at the perfect moment,” Bruce says. “I praise the Lord that I earned this position. Everything worked out with a purpose; my child had the best health care in this area, and I found a very

solid home and community here in Marco Island, and a very God-centric business organization with Keller Williams Naples and Marco. This all goes back to our values: God, family, then business. It really was a God-centered move. I’m so grateful to the company and to Adrian, the leader, and to Marco Island for being there for my family and me during that transition.”

Now, as a team leader, Bruce is focused on the growth and development of his agents. “One of my primary jobs is to coach and mentor and consult with my top agents to grow their businesses even bigger so they can have the life they want by design, not by default, and to serve the way they want to serve,” he says. “My greatest joy is to meet with agents, both with our company and outside of our company, and help them grow their business and contribute to having a better life and better future for their families.”

Bruce and his wife, Kelsey, have four children: Audrey, 11, Morgan, 8, Caleb, 6, and Brooks, 5 months. Bruce and Kelsey share a passion for serving others above self. As for the kids, they are avid readers. Audrey and Morgan are into tumbling and cheerleading, while Caleb loves basketball and baseball. The family also loves to travel and explore different parts of the world.

Becky Colburn
Team leader of the Keller Williams Naples office, Becky Colburn has been in the industry since 1997 and with Keller Williams Realty since 2012. Originally from South Carolina, she got her start there and sold in several other states before settling down in Florida in 2019, after a conversation with Adrian about business collaboration. “I was up in Vermont then and grew a really big team there,” she says. “When I started talking to Adrian, he was looking for a business partner, so I decided to move down here. I wanted to get back down to the South, of course, because my entire family is in the South.”

As a team leader, Becky places the utmost importance on coaching and keeping her agents motivated. However, she says, motivation must come from within. “You cannot motivate people; motivation is internal. The way I lead is, I find out what it is that they want to achieve and ask them why they’re doing what they’re doing, and keep them focused on that. When the money is rolling in and things are happening, it’s really easy to stay focused on that, but when things get hard, that’s the time as a leader that you have to redirect the agent’s focus back to the true reason they’re doing it in the first place,” she says.



Bruce Mitchell (left), Adrian Sabatino (middle), and Becky Colburn (right) collectively lead over 300 agents between the two Keller Williams offices in Naples and Marco Island.

“**Every agent wants to help the other.** It’s this mentality that has made our growth so tremendous.”

Becky and her husband of 10 years, John, are avid golfers. They have a daughter and granddaughter and one four-legged fur baby, Remington.

With offices in over 50 countries, Keller Williams Realty sells over \$1 billion in real estate every single day. They are also the only company with technology backed by artificial intelligence. “We aren’t just a real estate company. We also own our own technology; we don’t rent our technology from third-party sources,”

Adrian says. Bruce adds, “We’re the number-one market leader in luxury real estate. Last year, just to give perspective, we did over \$35 billion in revenue in luxury real estate, over 25,000 transactions.” Keller Williams is also in the Training Hall of Fame and has the most robust training, coaching, and mentorship programs in the world of real estate.

As leaders, Adrian, Bruce, and Becky all lead by example, exuding positivity, encouragement, vision, and

hope for the future. “The vision, the atmosphere of collaboration, encouragement, and celebrations of the victories and the wins that we’ve had has created tremendous energy in our market centers and growth,” Bruce says. “This has been a market that’s unlike any other, where there is a lot of uncertainty. We have taken that uncertainty and tabled that, and shown them the opportunity, and they’ve embraced it. It’s always about perspective, and our company has a fantastic one.”



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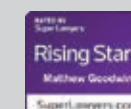
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Michael L. Michetti, Jr.



Woods, Weidenmiller, Michetti, & Rudnick LLP has six real estate attorneys, a large civil litigation practice and a small estate-planning department [Shown from left to right: Samuel F. Colburn, Morgan C. Hila, Michael L. Michetti Jr., Chris R. O'Brien, James ("Jay") F. Caudill.]

In the 1990s, a propensity for business mixed with a knack for entrepreneurship fueled Michael Michetti to forge a path from college to law school. However, practicing law wasn't always on his radar. Before and during college, Michael was convinced he was meant for a profession in sports. "When the movie *Jerry Maguire* came out, I was in law school but was convinced I wanted to be a sports agent. Then, I realized how hard it was to become a sports agent," Michael says, laughing. "So I decided on practicing law, and it was one of the best decisions I've made."

Originally from Washington, D.C., Michael attended the University of Michigan for undergrad and went

“

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every year since 2014.

”

back to D.C. for law school at the Columbus School of Law at Catholic University. He was officially licensed as an attorney in 1997 and spent the

next five years in D.C., the first two and a half of which were spent practicing law and the last two and a half running a dot-com company that he started with another attorney. When the events of 9/11 unfolded in 2001, and the dot-com was on its way to being sold, Michael began forming a new game plan. "A few months after 9/11 hit, I decided, 'You know what? The economy for this has gone way down, and I need to start getting on with my life.' I sold out to my partner and moved down to Florida."

Michael and attorney Casey Weidenmiller founded their firm in 2010 as Weidenmiller and Michetti. Shortly thereafter, Gregory Woods joined the team and in 2014 Joshua



Rudnick LLP. "One of the things that we pride ourselves in is getting back to people as quickly as possible and giving them as personalized service as possible," Michael says. "We have experienced and very sophisticated attorneys on staff here. Their job is not just to be a corporate, New York City-type law firm, where you're just another number. We want to treat every client as if they're family. We all share this mindset; we want to give as much personal service to our clients as we can and make sure we do it properly and as quickly as possible."

Michael is married to his wife, Jennifer, and has two children,

William, 23, and Isabella, 11. William is following in his dad's footsteps and is currently in law school in New York. He plans to work at his dad's firm over the summer this year. "Not in my department, though," Michael says, laughing. "He will be working in the litigation department. I told him, 'You cannot come work for me; you're going to work for someone else so you can actually learn something and not just hear Dad talking.'"

As for Isabella, she is a competitive golfer, which takes up quite a bit of the family's free time, traveling for her sporting events. As a family, they are avid travelers, though COVID put

Rudnick completed the quartet. Today, the firm is called Woods, Weidenmiller, Michetti, & Rudnick LLP and employs approximately 15 attorneys and 40 support staff.

When he first moved to Florida, Michael was a litigator but knew litigation wasn't his passion; he preferred the business side of things. "When I had my dot-com, what I handled was business development. I wanted to get into something that had a little bit more of a business-development feel, and real estate does that," he says.

Michael was responsible for launching the real estate department in the firm. "Everything I do is real estate-related," he adds. The firm has six real estate attorneys and a large civil litigation practice, as well as a small estate-planning department. "Our firm has received Old Republic National Title Insurance Company's Top Producer Award every year since 2014."

Personal service with big-firm quality is the underlying business model of Woods, Weidenmiller, Michetti, &



James ("Jay") F. Caudill (left) joined the firm in 2014 and is the partner in charge of the Bonita Springs/Estero office.



Real estate attorney Michael L. Michetti, Jr., co-founder of Woods, Weidenmiller, Michetti, & Rudnick LLP.

“One of the things that we pride ourselves in is getting back to people as quickly as possible and giving them as personalized service as possible.”

an end to that for a while. “We like to go to Europe a lot, especially Italy. We like to go skiing. We had trips planned to Deer Valley, which we’re going to go back to this year now that things seem to be getting better,” Michael says.

As for the real estate department, the attorneys genuinely pride themselves in efficiently handling real estate closings. “We think that our real estate attorney staff, relatively speaking, has quite a bit of knowledge. Between Josh Rudnick, Jay Caudill, and myself, we’re looking at 50-plus years of real estate law experience, collectively. We typically can handle things that other people can’t, and we do so with personalized service and efficiency.”

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while you're on vacation. For more information, call today.

Which ad would you respond to? Ironically, both are descriptions of the same career in real estate – just two different perspectives.

It's just a matter of deciding if you are going to make real estate your job or your business. If you look at real estate as a job, you may have chosen the wrong path. However, if you view it as a business, and treat it as such, there is no limit how far you can rise.

Sure, you have to work hard. You have to work

hard to be successful in any business. But isn't it better to feel like there's just not enough time after a 16-hour day, rather than grumbling about how strung-out an eight-hour-a-day job can feel?

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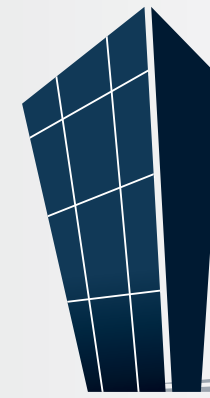
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CARLA

Masse

An Artful Life

“
I always look for
adventure.”



Growing up in Brazil, Carla Masse, of Sun Realty, lived a drastically different life than the one she lives today. Yet, through the years of transition, her character and passion for living an artful life have remained steady.

Carla was raised in a small, rural village of around 5,000 people. Her father was a farmer, and Carla remembers growing up around animals, riding horses, and living the laid-back lifestyle that farm life offers. She had a large extended family living in the same village, and weekend get-togethers at the farm often entailed gatherings of 30 or more.

“We really lived that small, village lifestyle,” Carla remembers.

As a child, Carla found a passion for art. By the time she was 13 years old, she was leading painting and drawing workshops in her village. Yet, when it came time to go to college, there was no option available to her for art school. Instead, she studied education.

After completing her degree, Carla came to the United States to improve her English language skills. She enrolled at Cape Cod Community College

in Massachusetts, intending to only stay one year. “It was an adventure,” Carla explains. “But one year turned into two years, and then I met my husband.”

Carla never returned to live in Brazil. She got married and set down roots in New England in 1999.

Finding Her Footing

In the United States, Carla had an opportunity to return to her love for art. She purchased a local gallery, and for three years, owned and directed her business. On the side, she and her husband began flipping homes. By 2005, however, she picked up her life once again.

“Moving to Florida was like moving halfway home,” Carla reflects. “Massachusetts was hard for me. Too cold, days were too short, grey days. We had this business with flipping homes, and our partner decided he was going to move to Florida. We came to check it out and just loved it. We drove all through Southwest Florida, and the warm weather, the sunsets, the feeling of a tropical place was very similar to where I grew up. I just went crazy. I thought this was amazing.”

...

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Carla Masse went into real estate in 2006 and was a top agent in her first year due to all the referrals she had from friends up north moving down.



In Florida, Carla got her real estate license and planned on using it for her investment business. However, her real estate journey quickly morphed into something much more. “When we moved to Florida, our goal was to run the investment business, and I got my license to make it easier. But things just went crazy from there. So many referrals. Especially people from Massachusetts, because there were a lot of people moving at the time. I had a lot of friends buying. In my first year in real estate in 2006, I was already a top agent. I had so many people coming in and purchasing from me, referring me to family and friends.”

The Art of Real Estate

While Carla no longer works directly in the arts, she looks at her real estate business as an art of its own. She can be creative with how she runs the business, her marketing strategies, and her outlook. “I love the fact that I can be creative with my own

business,” Carla says. “There is an art of relationship to the customer. The way I see it, real estate is like planning a painting. You have a project ahead of you, you’re interviewing a client, and there are so many pieces to the puzzle. Then there is also this big picture of what we need to accomplish. I can really view it as very similar to art.”

In 2020, Carla had one of her best years to date, closing \$20 million over 50 transactions with Sun Realty. She got so busy that she decided to start a team. “We had a great year last year,” Carla says. “Last year, I hired three other agents onto the team. Our goal is always to do the best we can to assist our clients to the best of our ability.”

As Carla steps into the future, she does so with a continued spirit of growth, adventure, and artfulness. As she says, “There are so many great things ahead.”

“Our goal is always to do the best we can to assist our clients to the best of our ability.”



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JOHN HUFFMAN

INNOVATIVE DESIGN SOLUTIONS

► partner spotlight

By Zachary Cohen | Photos by New Frame Photography

The Ministry of Life

“My journey has allowed me to give hope to other people that have been in my shoes, to give hope to the hopeless. I had a drug-addict mom and a father that wasn’t around, and now I run a \$7-million-per-year company. Life can change at any moment. That inspires me every day.”

Growing up in Naples, John Huffman was raised in a family rife with addiction, financial struggle, and heartache. His family didn’t provide him with the means to build a successful life, and John’s early years were laden with challenges. He spent his teenage years in and out of juvenile detention homes, and by 25 years old, he found himself at a Christian rehabilitation center.

“At 25, I was facing some pretty big trouble. But that’s when I met Jesus,” John says.

The Tides Turn

A decade prior, John had begun working for family friend Larry West. John had known Larry since he was a kid, and although John was troubled, Larry took a liking to him. For years, John worked for Larry in construction, on and off.

“If I wasn’t in a juvenile detention program or running the streets, Larry did his best to occupy me by giving me a place to lay my head. He was trying to teach me what a man looks like, but he never forced me. When I wanted to get up and leave, he let me do my own thing. But he had the attitude that he was always there when I needed him.”

After John cleaned up his own life, he accepted a job to work at the rehabilitation center. He spent three years

there, helping others travel the same path he had. After those three years, however, he was called to do ministry work in another, less traditional way. John was called to return to the construction industry — but this time, with a mission.

“The Lord showed me that there’s not enough ministry in the workplace. He called me to bring that light to the marketplace, to symbolize what love is in the marketplace. It’s more than the four walls of a church. That’s what he inspired me to do. Everywhere I go, there is ministry.”

Eight years ago, John and Larry partnered up to open Innovative Design Solutions. Today, Larry is the Vice President, and his son, Chris, is the treasurer.

“Larry is like a father figure to me,” John smiles.

Innovative Design Solutions

Innovative Design Solutions has now been in business for eight years. John has built the company into one of the top remodeling contractors in the area. He employs 46 individuals, including six dedicated administrative staff members.

“We also specialize in construction defects. In other words, repairing other contractor’s stuff,” John quips. “We’re problem solvers.”

...



With the encouragement and help of his wife Sarah, John Huffman opened Innovative Design Solutions, which has become one of the top remodeling contractors in the area.

A full-page background image showing a man and a woman walking together on a paved path. The woman is on the left, wearing a white ruffled blouse and a black skirt. The man is on the right, wearing a light purple button-down shirt with a logo and blue jeans. They are both smiling and looking at each other. In the background, there are large trees and a building with a sign that partially reads "DIAMOND".

“ The Lord showed me that there’s not enough ministry in the workplace. ”

...

Real estate agents love working with Innovative Design Solutions because of their timeliness and ability to put buyers at ease regarding inspection punch-list items. All of their laborers are in-house, save for the specialty trades. That means they have complete control over schedules and resolving issues.

The Ministry of Life

John has continued his ministry work in more ways than one. He’s on the board of several recovery ministries

and runs a ministry of his own called Harvest Recovery Ministry.

“We’re out feeding people and helping those with life-controlling issues. That’s a big part of our story,” John says. “Innovative design is huge into giving back to our community, to giving back to those that are in need.”

John’s wife, Sarah, is an essential part of the ministry work. When he left his full-time work at the ministry to open Innovative Design Solutions, she was

his number-one supporter. She encouraged him to follow his dream and not allow finances to hold him back.

“She pushed me out of the nest,” John smiles. “Sarah also did all my proposals and invoices in the beginning of our journey with Innovative Design Solutions — for no salary.”

Today, Sarah is an up-and-coming real estate agent. The couple is starting to do more and more business together; John takes care of any

John Huffman is on the board of several recovery ministries and runs a ministry of his own called Harvest Recovery Ministry.

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“There’s one promise we always make as a company—when it goes wrong, we are going to fix it.”

outstanding issues on her listings and helps her fix inspection-list items for her buyers.

Eight years into his journey with Innovative Design Solutions, John’s vision has never been clearer. He’s committed to coming through for each client, knowing that his work is the ministry.

“There’s one promise we always make as a company — when it goes wrong, we are going to fix it. That’s the only promise we will make because things happen. Regardless of what happens, it will be fixed. We will be there for you.”

For more information, please visit NaplesConstruction.net.



John Huffman's company, Innovative Design Solutions, is highly responsive and often fixes construction defects and inspection-list items.



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Samantha MARKER

►► rising star

By Zachary Cohen
Photos by LaCasaTour



The Search for a Career

After graduating from college with a degree in psychology, Samantha set out to build a career. However, she soon realized that psychology was a poor fit. She went into nursing, but this, too, failed to fulfill her.

During this time, Samantha relocated to Florida, where her younger sister, 14, was training for the Olympics. Samantha cared for her sister, home-schooled her, and took her to practices.

While taking care of her sister in Florida, Samantha met her husband, Jesse. The pair got married, began remodeling and flipping homes together, and relocated to Cape Coral, where Samantha opened a restaurant with her parents. The restaurant venture allowed Samantha the opportunity to pursue a career in real estate, a path she had been interested in since she and Jesse began flipping homes.

In 2018, Samantha officially began her real estate journey.

from SURVIVING ►►►► to THRIVING

As a child growing up outside Fort Wayne, Indiana, Samantha Marker, with Miloff Aubuchon Realty Group, lived a drastically different life than the one she leads today. Yet, those early years helped Samantha discover the skills that have carried her through her adult life.

Starting at 12 years old, Samantha showed cattle, sheep, and pigs. From local contests to state fairs to national shows, she'd stand up in front of competition and judges every weekend and give her best. Farm life isn't easy, and Samantha came to understand that hard work would propel her to achieve her dreams. In those early years, she honed her willpower and dedication. "The work I did on the farm, my upbringing...it shaped me. It showed me I am able to be dedicated to things. Whatever I wanted to do, I knew I was able to," she says.

Finding Her Footing

Samantha's husband, Jesse, has a long family history in the real estate business. His grandfather was a developer and real estate agent, and his parents were both agents and investors.

"Jesse encouraged me that I had a great personality for it along with the organizational skills and drive that this profession requires. So I said, 'Let's go for it.'"

Samantha's first six months on the job were a struggle. She didn't close a single deal, and being new to the area, struggled with generating leads. She doorknocked, went to open houses, and regularly attended networking events.

"I was constantly trying to branch off and do different things," Samantha remembers. "I was finally able to close a deal after six months. Then it really started taking off for me. The hard work began to pay off."

...

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From Surviving to Thriving

Three years later, Samantha is thriving. In 2020, she closed 50 transactions for \$18.6 million. She has developed a niche working with folks who are relocating, remodeling a home, or investing.

“If you’re looking for someone that will help you at the drop of a dime, I’m going to be there,” Samantha says. “I would store boxes for people that are out of town in my home. That’s the kind of work I do. I wear multiple hats in this position.”

Samantha continues to flip homes with her husband, Jesse. She also recently opened a title company, Premiere Title Services, alongside a few partners. Samantha is in the midst of a time of intense growth. She believes in work–life balance, but at the moment, she is okay with centering her life around work.

“Work–life balance — I believe in it, but at my age, and with what I want to achieve in my life, I’m not ready to give up my work for other things yet. That’s why I don’t have children. I’m putting whatever effort I can towards my work,” she says.

The Future is Bright

As Samantha looks ahead, she feels a sense of excitement for what’s to come. She knows that there will be more challenges in front of her, and by drawing on the strength of her loved ones, she’s ready to overcome them. “I’m so grateful for my friends’ and family’s encouragement to just keep going. There are so many times I’ve wanted to give up in this business.”

“When I have those hard times, I think about my dad,” Samantha continues through tears. “He recently passed away. When I’m in a hard place, I think about him and what he would want for me. He would want me to be happy and want me to pursue my dreams.”

In real estate, Samantha is doing just that.



“THE WORK I DID ON THE FARM, MY UPBRINGING... IT SHOWED ME I AM ABLE TO BE DEDICATED TO THINGS.

Whatever I wanted to do, I knew I was able to.”



Just three years in the business, Samantha Marker, with Miloff Aubuchon Realty Group, closed 50 transactions in 2020 for \$18.6 million.



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For more information, contact Membership Director Steve Dirks at 239-561-4170 ext. 205 or email him at sdirks@theclubatrenaissance.com.

The Club at Renaissance

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►► health and wellness

HOUSING FOR HEALING

By Kalynd Parrish

The 2020 pandemic hit everyone differently, but according to Kristin Long, Director of Development at NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Collier County, she is “thankful for the global pandemic for shedding light on mental health awareness.” For those who do not necessarily experience debilitating emotional stressors, it opened up the conversation — and an insight into people who cope with this daily. During the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, the need to check in on one another was apparent, and the community responded, with a greater awareness of the importance of mental health.

NAMI embodies a “safe space to share resources, have conversations, and be accepted for themselves — free of judgment.” The sole objective of “not feeling alone” when battling mental illness is how NAMI was created. Born in 1987 from local families who needed community support, NAMI Collier is now a national affiliate and is the only office accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA).

NAMI also works with local landlords to help find affordable housing for those affected by homelessness. Over the course of the last two years (exacerbated by the pandemic), one of the biggest challenges has been that

people suffering from mental disabilities are often homeless, “sleeping with one eye open because no one wants homeless people slumbered around Collier County,” says Long.

How can the problem of affordable housing be solved? Luckily, great progress is being made because of NAMI’s relationships with local government regulators, housing authorities, landlords, and the Hunger and Homeless Coalition of Collier County. There is an agreed-upon rate, through grants, that they are able to pay up to, but the key is finding landlords and property owners who are benevolent enough to work with them on

affordability. From Downtown to Golden Gate and North Naples, NAMI works with the county for fair-market rent, depending on family size. “Since late 2019, 64 homeless people and their dependents found safe, supportive housing,” says Long. However, the taboo surrounding mental health remains the biggest challenge.

NAMI helps battle the stigma to bring attention to matters of mental health and dispel the fear of those suffering with mental illness and its consequences. “They have every chance to be like everyone else — they just need a basic roof over their heads,” claims Long. “We are simply justifying who these people are and how they are doing the best they can, given their circumstances.”

NAMI Collier hopes to eventually purchase commercial real estate property so they can expand their business

and offer more services to help those struggling with mental illness and homelessness. The community has been supportive, with more and more people coming out to help and feeling a sense of purpose and belonging.

In order for NAMI’s mission to come to fruition, it is imperative to educate and raise awareness so individuals can be knowledgeable about their own personal well-being and recognize the signs, in others, of needing help. NAMI believes that with hope, inclusion, empowerment, compassion, and fairness, serious mental illnesses can be recognized and treated. Their advocacy is nationwide, and we are fortunate to see their dedication at work in Collier County. This year, NAMI Collier’s annual fundraiser luncheon, to be held at Arthrex One on December 10, 2021, will host Robin Williams’ son, Zak Williams.

NAMI Collier County provides advocacy, education, public awareness, and support so that all individuals and families affected by mental illnesses can improve the quality of their lives. For more information or to get involved, please contact Kristin Long at kristin@namicollier.org.

Kalynd Parrish grew up in Naples, Florida.

After a 10-year, soul-searching absence, during which she graduated from the University of Kentucky and found peace with her own wellness journey, she is thrilled to be back in The Sunshine State. Kalynd has a love of disco and all things sparkly, an interest in rescue Dobermans, and reports on health and wellness topics in Southwest Florida and nationwide.





NAMI Collier County’s mission is to

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CATHY

ROGERS



cover story

By Zachary Cohen | Photos by LaCasaTour

Taking Flight

Before real estate, Cathy Rogers worked as a flight attendant for over three decades.

I've met people from all walks of life. I've flown all over the world. And I can pretty much talk to anybody."

Before becoming one of Marco Island's top real estate agents, Cathy Rogers, with Premier Sotheby's International Realty, spent over three decades working as a flight attendant. She began her career in aviation at 21, and, through the years, developed the skills that would eventually help her build her real estate career. Perhaps most importantly, however, being a flight attendant helped Cathy cultivate the joy that she continues to exude.

"I think I am just a fun-loving person," Cathy says. "Being a flight attendant helped shape my personality. Having fun is what it's all about, and the whole flight attendant career shaped me into that."

The Big Transition

In the early 2000s, the airline industry underwent massive changes. The events of 9/11 reshaped the entire industry, and United Airlines filed for bankruptcy. "There were a lot of different issues with the airlines. It was time. If you're not having fun, you should move on. And I wasn't having fun," Cathy reflects.

Cathy grew up in Ohio, but through her 33 years as a flight attendant, she had the privilege of traveling to all corners of the world. As she began to ponder her next steps, she carefully considered her landing spot.

"I fell in love with Grand Cayman back in the day. I came across the bridge on Marco, and I thought, 'This is Grand Cayman in the United States.' You see the white sandy beaches. It's a

small-town atmosphere. People are nice. People are polite. It's just beautiful, and I love it here."

New Beginnings

Although Cathy didn't have a large sphere of influence on Marco Island, she describes the transition into real estate as "easy."

"I always loved real estate. Dealing with people, understanding people, body language, what people don't say sometimes, knowing how people are in different places of the world, and then being able to negotiate with people — I learned all of these things as a flight attendant. As a flight attendant, you definitely had to do some negotiating, too," she laughs.

Cathy has now been selling real estate for 16 years. She's consistently

...

...

Fun fact: In the '90s, Cathy spent some time acting and modeling.

“It was fun,” she says. **“I have my Screen Actors Guild card, and I did some commercials and movies.”**

Cathy Rogers, with Premier Sotheby's International Realty, has made the luxury market her niche and consistently sells some of the highest-priced homes and condos on Marco Island.

...



Cathy Roger's husband, John Toth, is also a licensed real estate agent.

...

a top-1-percent producer on Marco Island, and she thrives in the luxury market. She has made a habit of selling some of the highest-priced homes and condos on Marco Island. She has had the privilege of selling the highest-priced home on the island in 2015 and 2016, one of the highest-priced condos in 2020, and has sold the highest-priced home thus far in 2021. She's about to list one of the highest-priced homes ever on Marco Island — for an astounding \$14.25 million.

"I can do this because I give 150 percent to my clients," she says. "I work tirelessly hard for whatever they want."

Cathy believes that her ability to listen is what sets her apart. By listening to her clients, she's able to then help them achieve their dreams. "And the reward for me is their happiness," she says. "Seeing them happy when it's all finished ... that makes it all worth it. So if I had to give one piece of advice, it would be to listen to your clients. Follow a transaction through from beginning to end."

The Future is Bright

Cathy's husband, John Toth, is also a licensed real estate agent and assists with the business when Cathy needs a



helping hand. They have two children and three grandchildren.

"When I'm not working, I try to see family as much as I can. I am an avid tennis player whenever I have time. I love to work out, be outside," Cathy says.

As she looks ahead, Cathy hopes to continue building her business and executing for her clients. "The future? I hope to continue doing what I'm doing," Cathy smiles. "I would like to take more time to travel, spend time with friends and family... Truly, I'm having fun."

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home matters

By Shauna Osborne

For many, the reopening of local farmers' markets is a true harbinger of summer. Delicious leafy greens and juicy berries of all kinds beckon shoppers, friendly faces stand at ready to converse and educate, and the scent of freshly baked goods wafts through the air. Farmers' markets are truly magical places!

But they can also be overwhelming for the uninitiated market-goer, resulting in a fridge full of disparate produce that eventually goes bad in the crisper. Sound familiar? A bit of planning can keep farmers' market trips both tasty and productive.

Start by doing your **research before you go**. If you're unfamiliar with what's in season for your growing region, read up on it online, so you don't show up at the market expecting to buy, for example, rhubarb for pie when it's only available in spring. Produce seasonality guides for each state or growing zone are also available through your local cooperative extension.

Additionally, try to have a general idea of what meals or snacks you're envisioning *before* you go to the farmers' market. Unlike

the supermarket, farmers' markets have unpredictable stock, so you'll need to be a bit flexible, as well. Sold out of strawberries? Blueberries might just have to do!

What to bring: Bringing your own sturdy, reusable bags to the farmers' market is a great idea. Besides being better for the environment, vendors typically have thin, flimsy bags you won't want to fuss with. It's also smart to bring cash, in small bills if possible, as many vendors may not have card machines, and purchases will go more easily and quickly with exact change.

Have questions? The person who labored to grow the produce in front of you is most likely also the person vending it, so if you have questions about growing practices or an item that is new to you, don't be afraid to ask! Most vendors will be pleased to tell you all about their products, including how they are grown, what they taste like, and how best to prepare them.

Let the culinary adventure begin!

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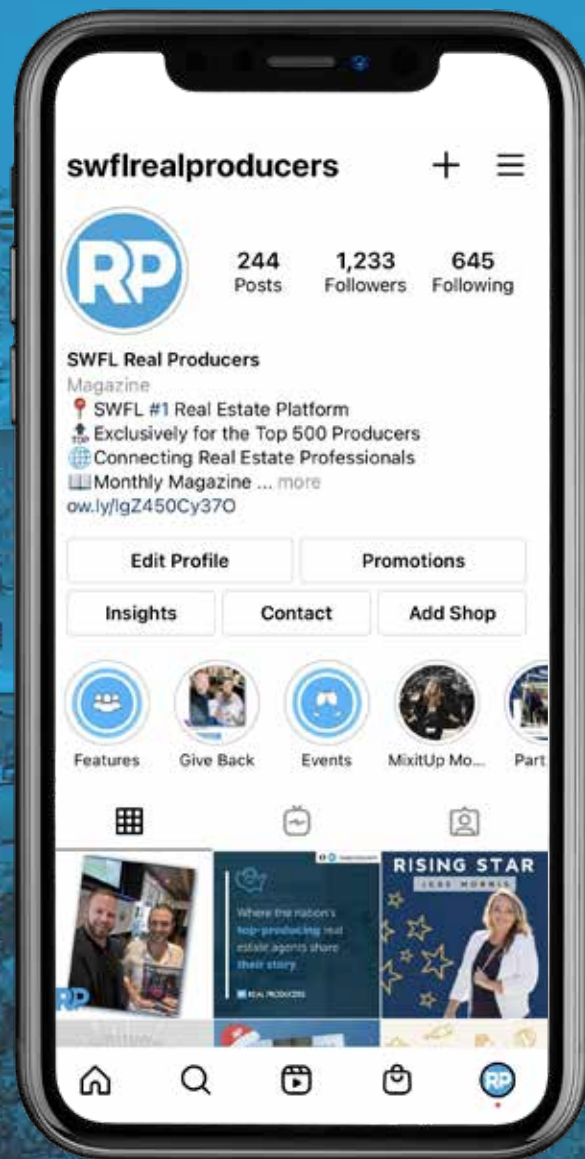
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