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MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Brittany Shaw

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: Absolute Stone Design

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If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email us at jeff.white@realproducersmag.com

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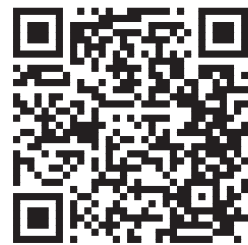


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POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

» publisher's note

This year at *Chattanooga Real Producers*, our theme is POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS, and I am on a mission to discover and learn why individuals choose to partner together in business. As we all know, real estate is a very interdependent industry. In any given transaction, there are countless stakeholders involved: lender, home inspector, closing attorney, title company, termite inspector, not to mention a whole host of potential trade vendors such as roofers, flooring, HVAC, carpet cleaners, etc.

So here is a genuine question: What makes you want to do business with an affiliate vendor? What makes you continue to do business with them? Knowing affiliate vendors

are an important and necessary part of your business, how do you want to be approached by a vendor who feels they have something to offer to you and your success?

Part of our mission at *Real Producers* is to CONNECT top REALTORS® with top BUSINESSES. My guess is most top REALTORS® understand the symbiotic nature of our business and are open to building new relationships that will result in powerful partnerships. I would love to hear your thoughts! We love hearing from you! Email me at jeff.white@realproducersmag.com.

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MEET ABSOLUTE STONE DESIGN

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Over the past few years, as the market has hit a peak, there has been a high demand for skilled labor.

No matter what the job is, quality work is always sought after, and even more so when it includes great customer service. 15 years ago in Virginia, Val Ribeiro started a company to provide an exceptional experience in the stone industry. Since then, Absolute Stone Design has become one of the largest sources for top-quality stone work in Virginia.

Before he founded Absolute Stone Design, Val worked in Brazil in the stone business. He spent several years learning the industry before moving to Southern Europe to play soccer. During his time playing, he learned several languages, as well as

how to work as part of a team and cooperate towards a common goal. When he moved to Boston, MA, he married his wife, Rose, and has since raised three children. He decided to take advantage of the opportunity to found his own company and provide

a new standard for the stone industry. He moved to Richmond, VA, and founded Absolute Stone Design in 2007. Over the next 15 years, he would grow and expand his vision for a unique customer experience.



Once Val founded his business, his reputation and quality of work quickly spread. He grew from doing just one or two kitchens a week to doing three to four in a single day by the next year. He grew into bigger spaces, hired more employees and staff, and continued to expand his brand. His son Chris has also joined the family business and helps his father continue to build and improve the reputation of the company. Due to their hard work and commitment to excellence, the company has recently expanded by opening a new showroom in Virginia. They have expanded to Chattanooga in the last couple of years, pursuing the opportunity the local market has provided.

When you walk into their local store, you will meet several friendly and professional staff. Located on Cowart Street, the Chattanooga location is owned by Val, along with partners Carlos Preciado, Carlos Alberto and Edwin Sepulveda.

Wilson Pabon is the local manager, with fantastic representation from Kamila Bispo as the marketing and sales manager. You will also meet Lesly and Michael, the sales and customer service team. They opened in June of 2020 and look forward to continue serving the local community, building trust with local homeowners and businesses.

Having opened their Chattanooga location only two years ago, they have already grown a great reputation. They are continuing their standards of excellence in serving the community and other businesses. By utilizing technology and great customer service, they provide a memorable and convenient experience to customers. They make it easy for customers to make decisions as they are guided through the process by expert advice. Once the customer is happy with their selection, the team handles the whole process in-house from start to finish. They source, cut, polish and

•••

install all with their own qualified and professional staff, ensuring a stress-free and quality process.

While their goal is to help their customers pick something they will love, they want to build strong, trusting relationships as well. With so many options, deciding on the look, materials and cost for any home renovation process can be stressful. Absolute Stone Design offers customers the chance to relax and enjoy the process, knowing they have experts to advise and guide them. They care about the people they serve and treat them as family, making sure they are doing the best they can for each and every person they work with. They ensure their customers feel understood

and build relationships beyond business. Strong communication during the entire process gives customers peace of mind during their renovations and builds.

Absolute Stone Design has built quality relationships with builders and contractors as well. Aside from serving members of the community in their personal renovations, they also serve local builders, contractors, and are fabricators with 16 local Lowe's and Cabinets to Go locations in Tennessee and north Georgia. By serving a wide array of customers, they have gained a wealth of experience in how to handle a multitude of jobs in both size and scope. This experience allows them to serve anyone in need of quality stone work.

At the end of the day, the team behind Absolute Stone Design wants to provide a special



experience. By providing the utmost in quality, service and craftsmanship there is to offer, they want every customer to walk away with a selection for their home that they will love and appreciate forever. Guiding customers to a decision they are excited about, treating them with respect and delivering on their promises has afforded them a fantastic reputation in Virginia, and they continue that trend here locally in Chattanooga. If you are looking for a great experience for your next remodel, give them a chance to show you what they can do.



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Behind every real producer is a strong leader. Excellent managing brokers, owners and leaders are something worth celebrating! We love to highlight the human behind the brokerage and give a glimpse into what makes these industry titans tick. Love your broker? Nominate them today!

TOP PRODUCER

Every cover of *Chattanooga Real Producers* features a top 50 agent. Despite what you might think, that local legend REALTOR® you're thinking of right now is a *real human being* with quirks, hobbies and even mistakes. She may be a household name, but have you ever seen her house? Did you know he has 17 cats? You get the picture. We love getting to know our top performers ... nominate one now!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Many real estate agents know the importance of giving back, and we celebrate that! Our "Making a Difference" column spreads awareness for great nonprofit organizations and good causes. If you are involved with a nonprofit or philanthropic cause (volunteer, founders, etc.), share yours today!

MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

REALTORS® face a unique set of challenges from month to month, day to day and even minute to minute! A lot rides on your shoulders, so it's important to take your mental health seriously. Press pause with us for a moment and maybe even learn something about yourself you didn't realize before. If there is a specific struggle, topic or trigger you'd like to see discussed in an upcoming article, please reach out!

FUNNY STORIES

Everyone knows there are some funny, bizarre and/or downright crazy situations that happen in your life as a real estate professional! This column is your chance to share those funny stories with other agents so we can all be in on the joke. Email a brief story to see it in a future issue!

AND MORE!

As we grow, we will be able to do more types of content, so we are *always* open to input and feedback from you! Please do not hesitate to speak up!

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Meet Lisa Kimsey

SERVING ABOVE ALL ELSE

Many successful people will agree that what you focus on expands. This is true regardless of the industry or arena you focus in. From sports to business, music to education, the more effort you spend on something, the more it will grow. For Lisa, her focus is 100% on her clients. She isn't in real estate for money or recognition. What she really wants from her career is to be a part of a community and build her own. She loves people and is driven by new ways to serve and support them. Every client she deals with becomes a part of her growing community, and that is where she derives her happiness.

Born and raised in Columbia, SC, Lisa married her husband, Joshua, in 2007. During Joshua's military service, they lived in the United Kingdom, where they had their daughter in 2008. She fell in love with real estate while living in an area with different styles of houses and architecture. When they moved back to the U.S. in 2011, they decided they wanted to raise their family in Chattanooga. After living in Soddy Daisy for eight years, they moved to Signal Mountain, and Lisa continued her journey into real estate.

When they bought their current house, Lisa decided to spend time renovating. She started in 2020 and spent the next year doing DIY projects, learning along the way. However much she enjoyed beautifying her home, she was missing something important: community. Her previous work as an accomplished embroidery

service no longer gave her what she wanted. She wanted to get involved in some meaningful ways in her community and, in turn, serve others through her talents and her time. Since real estate gave her that opportunity, she committed to the career and received her license in late May 2021.

In just over 18 months, Lisa has already proven her aptitude and passion for real estate. Almost at \$5 million in volume, she is quickly growing her business. However, more than real estate, the reason she has achieved success so quickly is because of her desire to serve above all else. "I feel more fulfilled as a person when I am doing for others," she says. While she enjoys real estate, what it really offers her is the ability to have an impact in people's lives, and that is what ultimately drives her.

"Lisa is extremely caring, considerate, and goes beyond her duties and expected responsibilities." Having a servant's heart is a guiding principle in her business. She confidently states, "You do what you feel called to do, and you expect nothing in return for it." She is wholly committed to the opportunity to love on her clients, colleagues, partners, friends and family. Unsurprisingly, most of her clients become friends or family to her through her transactions. In a culture that questions kindness and selfless acts for ulterior motives or subversive intentions, Lisa is true to herself and her beliefs:

•••



▶▶ rising star
By Anders Clarke
Photos by Carson Andrew

•••
Treat others how you would want to be treated.

While she brings the same energy and attitude to each client, Lisa is always attentive to her clients' specific needs. Agents know every transaction is different because every client is different, not to mention the property. Even though her heart never changes, her approach does. Depending on the personality and needs of each client, Lisa is sure to adjust her communication and method to ensure they feel confident and secure in their partnership with her. She loves to work with buyers because it gives her even more time to spend on each person she helps, building understanding and trust at an even greater level. However, problems always come up, and Lisa has proven she is up to the task.

So often people who are nice will shy away from confrontation or potential conflict. But Lisa understands that it's part of the process, and it stems from some deeper issues. Just like she teaches her daughter, she is confident in the face of adversity and will stand up for herself or her clients when it's necessary. Not one to resort to pettiness or squabbling, Lisa keys into the nuance of tricky interpersonal problems and works at finding a solution where everyone wins. She can be tough when she needs to be and is not one to shy away from bullies or intimidation tactics. Her husband admits she can be scary when she fights for doing what's right. Fighting on behalf of people she cares about, for the things that matter, gives her a unique power that most 'nice' people often lack and provides a well-rounded advocate in real estate and in life.

As she approaches her two-year anniversary in the business, Lisa is excited about the growth and possibility of the future. Her community continues to grow, as do the opportunities to love on those around her. She has

received numerous remarks that she does real estate "differently," in that she truly hones in on each and every client, building the best relationship she can. "I feel rich in friendships from real estate," she says, and grows richer every day.

Her goal is to help others the best she can and build something special along the way. "I am using real estate to build that trust, community and relationships all at the same time," she states. When she first got into real estate, she talked to a friend who was excited for her but made a serious request: Don't

let the business change who you are. It's safe to say that Lisa is staying true to herself, her clients and her beliefs. I look forward to watching her build and improve on her rock-solid foundation.

Outside of real estate, Lisa makes sure her family and friends get plenty of love too. She loves to travel to visit friends in North Carolina or just hang out and relax with her family at home. She continues to work on home projects as well, always finding things to improve or beautify in her home. By surrounding herself with things that bring her peace, she is in turn able to bring peace to her clients.

“
I am using real estate to build that trust, community and relationships all at the same time.
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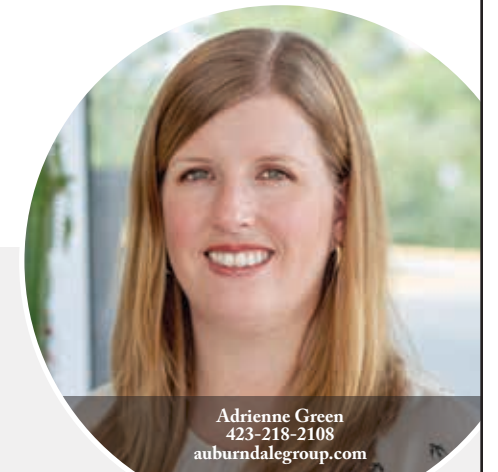
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Crafting Thoughtful Customer Experiences

By Anders Clarke

We don't always choose our careers. After talking to many top producers, a sizeable percentage didn't even consider real estate but instead found themselves pulled into it or taking a leap. In fact, many times in life, the map we make and the trail we find ourselves on are rarely the same. For Brittany, even though she grew up in real estate, she spent plenty of time working in the media and marketing industries.

Her real estate career started in earnest in 2005, shortly after graduating high school. Growing up around her grandmother, Hazel Roberson, she had a superb role model in the industry. She joined Century 21 Roberson Realty, where she spent the next 12 years, during which she also got her broker license in 2008. During that time, she ended up working in journalism, marketing, fitness and other media jobs alongside real estate before joining Pratt Homes in 2017.

When she found her current home at Pratt Home Builders, she says she finally felt like she found a niche she truly enjoyed, surrounded by others who enjoyed it too. Now closing in on her sixth anniversary in April working as part of the sales and marketing department for Pratt, she loves what she does and the freedom it gives her to have an impact on others. Having built a strong resume, the value she could provide to the prominent builder was clear. She has spent the last several years helping Pratt improve their marketing and sales, especially in the digital space, and is involved in between 60-70% of the annual sales at Pratt.

In her time at Pratt, Brittany has assisted in improving the digital presence of the brand, allowing them to help even more people. When she joined, Pratt was doing no online sales, and now is sitting at about 90%. One of her main withholdings in real estate was the apparent "lack of process." Now much of her time is spent learning what works and improving the sales process, including the ease of access and simplicity for customers. Along with her mentor,



Pratt VP Sales and Broker, Bill Panebianco, she ultimately works to help provide the simplest and most comfortable process possible for everyone who works with them. Getting customers in a new home is always rewarding, but making the process a breeze makes it even better.

Her work allows her to be an intimate part of the community. As a REALTOR®, you get to help people move into neighborhoods, cities and communities they are excited to be a part of. And as a builder, you take it one step further by creating those communities. One of her favorite parts is naming the developments, coming up with street names and themes which often included a nod to Chattanooga's plants, trees, and wildlife, and getting great feedback from appreciative customers.

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*Honesty should be the cornerstone
for everything we do.*
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Her work allows her the opportunity to craft a unique experience for their future buyers. “I love real estate marketing, real estate development, and the whole process and challenge of creating really special, interesting, intentional communities,” she says. Brittany not only uses her career to give back, but also stays involved with several area nonprofits.

One of the causes that holds a special place in her heart is The Kidney Foundation of Greater Chattanooga. Due to its impact in her life and the opportunity to spread awareness about prevention, she stays involved in fundraising and volunteering opportunities. She is always open to giving back. For this organization, she has been involved in a Dare to Dance event for fundraising, competing in 2020 and again in 2022 as part of the All-Star 15-Year Anniversary Cast. Due to her involvement, and the support from Pratt Homes, she was able to raise money for local kidney patients. She is now a pro for North Georgia Dancing Stars for primary health centers as well.

She also takes part in several other local community projects. She is a part of the YMCA board of directors, where she is able to influence and brainstorm future projects. She says she’s “very excited to execute my many ideas for making the YMCA a community hub that supports mind, body and emotional well-being.” She and her team at Pratt are also involved in many Habitat builds. She has also helped market the Startup Week CHA and co-founded APEX for Tech Entrepreneurs, helping to bring a local entrepreneurial favorite to fruition. For her own community at Pratt, she is helping with a 12-week challenge with Nutrition World, encouraging her team to increase their own health and fitness.

Raised by great leaders, Brittany works hard to continue the trend and lead by example. She encourages and helps many in the community through her work, her volunteering, and her passion for thoughtfulness and big picture thinking. She says Bill Panebianco with Pratt Homes has been a consistent mentor in her growth and the development of her skillset with Pratt. He has worked closely with her over the years and shared his wealth of experience. Just like Bill, she holds herself to a high standard and is always working to get better. “Honesty should be the cornerstone for everything we do,” she says. Whether she is working with customers, colleagues or fellow volunteers, she always strives to move the needle in the right direction. “Mr. James Pratt has also been an inspiration and mentor with the level of detail he puts into coming up with communities. That’s what I always wanted to do, and he’s one of few people in Greater Chattanooga I’ve found who shares my passion for a really special community living experience.” Brittany said.

Due to her many interests, Brittany has plenty to keep her busy outside her work hours. She loves to enjoy the natural beauty of Chattanooga and has a penchant for water-based activities, like paddleboarding or boating. She loves nature photography and writing and is a fitness and yoga instructor on occasion. She loves to travel and has learned to play her 15th instrument, the violin, over the past couple of years. Giving herself time to enjoy personal pursuits affords her focus and intentionality when she works. She loves what she does and will likely be helping guide Pratt Homes for many years to come.





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▶ catchin' up with tony britton

HOW ONE CONNECTION CAN CHANGE **EVERYTHING**

In our very first edition of *Chattanooga Real Producers* in September 2020, we did a feature on a Rising Star named Tony Britton, with The Edrington Team/Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices J Douglas Properties. We thought it would be fun to catch up with this amazing real estate professional, and we are so grateful we did! A short five years ago, Tony was teaching school and only beginning to consider a career in real estate. Today, he is producing among the top 2% in the greater Chattanooga area.

As part of The Edrington Team, he is grateful to his teammates, a great lead generation system and a great brand behind him. According to Tony, he loves being a part of something bigger than himself, and the structure of the team allows him to focus on helping as many people as possible. "I am honored and humbled to be a part of a team that has led Chattanooga in the number of homes sold for the past four years." The team focuses on making lifelong clients as their motto states, "We want to be your forever REALTOR®!"

When Tony first entered into the real estate field, he was a bit unsure how he would be received. "One of my limiting beliefs was that I could succeed as an African American in Chattanooga." Tony goes on to clarify, "I felt I could not. It was deeply rooted because I hadn't seen anybody that looked like me that was successful, specifically in this industry."

It was at about that time he met Marcus Holt, a very successful REALTOR® who also happened to be a Black man. Marcus and the rest of



The Edrington Team gave Tony the encouragement he needed to push through his doubts and take those first few steps down this life-changing path.

Tony's faith plays an important part in his business and his success. "I have a great spiritual support system who are my prayer warriors. This industry is hard, and I really rely on my faith to help in every deal. I don't take it lightly that we are dealing with the biggest transaction people deal with."

Congratulations to Tony as he continues to grow his business and make a mark on the Chattanooga real estate community. We continue to be impressed not only by his success but by the character of this young man whose heart is to simply make a difference in someone's life. You can read his full story in the September 2020 edition of *Chattanooga Real Producers*.

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meet
MARCUS
HOLT

**ANYTHING
IS POSSIBLE**

Marcus Holt, with The Edrington Team of Berkshire Hathaway J Douglas Properties, intentionally and purposefully chose a career in real estate because he recognized it as a calling. Marcus already had a successful banking career. He had a stable and generous salary, an impressive title, benefits and vacation days. He wasn't unhappy. However, once he recognized the potential in real estate — not just to change his personal financial situation, but the ability he would have to impact many families and change their financial situation — his decision was made.



Marcus had Leah's unwavering support, which built his foundation. He also had the coaching and mentoring of his friend and team leader, George Edrington. "I was looking up to George before I was even in real estate," offers Marcus. "He has demonstrated how the value of hard work and dedication while putting your family first can lead to unlimited success. He has also shown me that you can transition from one successful career to another without breaking stride. I will forever be grateful for his influence on my life."

Awards and accolades are nice. And Marcus has received plenty of them, to include agent of the year. But that's not why he gets up every day and pours into his business. "Helping first-time homebuyers and investors is so exciting for me. To see them through the process and then be with them as they close on their first home/investment property is extremely rewarding," Marcus shares. He knows the impact he's having on families and their future, and he thrives helping others see how owning property can change their lives. Marcus makes an impression on his clients, and the ultimate sign of success for him is getting referred to a past client's family or friends. "We have several past clients that are now close friends, and we have helped everyone in their family buy and sell real estate. Being trusted to help entire extended families through life events over the years is such an honor," offers Marcus.

Marcus credits his wife, Leah, for nudging him toward real estate. She was already in the industry and knew he had the perfect skill set and work ethic to be successful. "With Leah being a part of the team and one of my best friends being the team leader, I was able to see firsthand how the business was run, and I knew that it was the right next logical step for me," reflects Marcus. "Once I began digging in and learning the processes of a transaction and everything I could about real estate, I knew being as knowledgeable as possible, coupled with the accountability of my team, there would be no looking back or slowing down."

Leaving a career after a decade of experience to start something new can be a daunting experience. This is especially true when you look at the statistics of how many people start in real estate but quickly leave the business or remain part-time.

While in his banking career, Marcus had a traumatic and life-altering experience. He was shot during a robbery. Instead of letting this terrible experience slow him down or make him afraid, he did the opposite and used it for growth. Marcus is keenly aware just how short life can be. And once you truly understand how fragile life can be, you think differently about things. "I encourage everyone I meet to follow their dreams and to build the life they want," shares Marcus. "Too many people give up on themselves and never truly live their life." Shifting his career from banking to real estate has allowed Marcus to build the kind of life for himself and his family he always wanted. For Marcus, there's no settling; life and work may pose challenges and bumpy roads, but he doesn't let tough circumstances get in his way.

A growth mindset and belief in himself propelled Marcus forward. "I am the type of person who believes there is no challenge that is too big for me. I am a firm believer that as long as I believe in



...

myself, I can accomplish anything. Sometimes that belief can put you in challenging situations,” he says only half-jokingly. “But the hard work allows you to overcome those obstacles.” Marcus also challenges himself to really live and be in each moment of his life. “I try to stay present in every moment. I think my clients appreciate how I really focus on them throughout the whole process. It also means when I’m with my family, I’m not thinking about lingering work issues; my attention is solely on them.”

Real estate is a family business for the Holt family. “Working directly with Leah every day — and let’s be clear, she really runs the show — is an incredible gift,” says Marcus. Leah and Marcus have two kids — Lauren, 9, and Miles, 5. “We intentionally involve our kids in building our future. My family is my ‘why.’ I’m very clear on why I work so hard — it’s always for our family.” When the Holt family isn’t working real estate deals, they can most likely be found on a field or court somewhere. “Sports are a huge part of our life,” shares Marcus. “We’re often watching or playing a sport.” When it comes to relaxing, time on the lake refreshes them.

In his short seven years in real estate, Marcus has already left his mark on the industry. His good-natured demeanor and anything-is-possible attitude have endeared him to his clients. His passion for real estate and its ability to change someone’s life in the short-term while building generational wealth fuels his drive to help as many people as possible. While succeeding at high levels, Marcus never takes his focus off what is most important to him — his family. Every decision he makes in business is done so with the ultimate goal of creating the best life possible for his family.

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ZACHARY NELSON



Get to know Zachary Nelson,
Team Mortgage Banker
on the Gabe Whitmer Team

Q: How long have you been in the mortgage industry?

Over two years now and loving the adventure and excitement each day brings - I had previously spent about a decade in sales management and really appreciate the ability to connect with people in this role and meet them where they are.

Q: What is your favorite part about what you do?

I always like to tell folks 'Most people will only go through this process a few times in their entire lives - there is no reason you should know how all of this works! That is what I am here for!' I love educating people throughout the exciting (And stressful) journey of home buying.

Q: How long have you lived in the Chattanooga area?

I am originally from Michigan but have lived in Chattanooga full time for about 10 years now. My

beautiful wife Pam, wonderful son Milo and I currently live on Signal Mountain and love the close-knit community.

Q: What does your life look like outside of work?

Whenever I am not fielding late weekend night calls from clients trying to get a last minute offer in, I love to travel with my gorgeous wife and clever 2 year old son, I like to golf (Very poorly), take part in 5ks and half marathons (Even more poorly), and watch my Michigan based sports teams break my heart.

Q: Why should someone choose your team over the competition?

Our team has a few core tenets that I am really proud of: We believe in hard timelines, overcommunication, and education throughout the process. Time-sensitivity is at the top of our list, as news (Either good or less than good) needs to be shared as quickly as possible. Teamwork makes the dream work!



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