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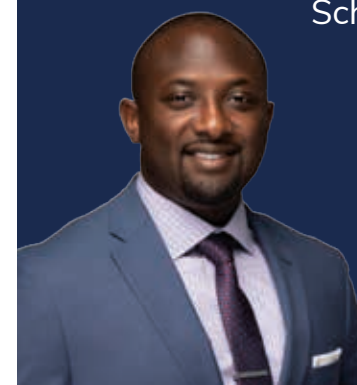
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► publisher's note

'Tis the Season of Joy, Giving, & Connection

Dear Real Producers of Charlotte,

The holidays are upon us, and as the world sparkles with festive lights, it's a time to cherish family, friends, and meaningful connections. It's also a season of giving, a magical time when we come together to share our gratitude and appreciation.

The holidays offer the perfect backdrop for strategic gifting, an opportunity to reflect on our client appreciation efforts. As the year comes to a close, it's a great moment to review your client-gifting strategies. Are you continuing with what's been working, or is it time to shake things up and explore fresh options?

For creative inspiration, consider checking out cutting-edge closing gifts at www.strategicgifting.com. They offer innovative branding and client gifting ideas that can help you stand out and deepen your client relationships.

Living in joy is not just reserved for the holiday season; it's a mindset that we can carry with us throughout the year. Let's remember to infuse joy into our daily lives! Whether it's through acts of kindness, finding joy in the small moments, or sharing a laugh, we can create a life filled with satisfaction and meaning.

We will be celebrating the holidays Real Producers- style at the Cocktails & Candy Canes party on December 6th. What a way to close out 2023 with all of you! Look for the photos from this fun-filled, joyful event in the next issue of *Charlotte Real Producers* and on our social media. Be sure to tag yourself and your friends in the photos!

We're looking forward to seeing all of you again at our next big Charlotte Real Producers event — our "Industry Insights for Top Experts" masterclass on March 19, 2024. We can't wait to see you all again for a powerful, uplifting, and informative event, and to create more memories together!

Happy holidays to you and yours!

With gratitude,



Kristin Brindley

Owner/Publisher
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KRISTIN BRINDLEY
ENTREPRENEUR, CONNECTOR, PUBLISHER

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What new and creative client appreciation ideas could you explore to strengthen your connections in the coming year?



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GET BACK TO THE BASICS

The Solution to your Social Media Struggles

Social media marketing can be one of the most difficult parts of your business. It seems like such a large undertaking and it's hard to know where to start... It's also such a fast-moving industry that we can suffer from what I call "shiny-object syndrome," changing from a new idea or strategy before the one you just started learning starts working.

All of this makes social media uncomfortable for most, and after years of struggling, we end up throwing in the towel in defeat. If this describes your relationship with social media in your business, you're not alone. In fact, you're in the majority. After years of helping people with their social media, I'd like to give you some words of encouragement.

Your industry is also fast-paced and constantly changing. You're having to constantly adapt to new techniques, new technologies, new laws, and new processes. Whenever you find yourself in a rut in your business, what do you do?

You get back to the basics.

Getting back to the basics is generally the best way to find traction and change the direction of your

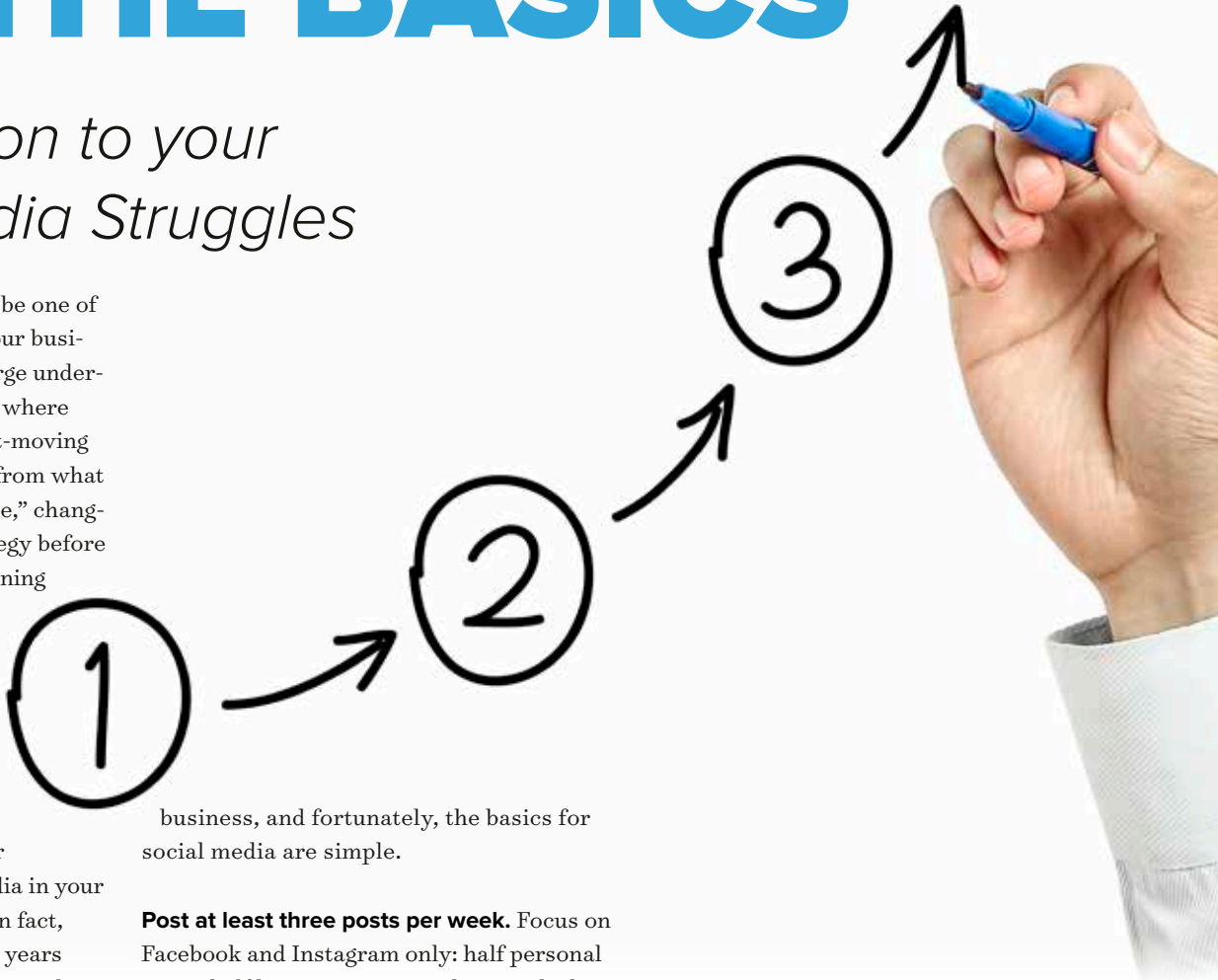
business, and fortunately, the basics for social media are simple.

Post at least three posts per week. Focus on Facebook and Instagram only: half personal posts, half business posts. Video may be best, but it's the most difficult to create, so start with posting pictures, at a minimum.

Scroll your news feed for five minutes per day and engage with your friends' content. If you do this for 12 weeks consistently, I guarantee you'll find positive traction in your social media.

Let me know how it works!

Mike Baker is owner and founder of Your Social Liaison. To learn more, call Mike Baker at (518) 669-1462, email YourSocialLiaison@gmail.com, or visit Facebook.com/YourSocialLiaison.



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DON ELROD

ELROD PORTRAITS

Capturing Life's Moments

Meet Don Elrod, the man behind Elrod Portraits, a photography studio that's more than just a studio — it's a window into the world of lifestyle photography, branding, and unforgettable moments.

In the Blink of a Shutter

In 2001, Don took a leap of faith, venturing into the world of photography as a backup plan. Little did he know, this decision would shape his life in ways he never imagined. His career began by capturing the magic of weddings part-time, all while he continued working in the retail drug industry.

"This career kind of chose me," Don says. "Photography was something I started as a fall-back job. I was working in the

retail drug industry for 23 years and was going through reorganization, and I felt the need to have a backup."

Fast forward to today, Don has been in the photography business full-time for the past four years, and he's been doing it with style. His company, Elrod Portraits, specializes in lifestyle photos, company branding, headshots, and event/conference photography.

"One of the largest assets we have is for event headshots. We can deliver the headshots to each individual almost instantly," Don says with a touch of pride. "This offers top-producing REALTORS® a crucial edge in today's fast-paced world."

A Thoughtful Mindset

Don’s work isn’t just about photography; it’s about people. He’s passionate about meeting different individuals and learning about their businesses, interests, and what makes them successful. Don’s keen interest in the tools they use and the passion that drives them is what makes him a standout professional.

Don sees his business as an extension of his clients’ teams and brands. He understands that appearance is everything, so he’s committed to their success, not just capturing moments in time.

“If my clients don’t look good, we don’t look good,” Don affirms.

Life Beyond the Lens

Outside of work, Don’s life revolves around his family. He’s a dedicated husband to Melissa and a father to three amazing children: Evan, David, and Savannah. Their shared love for playing games and exploring new places binds them together.

Don reflects on their adventures, saying, “My son, David, and I backpack the Great Smoky Mountains. There are over 900 miles of trails in the Great Smokies and there’s a ‘900 Miler Club.’ We have about 400 miles completed, so we are almost halfway to getting our certificates.”

Don’s dedication extends beyond his family and business. He’s a firm believer in Tony Robbins’ quote, “constant and never-ending improvement,” a philosophy that motivates him to give



Don Elrod is the owner of Elrod Portraits and the lead photographer for *Charlotte Real Producers* magazine.



Don and his son, David, have hiked over 400 of the 900 miles of trails in the Greak Smoky Mountains.



Don and his daughter, Savannah, at Arches National Park in Utah.



Don's family loves exploring new places together.



The Elrod family (from left to right: Savannah, Melissa, Don, David; not pictured: Evan)

back. He’s a regular attendee at the Imaging USA photographers conference, where he stays updated on the latest industry trends, always striving to be better.

As he looks to the future, Don anticipates his youngest child graduating from high school, marking the beginning of a new chapter as empty nesters. Professionally, he’s committed to ongoing learning and skill development and staying ahead of the curve to better serve his clients while continuing to exceed their expectations.

“I am very conscientious about doing what I say I’m going to do, whether it’s being on time, meeting a delivery deadline, etc.,” Don concludes. “If I’m going to be five minutes late, you’ll get a text from me stating that fact. My credibility and name, at the end of the day, are all that I have.”



If you’re looking for a photography partner who’s not just about the photos but about the success of your business, Don Elrod is your man. Visit his website at www.elrodportraits.com to learn more.





▶ rising star
Photos by Don Elrod

JULIE NGUYEN

A Rising Star in the Queen City

Julie Nguyen has carved a remarkable niche in the Queen City's housing market simply by being herself.

"I have always loved Charlotte real estate and seeing what was on the market... My transition to real estate was not just a career change; it was a calling," Julie shares.

A TRUE NATIVE

Julie's roots run deep in Charlotte. Born and raised in the city, she embodies the spirit of her hometown.

"After completing my nursing degree at Queens University in Charlotte, I worked as a Level 1 trauma emergency room nurse for seven years," Julie explains. "I felt a

lot of satisfaction and enjoyment from working in the emergency room, but the burnout was real, and I got to a point where I just needed a break."

So why real estate? For Julie, it was a natural progression. Her passion for Charlotte's real estate market, coupled with her innate desire to guide and comfort people, made real estate the perfect fit.

"I still have the opportunity to provide comfort and help clients with one of the largest decisions of their life," she smiles.

ON THE MOVE

Since stepping into the world of real estate in 2018, Julie's star has been on a meteoric rise.

"It truly feels like I am walking in my purpose as an agent," she affirms.



In 2022 alone, Julie achieved a remarkable sales volume of over \$15.5 million with 27 transactions under her belt. Her clients span the spectrum, from sellers who entrust her to secure top dollar for their homes to buyers seeking the perfect place to call their own.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Julie’s success in real estate doesn’t rest solely on her intimate knowledge of Charlotte’s communities. It’s her ability to communicate with transparency that sets her apart. Her accessibility, trustworthiness, and dedication have forged a bond with her clients that extends well beyond the closing table.

“I love being a part of my clients’ journeys and creating a special bond by getting to know them on an intimate level,” Julie notes.

BEYOND WORK

Julie’s family, including her husband Daniel, who shares her love for Charlotte, and their upcoming addition, a baby girl due in February, form the nucleus of her life. Her love for Charlotte’s local boutiques and her penchant for tennis and walks with her beloved dachshund/Yorkie mix, Winnie, keep her grounded in the city she calls home.



Julie and Winnie



Rising Star Julie Nguyen is a Realtor with Yancey Realty.

“ I LOVE BEING A PART OF MY CLIENTS' JOURNEYS and creating a special bond by getting to know them on an intimate level.

“We also enjoy cooking dinner together or venturing out into the South End and trying out the ever-evolving restaurant scene,” Julie adds. “Daniel is definitely a huge help to me in networking and marketing my business, and I am very lucky to have such a supportive partner.”

Julie and her sister are also passionate animal activists with plenty of ambitions on their local agenda.

“I created Daisy Bean Dog Rescue, a 501(c)(3), with my sister, Rachel,” Julie explains. “We started this animal rescue last year and have big plans to get involved with our local legislation and work on policies around shelter animals and their well-being. We both have

such a passion for animals, and this seemed like the perfect way to exercise our passion while helping the animals in our city.”

As she looks toward the future, Julie says her plan is to keep growing her business and network to become “the first person someone thinks of when they think of Charlotte real estate.”

While her star continues to rise, Julie’s message to aspiring top producers is clear: don’t let imposter syndrome or comparisons hold you back.

“There is room for many successful agents in this industry, and you can offer value to your sphere that no one else can,” she encourages. “Believe in yourself and your abilities.”

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LISA MCCROSSAN

Living and Breathing Real Estate

Lisa McCrossan has been selling homes since she was 9 years old. Not really, but she did sell her first house at that age... She was a Bluebird, similar to a Girl Scout, and was selling candy when she and a friend went into a model home in Palo Alto, California, and she fell in love with the house. She couldn't wait to get back home and tell her parents and brother about this beautiful, must-see home. Lisa convinced her parents to go see it and they bought the house! Little did she know then that selling homes full-time was in her future.

Lisa is passionate about luxury real estate. Her journey in the world of high-end properties began when her company, Ivester Jackson, partnered with Christie's International over a decade ago, solidifying their presence in the luxury real estate market in the Charlotte and Lake Norman areas.

Growing up in Palo Alto, California, Lisa dreamt of a career in television, specifically as a national news

anchor on *The Today Show*. She came close, anchoring the news for 10 years in various cities and ended up at WOWK-TV in Huntington, West Virginia, anchoring the morning and noon news. Instead of making her way to NBC Studios in New York City, Lisa met and married her first husband, moved to Charlotte, and became a stay-at-home mom to three children.

She also explored her love for yoga, working the front desk at a yoga





“We feel like we live at a resort and are very grateful to be here (except I’m often a golf widow). Plus, the location is amazing!”

Photos by Don Elrod



ON THE COURSE

Lisa McCrossen lives and sells in Longview Country Club, a special community with a Jack Nicklaus golf course and clubhouse.



Lisa and Ty McCrossen's family

studio while earning her instructor certification. She later opened Pretty Postures, teaching yoga and the benefits of breathing as a stress relief to students of all ages.

After marrying her current husband, Ty, in 2011, Lisa's desire for a more fulfilling professional path led to exploring and studying real estate. With encouragement from her husband, she hit the ground running in the luxury housing industry in 2015. Her first deal was a buy side for \$1.4 million, and her career has taken off ever since.

“I really feel like I found my calling,” she says. “The luxury space came natural to me. I absolutely love what I do and have been blessed with a successful career.”

Going Above and Beyond

Lisa's ability to connect with her clients and make each one her top priority is the cornerstone of her business. Beyond buying and selling properties, she thrives on collaborating with other agents and connecting her clients with various professionals involved in the real estate process — inspectors, painters, architects, and other vendors are all

important in her business. Her goal is to work together to achieve the best outcome for both the seller and the buyer.

Lisa is known to go beyond the call of duty in her client relationships. She has worn a beekeeper's suit to help move bees out of an attic, cleaned up pet waste before showings, and traveled long distances to personally show listings to potential buyers. She is committed to ensuring that her clients feel like they are her sole focus, providing a level of personalized service that sets her apart.

“Connection is what really drives me — connecting with people, making connections, and having my clients feel like they are the only client that I have at the time,” she says. “A real estate deal is such an emotional transaction for everyone involved... The human touch is so important in the process.”

THE NEXT CHAPTER

Lisa is the proud mother of three children. Wil, 20, is a junior at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill (UNC); Grace, 19, is a sophomore at UNC; and Nathan, 18, is a senior at Weddington High School. Game nights are frequent and competitive for the

family, especially when it comes to Scrabble or other word games. They also enjoy hiking, traveling and hanging out with furry family members Philly, a 9-year-old golden retriever, and Frankie, a 7-year-old dachshund.

A lifelong learner, Lisa is always seeking ways to evolve and improve personally and professionally. She enjoys listening to podcasts, is an avid reader, and says she learns something new in each real estate transaction.

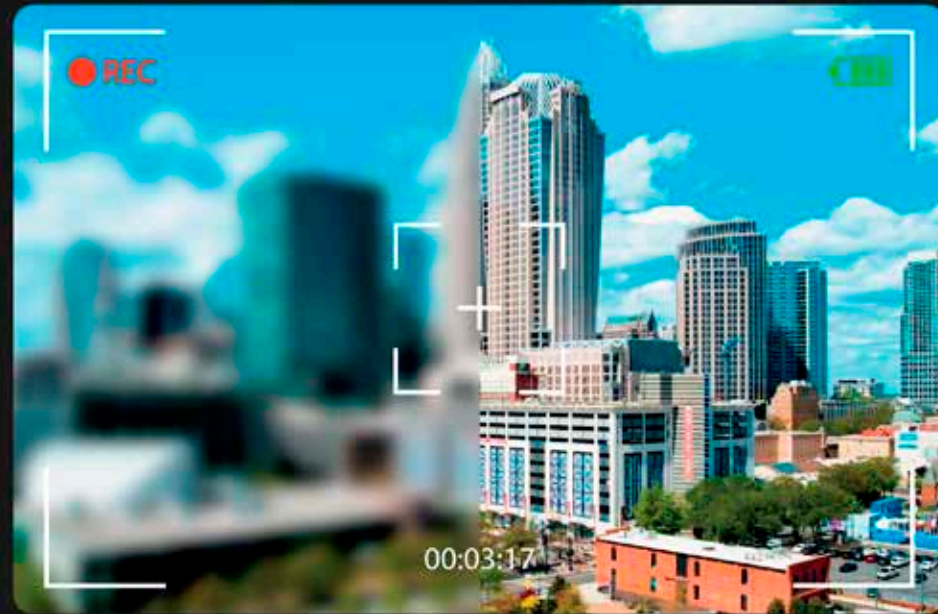
“I am a curious person. I ask a lot of questions,” Lisa says. “That's what made me a good reporter. I also love being introspective and figuring out how I can do something better the next time.”

Lisa and Ty will soon be empty nesters, and while this new phase makes her a little sad, Lisa hopes to use it as a time to double her business in 2024 and possibly create a team to join with her and her assistant, Ashlin Livesey. Her outlook for the future of real estate in Charlotte remains optimistic.

“We've got a great airport and a pretty good infrastructure, in terms of our highways and getting around town,” she notes. A lot of people are moving here ... and I think people will continue to see equity grow in their homes. Charlotte is the place to be!”



Photo by Don Elrod



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