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Brett Gettman
Owner / Publisher
Brett.Gettman@realproducersmag.com



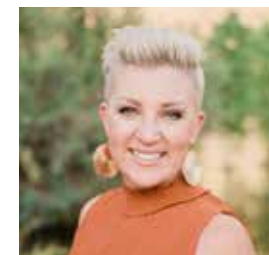
Geneva Eilertson
Reprints Manager
geneva@realproducersmag.com



Joseph Haeger
Editor / Writer



Kristina Ferro
Desert Roots Photography



Lauren Gettman
Owner, Red Hog Media



Nicole Wright
Ad Manager,
"The Ad Junkies"



Tim Correa
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A FUTURE OF ONE'S OWN

Adriana Opris may only be 27 years old, but her drive makes her wise beyond her years.

She's a first-generation American; her parents emigrated from Romania when they were young and provided an invaluable example of what it means to be self-made. Her dad came here without speaking English and has since started multiple successful businesses and raised a family.

Adriana spoke only Romanian until she attended kindergarten, which made her feel even more like an outcast during a time that was already hard on kids. She started skipping recess to take an English as a second language class. While she was able to communicate better with her peers, her parents moved around a lot, which perpetually made her the new kid.

By high school, Adriana was all done being in that position. Online school was on the rise, and she decided to take advantage of it. "I did online classes and finished high school in two years."

Finishing school at 16, she decided to join her older friends at community college. While she didn't necessarily know what she wanted to do, she knew what she didn't want: a typical 9-5 job where she was expected to do the same thing, again and again, every day. She wanted to be in

charge of her own life and live on her own terms, and this started with her career.

Faced with these larger life choices, she thought long and hard about what she wanted. "I think I wanted to make a life for myself, and I've always had that drive. My dad being the businessman he is — I was always inspired by that."

A FATHER'S WISDOM

In 2012, Adriana's family packed up and left Michigan for Arizona. "We moved here and my dad, of course, comes from the Midwest, so Arizona is a whole different culture shock — coming from greenery to desert," she tells me. Her dad promised to build a house in Arizona, live on an acre, and plant a bunch of trees, essentially creating his very own slice of Michigan.

"When we moved here, he actually bought an acre and started building," Adriana says. "Once he built the house, he realized this was an opportunity to start a journey in real estate." He clearly had a knack for building houses, and once he got into the groove, it all made sense. He looked at the future and wanted to make this business venture a whole family affair. This led Adriana to get her real estate license when she was 21 years old.

She was excited when she got hired right away, but at that time didn't fully understand the

...

▶▶ rising star

By Joseph Haeger
Photo by Armada Visuals

PHOTO BY ARMADA VISUALS



industry. She gave it one year but didn't like it, opting to quit and go back to school.

SOMETHING NEW

Adriana got her skin care license after she left real estate. "I got my aesthetician's license, and it was way different than real estate," she explains.

"I fell in love with it and started my own business. I would do real estate on the side for family and friends but didn't really want anything to do with it," she says with a laugh. Then, 2020 hit and the pandemic shut her skin care business down.

"It forced me to go back into real estate, and of course, the market got really hot," she remembers. "This time around, I switched brokerages and joined a team, and it was a whole different experience. That's when I really did fall in love with real estate."

She works under Blake St. John, and while she loves the independent nature of this business, she finds being a part of a team hugely beneficial. "At the end of the day, you need that support system, and that's what the team dynamic definitely gives."



LOOKING AT THE HORIZON

Adriana understands there's a person and a life behind every single one of her transactions.

"I feel like at the end of the day, you can be a great negotiator, you can close a deal, you can do everything by the book, but what really sets you apart is your personality, drive, and communication — it's being authentic because real estate is a relationship business and building relationships is the key to success."

Looking forward, she wants to stay in the real estate game but also wants to expand her capabilities. She watches her dad build these gorgeous houses, and her mom breathes life and beauty into them, working as a gifted interior designer — and she has the urge to follow in their footsteps.

"The older I get, the more I find a bigger passion for house design and architecture," she says. "I would love to know I could build a house like that one day."

And looking at who Adriana is and what she's accomplished, there's no doubt in my mind that she will, and she'll absolutely succeed in doing it.






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Katrina BARRETT

▶▶ featured agent

By Joseph Haeger

WHAT'S IN A NAME

It's clear Katrina Barrett has a community mind-set considering she founded, owns, and brokers Local Board Real Estate, a brokerage of elite REALTORS® ready to help clients buy local, sell local, and build local. Katrina comes from a long line of real estate professionals — her grandparents were both brokers, and her parents were attorneys and owned their own brokerage — but it was never her plan to follow in their footsteps.

“My whole life, I kept on saying I’m not going to be a broker. I’m going to dress up in a suit and work in a big building,” she says. “I went to the University of Miami and studied finance and economics. Then I started in the investment industry and became an independent wealth advisor.”

When Katrina found her way back to real estate, she had something else in mind compared to the business-as-usual status quo she found in the industry. “I interviewed at a few large firms and felt that there were a lot of handcuffs. I just wanted to put the client first and wanted to charge them less if I wanted to or do interesting marketing.”

Her approach to marketing is one of the things that sets her company apart from the rest. “We host pickleball tournaments, we organize runs, and we organize golf tournaments — we’re big in the charity scene. I have never really done any advertising in magazines, and we’ve never paid for ads. We’ve just tried to spend the money on our clients.”

This is a smart and effective way to get your business out there because people won’t simply associate it with an industry, but rather they come to associate the name with an emotion or experience. Katrina wants to capitalize on and expand this approach too. “We’re trying to pivot a bit,” she says. “We want to become a local hub for things that are coming to town: events, shows, new restaurant openings. We’re trying to support other small businesses. Local supporting local — it’s the movement.”

BIGGER THAN REAL ESTATE

Katrina’s unique approach to real estate doesn’t stop at engaging marketing, either. “I came from the working 24/7 corporate lifestyle, so I think I have a different energy,” she tells me. “I haven’t ever been part of a big corporate brokerage, so I think by default I don’t even know how they run or what their rules are. I have no preset notion for what a meeting should look like,” she continues. “We’re making our own rules, and we’re running a lot more like corporate America versus what an old-school brokerage should be.”

Katrina also tends to inject the skills she cultivated from her first job in wealth management into her real estate business.

“I wake up at 5 a.m., work out for roughly an hour, get the kids to school by 7:45 a.m., and then I go into my financial office and work on markets until about noon. From noon until 8:00 p.m. or so, I’m in showings.”

PHOTO BY RED HOG MEDIA



It’s clear Katrina is accessible and willing to do whatever it takes for her clients, but what truly sets her apart is the time she spends in her financial office. “The more things you have a deep understanding of, the more you understand the relationships between different markets. You can be a better advisor to clients as to when to make moves and where,” she says. “If your only tool in your bag is real estate, then you’ve got to *sell* someone a house.”

Her wide knowledge base allows and empowers her to take the lead and advise her clients. She understands and can guide clients when it’s not a good time to buy a house, when the interest rates aren’t favorable, and it’s better to save, or when it’s a great time to buy rentals but to not upgrade primary residences. Her expertise sets people up for better success.

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GROWING OUT

Looking ahead, Katrina wants to improve both the industry and the client experience. “I think the biggest thing to implant into anyone is to always look at the end game. Don’t look at the short game. All success is a marathon,” she explains. “It’s never a sprint — it’s never getting rich quick. It’s a slow build, and really, a slow build is a sustainable build.” The future for Katrina and Local Board Real Estate is bright. In fact, they’re in the midst of expanding their operations into ten new states, which will open up a plethora of opportunities for them to grow and reach so many more new people across the country.

“I think that for the first time, we’re attracting the attention of a lot of top REALTORS® locally,” she tells me. “I was just shocked and amazed when connecting with peers from other cities. Everyone’s passion and excitement are driving this. I think it’s a great time.”



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TRACY ANDREWS

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By Joseph Haeger | Photo by Red Hog Media

HOME TEAM INSPECTION



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THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE JOB

Tracy Andrews is the franchise owner and operator of the Scottsdale branch of HomeTeam Inspection Service, and he deeply understands the intricacies and importance of home inspections. First, honesty is key because someone buying a home deserves to know everything about it. Then, issues that pop up oftentimes require a gentler approach as opposed to bluntly saying, “Your roof is shot.” He doesn’t want to scare buyers off because problems are made to be fixed — and that’s exactly what he’ll tell the buyer.

“This is just something to negotiate with the seller,” he says. “I’m glad we found [the issue] now instead of six months down the road. I turn positive on it,” Tracy explains. “Whatever it is, it’s fixable: a roof you can replace, an AC system you can replace, a foundation you can fix. I tell them it’s a matter of how much you love this house.”

It’s this blend of being realistic about home purchases and knowing where the clients are coming from that makes Tracy a great, insightful inspector for any transaction.

GETTING INTO THE GAME

Before Tracy was a home inspector, he was a service advisor at car dealerships. “My dad had car dealerships growing up, so I’ve always worked on cars and stuff like that, but it was a lot of red tape and politics.”

He wanted to get out of that line of business, so he considered buying a franchise, which would allow him to be his own boss. Looking further into it, he saw the perfect fit for his expertise: home inspection. He decided on HomeTeam, who have been around since 1993 with a great reputation, and the rest is history.

WITH THE HELP OF TECH

It’s incredible how far the home inspection field has evolved. In the same way that the Internet completely changed the game for real estate agents because it gave a ton of great information back to the client, technology has opened doors for inspectors to help shine a brighter, more comprehensive light on the houses they’re tasked with inspecting. All the equipment available for each job is a major plus for every person involved in the process because it allows us to see areas that were impossible to check out beforehand.

“We fly drones on roofs where we can’t walk,” Tracy tells me about some of the equipment HomeTeam uses. “We use infrared cameras to sense temperature differences in floors, walls, and ceilings for water leaks. We use moisture meters to sense any moisture in walls, floors, or ceilings.

Sewer scope camera systems go into sewer lines to look for any specific defects. And we also have a remote control car that we can drive into crawl spaces under houses. These cars have cameras and lights on them as well.”

All these techniques and pieces of equipment provide a larger and more in-depth picture of the house the client is about to buy, which is likely the biggest purchase they’ll make in their lifetime. When someone is about to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars, they deserve to know exactly what they’re getting.

Before, the unknown required a certain amount of trust and the buyer prayed everything was going to be OK. Now, that’s not a problem because no trust is involved — we’re

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PHOTO BY RED HOG MEDIA

...

able to know the whole reality of the house. “We use this technology so we can do the most thorough inspection possible,” Tracy says.

The peace of mind this provides is something any agent should strive for.

THE MAGIC IS IN THE DETAILS

After Tracy finishes his inspection, he asks the client and their agent to come to the property so he can review the report in person. This step is one of the most important parts of the process.

“I show you something, a picture with an arrow, and I describe what room it’s in, but then if you go, ‘I don’t get the picture.’ Well, let’s go look at it; let’s go walk in that room and look at it.”

He emails the report out regardless, but if the client isn’t able to be there in person, he encourages them to call after they look at the report. This is so he can help put everything into context. Some things may look scary on the report, but everything is fixable, and it’s his goal to put the homebuyer’s mind at ease.

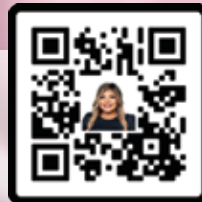
“Some contractors don’t know how to do that,” he explains. “They’re usually general contractors, and they’ve never had to deal with people. They’ve dealt with houses.”

Tracy’s mission is to bring a warmer touch to the business and help every buyer feel good about their purchase. He’s upfront and honest, with a twist of optimism, always letting people know everything is fixable. It just depends on how much they love their new home. And that personal touch is what sets him apart.

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AMBER ROBERTS

FAVORITE FOOD — French fries

FAVORITE HOLIDAY — New Year's Eve because it's my birthday

FAVORITE VACATION — Phuket, Thailand

ONE WORD THAT DESCRIBES ME — Passionate

SOMETHING NOT TOO MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT ME — I was a cheerleader and gymnast for 15 years.

TRICIA LEHANE

FAVORITE FOOD — Beans

FAVORITE HOLIDAY — New Year's — say goodbye to the past year and look forward to the new opportunities

FAVORITE VACATION — Roadtrips, meeting up with family and friends

WORD THAT DESCRIBES ME — Passionate

SOMETHING UNIQUE ABOUT ME — I did event management and fundraising in Kelowna, British Columbia. I took 60 people out of 600 to Oprah's Live your Best Life Tour in Seattle, WA, in 2004. A lot of my attendees were on Entertainment Tonight.



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