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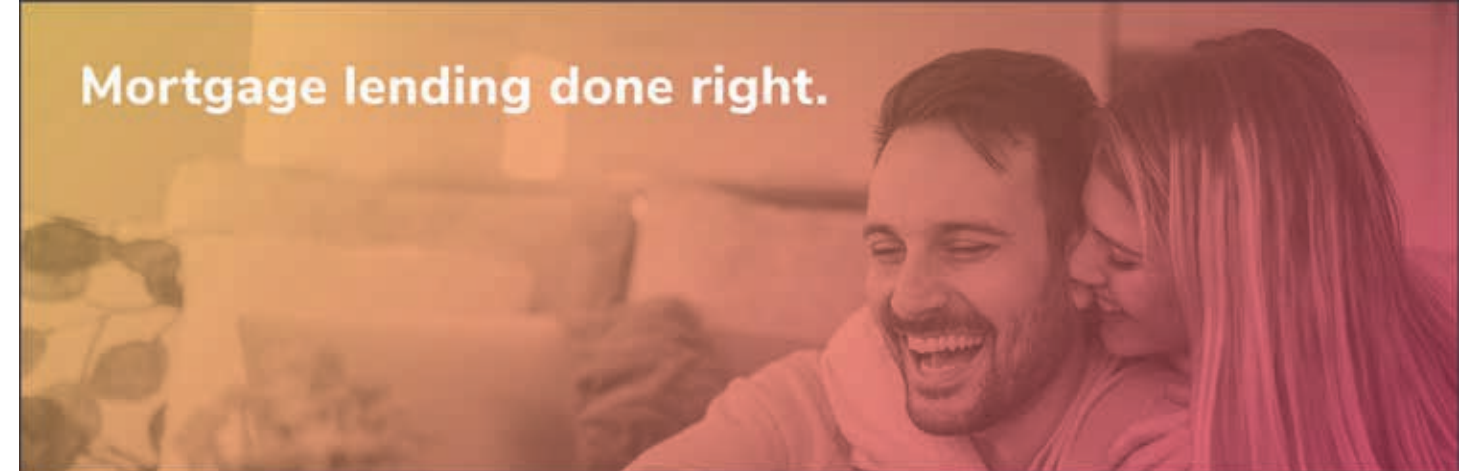
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►► publisher's note

STAY COOL, SCOTTSDALE

OK, the heat is on! I hope everyone is keeping cool. Speaking of keeping cool, by the time you're reading this, you are hopefully aware of our big quarterly event. As I'm writing this in early July, I'm still working out details for the next event. But I promise you there will be air conditioning and a cold beverage of your choice waiting for you at our next event.

Now more than ever with a shifting market is the time for real estate professionals to meet and discuss market trends. The lending market is changing, and rates are adjusting. At our next event, we will have several lenders on standby to address changes in that industry.

Meet your peers and discuss your upcoming projects and market trends with the people you respect more than anyone: Your fellow agents who work in Scottsdale, just like you. I'm always impressed at our events just how much information is passed and how business gets done at our events.

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Scottsdale's Secret Agent



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DAVID JOHNSON

» feature story

David Johnson is a man concerned with intentionality. He wants to make significant connections and spend meaningful time with his family.

“It sounds cliché, but to me, it’s always more important to be remembered for who I am than necessarily for what I accomplished.” After talking to David for nearly an hour, it’s staggering how much he’s done in his life. “My kids say this all the time: ‘Dad, what haven’t you done?’” Before real estate, he held an important and revered job. “I’m a pre-law, political science major by trade,” which he originally wanted to use to get into the FBI, “but that didn’t work out, so I spent the first 10 years of my life as a Secret Service agent.”

THE AGENT LIFE

He didn’t expect a lot growing up in a blue-collar family in Florida, but that all changed. “I had an incredible experience as an agent,” he says. “I’ve been to every continent besides Antarctica and Australia and protected every president besides Carter and Reagan.” From his early 20s to his early 30s, David traveled the world as an agent and gained an invaluable perspective on life.

David was stationed at the Miami Field Office, but when asked to relocate to the D.C. area, he knew it was time to move on. “Different opportunities were knocking on my door,” he says. On top of that, he had young kids, and the Secret Service life wasn’t conducive to being a family man. “I was stationed out of Miami, but I traveled about 200 days a year. I missed three of my son’s first five birthdays; every Thanksgiving and Christmas would be toast,” he says. “It was pretty hard on family life.”

MOVING ON

Presented with the opportunity, he chose to transition to the next stage in life. “My wife and I started businesses in direct-to-consumer spaces,” developing a variety of companies globally for 15 to 18 years. From there, David crossed off a bucket list item: Owning a horse ranch. His family lived on the Colorado ranch for about seven years before moving to Scottsdale in 2019, where his wife’s family is based.

Having always been interested in real estate but not having the time to fully commit, he saw this move as a new beginning. David’s love of real estate runs deep, starting with his formative years when he watched his dad work as a general contractor. Over the years, he’s dabbled with personal investments and sold the horse ranch in Colorado. “All of those are precursors to really understand this side of the business is very transactional, but it’s also very personal.” While David enjoys the business side of real estate, it’s the human element that he connects with.

THE HUMAN SIDE

“I like to say I have a Ph.D. in human relationships.” David thinks back on his long professional life: “There’s not a conversation I haven’t had. Nobody is going to say something that’ll leave me

scratching my head.” His vast experience comes in handy when it comes to this business. He knows how to deal with complicated situations and, because of his expertise, he’s able to navigate and negotiate through potential issues so his clients can feel good about the outcome of a sale.

“I find that providing quality expertise in a transactional type of business environment is key,” he says of his approach. “My clients love it. Most of them become family; I stay connected with them long after our transaction is done. A lot of them, we hang out with as families.”

During this phase of his life, especially after having lived such a comprehensive first season, we had to know: What makes real estate an engaging and exciting industry? “Every day is different,” David says. “I’m definitely not the ‘every day needs to be the same 9-to-5’ kind of guy. I love that every deal is different. Every personality is different. Every need is different. It takes a good bit of thought on your approach to every client, transaction, business deal. That keeps me focused about what I like to do.”

What does the future hold? “From a personal standpoint, I see more grandkids, watching my kids grow up. Easing into both of those seasons as a dad and a grandfather is certainly important to me. On the professional side, I think at my stage of life, I’m not going to say anything cheesy like I want to be the No. 1 real estate agent. No, that’s not what I’m here for. We want to continue to grow the business each year and impact the most people that we can.” He’s far more concerned about building the relationships around him as opposed to garnering praise. “You can get lost in the accolades,” he says, “and as you get older, you start to see what really truly matters is people remember the person you were.”




“My clients love it. Most of them become family; I stay connected with them long after our transaction is done. A lot of them, we hang out with as families.”



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BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY

JASON PAYNE — Building a better community

“I love where I live. Gilbert and Phoenix have a huge, booming economy. I love the family culture here,” Jason Payne says of his hometown.

He makes a positive impact in his community with State 48 Roofing, a company concerned with taking back the narrative. “My goal is to change the industry in the positive.” During the past 21 out of 25 years, the roofing industry has been the No. 1 ROC complaint. According to Jason, from the quality to the customer service, it has an extremely bad reputation, but he takes this as a challenge and intends to show people a better alternative.

■ HIS OTHER MISSION

“I went on a mission for my church to Mexico City for two years,” he says. “It was a proselytizing mission.”

When asked about the day-to-day duties of the LDS mission, he told me it came down to finding people who wanted to be closer to God. “You do your scripture reading, prayer and training in the morning. Then most of the day, you’re out knocking on doors, visiting members, non-members; visiting prospects, people who are interested in the church.”

Where does this fit into roofing? From this experience, Jason picked up Spanish as a second language. About a year after he came back, his cousin offered him a job. Jason, not knowing anything about roofing, raised his concerns. “He’s like, ‘Not a problem. You’ll learn how to run crews, but you don’t need to know how to do roofing. You just need to manage a crew and speak Spanish to them.’ And so, Jason found himself on a new path.

■ BRANCHING OUT

In his first five years, he learned everything he needed to know about the roofing process. From there, he moved into a sales and general manager role, gaining an understanding for the other side of the business. Then, in August of 2019, he decided to take a leap of faith and start his own company.

Opening right before a pandemic — albeit not one we were aware of — seems like a tenuous beginning, but when asked if it negatively affected his business, Jason was quick to shut down any such assumptions. “No,” he says. “Two reasons: Number one, I don’t let the government, or the pandemic, decide or dictate the outcome of my future. That’s more of a mental mindset for me. Number two, I was blessed enough to be essential,” he explains. “When the pandemic hit, I still had record-setting years.”

A big part of his booming business is the branding. “We have what is called a #SexyRoofStatus guarantee. It’s a hashtag that’s on all my advertising.” The Sexy Roof Status is a symbol, showing everyone who did the work and, by extension, the quality of the work done. “We don’t just put on a

roof. We give you a Sexy Roof Status experience from the second you call us ‘til the second we get a five-star review.”

State 48 Roofing goes beyond a quirky and fun slogan, though. “The difference between us and the other guys is that we’re a fully developed, fully established team.” It’s not a little business run by just Jason and a few other people. No, he has the team and the expertise to grow, scale and support any job at any time.

■ TAKING IT A STEP FURTHER

On his hunt for success, he decided to become a student of business.

“I started studying and learning, watching YouTube videos and reading books. Before, I was just winging it,” he says. “Once you become a scholar of the game, that’s when it gets fun. That’s when things started to change for me.”

He looked at business holistically, understanding it goes beyond getting in the trenches and simply doing your thing.



●●● “I’m not reinventing the wheel, right? I’m doing everything in my power to make sure that I am following the greats and learning from the best. I’m studying successful companies — the multi-million-dollar franchises. What they’re doing, the systems they implement, the culture they have and how they treat their employees.”

This is where he’s able to take what works and leave behind what doesn’t, and clearly, it’s effective.



■ THE MAN UNDER THE ROOF

When he’s not on the job, Jason spends his free time with his wife and five kids. It’s obvious they’re his driving factor to success. “My family is my hobby. We’re very outdoorsy — we do anything if it’s outside, whether that’s camping or going to the beach.”

They play a major role in his future too. “Personally, I want to create awesome experiences with my kids for the next 30, 40 years. Professionally, I plan on building this company, serving the community and building a legacy.”

Only time will tell, but based on Jason’s history so far, I’d wager to say this is all going to work out according to plan.



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that’s when it gets fun. That’s when
things started to change for me.

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JASON SHINN

By Ellen Buchanan

“The proper function of man is to live, not to exist. I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them. I shall use my time.” — Jack London

Jason Shinn knows how to maximize his time. By the time he was in his 20s, Jason had already traveled the world and dived headfirst into an industry he knew nothing about that would shape him as a professional and tee him up for success in real estate.

Jason grew up in Sedona, AZ, the son of a custom and spec home builder. From a young age, Jason would help his father in his work. After graduating from high school, he attended college in Flagstaff for construction for two years, thinking he might want to eventually take over the family business. However, Jason had a yearning to broaden his horizons and see a little more of the world.

Always having had an eye for design, Jason was curious about the fashion industry. Without knowing anyone, he drove to Los Angeles and enrolled in the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (FIDM). He would go on to earn three fashion degrees and a bachelor’s in business from FIDM, after which he signed on with Apparel Textile Sourcing, an international trade show producer, working on the supply-chain side of the fashion industry for the next six years.

“It was exciting exploring a new industry,” he recalls. “I was conference director and handled all the marketing and managing of partners for the trade show. We produced the trade shows mainly in

Toronto, Miami, Berlin and Los Angeles. But we went all over — Milan, London, Manila, China, Hong Kong, Paris.”

Jason was learning a lot about sales, marketing, project management and client relations but found himself wanting a change.

“My job wasn’t as dynamic, day to day, as I’d hoped for,” he says, “and I wanted something that would still give me a creative outlet. My interest in homes and building and real estate was piqued again...”

Jason moved back to Arizona, was licensed in late 2019, and went full-time in real estate in January 2020 as an independent agent. A friend introduced him to team lead Blake St. John, who was at Walt Danley Christie’s International Real Estate at the time.

“I’d wanted to join a team for a while but hadn’t found the right team lead,” Jason explains. “I was looking for certain characteristics and a shared vision. The overarching reason I’ve been so successful is because of my attention to character and decision to be around good people. If you have that genuine positive mind-set, you can attract people who share it.”

Jason would join forces with Blake, working with him for a time at Walt Danley before Blake’s St. John International team moved to RETSY.

...



We're going to focus on continuing to do what we do well — continuing to be good agents, spread the word and build relationships.

”

Hanging with my nephew



“I really liked his leadership style,” Jason says. “And we both wanted to create a brand to evolve the status quo in the right direction and build something new that’s attractive and fun, not only for our teammates but also our clients.”

Just two and a half years in the business, Jason’s fledgling career is thriving. He had \$5 million in sales in 2021 and is looking to meet or exceed that in 2022. He is vice partner of his seven-member team and is tasked with helping manage and grow the team.

“I’ve always gravitated toward the human element and the soft skills — the character and integrity and managing of relationships. You can’t really fake genuine caring, and I



Photo by Red Hog Media

genuinely care about my clients and my team,” he says.

Outside real estate, Jason enjoys fitness, hiking, travel, “anything food” and social outings with friends and colleagues.

As he looks to the future, Jason is eager to continue to add value and grow the team, sharing that they have a goal to become the go-to team in North Scottsdale.

“We’re very focused on understanding our clients’ wants and needs and doing our best to facilitate them,” he says.

Long term, Jason wants to get into the development side of real estate, building homes or commercial projects.

“My dad has been a great inspiration and resource since he did the work for 20 years,” he says. “Blake has a keen eye for design, too, and I grew up in it... We’ve since worked with multiple builders for new construction projects and have some remodels under our belt. We will continue to expand on that side of the business. It’s another aspect of this job we are very passionate about.”

From Sedona to Los Angeles and back to Scottsdale to his roots in real estate, Jason

Shinn’s life and career path have truly come full circle. With his natural affinity for people and sharp business acumen, no doubt great things are on the horizon for Jason, even as he emphasizes the key importance of simply mastering the basics.

“We’re going to focus on continuing to do what we do well — continuing to be good agents, spread the word and build relationships.”



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