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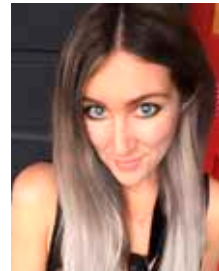
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Bernadette.Kerkes@escrowoptions.com



Tom Blank

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951.314.6860

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2022

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TOTAL TRANSACTIONS

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SALES VOLUME

\$19.674
MILLION
AVERAGE
SALES VOLUME
PER AGENT

48
AVERAGE
TRANSACTIONS
PER AGENT

GARRETT BROOKMAN

» cover story

Written by **Zachary Cohen**
Photography by **Marissa McCutchan**

In 2015, Garrett Brookman found himself at a crossroads. After moving to Temecula from Encinitas the year prior, Garrett was attending college and working at Crush and Brew, a vibrant restaurant and bar. He had the drive to create the career of his dreams, but he didn't yet know how that would take shape.

One day, real estate broker Josh Painter and lender Justin Grable came in to watch a soccer game. Garrett hit it off with the pair, talking with them as they enjoyed the game and the atmosphere.

"I was chatting them up for two to three hours. I didn't think much of it. They didn't mention they were in real estate at the time," Garrett recalls.

Two weeks later, Josh returned to the restaurant to talk with Garrett. He asked him what his life goals were, where he was headed professionally, and eventually if he'd consider getting into real estate. Josh took notice of Garrett's people skills, believing he had what it took to be a successful REALTOR®.

“

I HAVE PUT **1000%** INTO EVERY JOB I'VE HAD. THAT'S JUST MY CHARACTER. BEYOND MY FAMILY AND OUR SECURITY, MY WHY HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT GIVING MY ALL TO CREATE THE BEST RESULT.

”



"I had never thought about that or even knew what it entailed, but it had my curiosity. He gave me his card, I called him that night, and I signed up for my license the next day," Garrett reflects. "I have been in the restaurant industry since I was 15, and I've seen other people get job opportunities in sales. I always had the feeling that one day it would happen to me, and it did happen to me. I got my opportunity."

While working toward getting licensed, Garrett jumped into real estate with both feet, shadowing Josh and learning the basics. The first few months of his sales career were slow, but things soon picked up, and his business grew year after year. In year five, when he sold 60 homes

as a solo agent, he had hit his maximum capacity. He began building a team, helping him increase his sales further and take his business to the next level. Garrett prides himself on offering the same type of one-on-one mentorship that Josh gave him when he began his career.

"We are young, hungry go-getters," Garrett explains. "My whole team are guys like myself. We're like-minded. We're focused, driven and eager to help. We're always wanting to be better and give the best experience to our clients."

“

MY WHOLE TEAM ARE GUYS LIKE MYSELF. WE'RE LIKE-MINDED. WE'RE FOCUSED, DRIVEN AND EAGER TO HELP. WE'RE ALWAYS WANTING TO BE BETTER AND GIVE THE BEST EXPERIENCE TO OUR CLIENTS.

”

Garrett plans to continue growing the team, but he doesn't intend to have a mega team; rather, he hopes to build a group of six to eight agents that share a common vision. Garrett aspires to remain committed to his craft, humble, and passionate.



FUN FACT

Garrett and his wife, Karen, met within the same week and at the same bar where he met Josh and Justin. "I got hit with the golden wand twice in one week," Garrett laughs. Garrett and Karen enjoy traveling, skiing, going to the gym, playing pickleball, and hanging with their two dogs.



“

AS SUCCESS HAS COME AND I'VE GROWN, I'VE ALWAYS SEEN MYSELF AS THE SAME HARD WORKING PERSON I WAS AT THE BEGINNING. NOTHING HAS TRULY CHANGED. MY VISION OF WHO I AM AS A PERSON REMAINS THE SAME.

”

“I have put 1000% into every job I've had. That's just my character. Beyond my family and our security, my why has always been about giving my all to create the best result. I never liked to mentally clock in and clock out. My why is seeing results from putting in the most effort possible into my career and seeing my clients' happiness throughout the process,” he says. “As success has come and I've grown, I've always seen myself as the same hard working person I was at the beginning. Nothing has truly changed. My vision of who I am as a person remains the same. I love my career just as much as I did in the beginning, and I still feel like that guy that gets just as excited for every deal and every offer. I still have the utmost passion for what I do.”

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LAGUNA BEACH LAGUNA NIGUEL CARLSBAD MURRIETA BEVERLY HILLS LAGUNA WOODS TUSTIN

JUNK DAWGS

Junk Dawgs owner Drew Douglass is breaking barriers, proving that, even at a young age, he can make his company one of Southern California's best. Drew started Junk Dawgs while he was still a junior in college, and three years later, the company is thriving. They've grown from being a one-person show to a team of 11 field employees, a fully staffed call center, and a leadership team that includes Drew's older brother, Zach.

Drew's entrepreneurial journey began amid the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. He was attending the University of Redlands when the University shut down its physical locations and classes moved online. Meanwhile, Drew was working for a moving company.

"I was always working through school, and I always enjoyed work more than school," Drew says frankly. "I realized I was making good money, I enjoyed my work, and I felt like I could do something similar and make what the boss makes. And he

made more than my dad, who has a master's degree. I started thinking, do I really need school?"

As Drew grappled with questions about his future, he had a big idea: to take the knowledge he learned in the moving business and create his own junk removal company. His former employer did some junk removal work, and he sensed an opportunity in the sector. So, in August 2020, Drew launched Junk Dawgs.

"There were many late nights of thinking. I just couldn't shake it. I was up looking at trailers and pickups to buy, trying to scrape together business any way I could. And then, I just decided to go for it. I took a leave of absence from school for a year, bought a truck and a trailer, and got started. It was just me and any friend who I could get a hand from."

Drew found some early success but struggled to create the business he envisioned. He wasn't sure he was in the right place.

"I had to go through my own journey, and that journey entailed leaving the business for a few months," Drew reflects. "During that time, I realized I really did want to work for myself. But what did I really want to do? I began to reassess everything."

During these months, Drew explored various other business models and industries. While it was easy to feel that the grass would be greener in another sector, he realized that every business had its challenges. His period of contemplation left him more committed to Junk Dawgs than ever before. In the summer of 2021, he relaunched his business, this time fully devoted to a vision of growth and service.

This work is stressful, it's fun, it's exciting, and it's exhilarating... **I WOULDN'T WANT TO BE DOING ANYTHING ELSE.** With Junk Dawgs, the possibilities are endless.

"With that commitment, things started to pick up naturally," Drew reflects. "It was time to give it a real go. It was make or break. I had to make it work, and I did."

Over the past two years, Junk Dawgs has built a reputation for being one of Redlands and the Inland Empire's most reliable junk removal resources.

"We are the most reliable, professional, fun-loving company you'll be involved with," Drew says proudly. "We're not coming to pick up junk. We're coming to deliver an experience. From the second you call until we drive away with the junk, we want it to be a breeze for everyone involved. We answer the phone with a smile and give follow-up, confirmation, and reliability."

As Drew looks ahead, he has big aspirations for the future of Junk Dawgs. He hopes to expand the company throughout Southern California and, perhaps one day, throughout the nation.

"This work is stressful, it's fun, it's exciting, and it's exhilarating... I wouldn't want to be doing anything else. With Junk Dawgs, the possibilities are endless."



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Navigating the *New Solar Policy* as a Realtor



Written By **Jordan Shaw** owner of Shaw Energy Consulting LLC

What changed?

In December, the California Public Utilities Commission voted to reverse course on solar compensation for all exported energy across PG&E, SCE and SDG&E. In short, they chose to remove 1:1 net metering (NEM) for each kWh that passed by the utility meter, dropping compensation by ~75 percent effective April 15th this year. This is how all solar worked - sending excess energy into the grid for buyback at a later time. The grid was a battery for export and import on demand.

Any system not grandfathered into the earlier NEM versions by the deadline saw an immediate elongation in payback. Utilities and solar providers alike saw a rush to meet this deadline by homeowners, the largest solar surge in California history. PG&E saw 82% of anticipated annual solar adaptors choose to do so in just 3 months!

With this policy change, not only was the value of the energy export diminished, based on time of day and time of the year, but homeowners could no longer 'carry forward' energy during lighter usage months. They would need to true up each month versus a 12 month relevant period. This complex export pricing with monthly billing makes home integrated energy storage a necessary component of every solar system as it no longer makes financial sense to send excess energy back to the utility.

Why did this happen?

Utilities have a hard time keeping up with peak demand. We see this in the summertime FLEX alerts. The drop in compensation was to encourage more batteries being placed on the grid to support demand shaving and a more sustainable grid. Others argue this was a utility power play or profit grab. In either case, adding battery storage is the next wave of the solar future. It's just happening much faster than we anticipated.

In October of 2015, Hawaii made a similar move by removing net metering. Now, all systems have 2, 3, even several times as many, batteries per home. Hawaii has massive imports of fossil fuels for energy, so it's a major push to create energy independence and prevent black outs. CA has become the next Hawaii, with North Carolina following California's lead this July.

What does this mean for you as an agent?

New solar policy makes it critical for real estate pros to understand the landscape of the existing installed solar as much as new. Buyers agents need to know which NEM policy a solar system is on in order to provide added value for property appraisal, negotiation, option selections and ultimately, their long term utility costs.

Let's take a couple scenarios on where NEM 3.0 impacts and how to guide.

New Construction: If a builder places a moderately sized solar system on the roof, the array will only directly impact the homeowners usage 'during the day'. This is ideal if the home is constantly utilizing energy, such as from a pool pump. Any consultations, however, with the solar vendor to 'upgrade' the array prior to close of escrow is wasted money without battery storage. It is in the buyer's best interest to go for the 'smallest' solar system and purchase it, not lease, so they can retrofit a larger solar array and/or battery storage tied in once they understand their historical usage.

Existing Retrofit / Resell: For buyers researching homes to purchase, find a solar home that is grandfathered into NEM 2.0 or earlier. Ask for the PTO Letter / Email provided by the utility company to the owner prior to escrow. Anything prior to April is GOLD! This provides your buyer with maximum savings over its lifespan. If you are selling such a home, then marketing 'owned' solar with pre NEM 3.0 is advantageous to demand maximum dollar for the home. If they are on NEM 3.0, this provides added negotiation if they are not equipped with an energy storage system.

Be your client's guide.

With NEM 3.0 in effect, you have the power to help your clients get maximum value and avoid any pitfalls. Here are a couple reasons to get ahead of this with your clients...

Escrow closed. Hello door knock. You know it to be true! Honestly, with NEM 3.0 we should see 'less' door knocks for solar. But why risk it? Remove the element of surprise when your client calls you up later to sell the home and they are stuck with an ugly, overpriced solar system or lease that you now have to deal with. Navigating your clients to a solar professional like us will help set them, and you, up for success.

They'll do it anyway. Approximately 4% of all homes in the US are solar. You read that



right. Most of them are right here in CA. With increasing energy rates, your buyer will feel the squeeze this summer and every year there after. They'll be hunting down ways to save whether you've pointed them in a direction or not.

A Protective Bubble: Solar + Storage

Even under the new net billing rules, solar has fantastic savings potential. Coupling it with energy storage technology also protects homeowners from fluctuations in rate structures. Self consumption allows them to

avoid time of use rates and buying back energy at ever increasing prices. Utilities are preparing up to 40 percent rate hikes, with SDG&E increasing peak rates above 80 cents kWh this summer! Solar paired with energy storage still yields fantastic returns, sometimes well into the six figures.

So while NEM 3.0 isn't an ideal situation for anyone other than the utilities, sticking with 'renting' with the utilities continues to be the worst option a homeowner can choose. We are in this together to help our clients navigate to a brighter future.

Jordan Shaw is a 8 (plus) year solar professional, living in Menifee. He is the owner of Shaw Energy Consulting LLC, a speaker, trainer, field leader, husband and father.

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ANDREA

Emerson

Written by **Kendra Woodward**
Photography by **Marissa McCutchan**

Andrea Emerson is a real estate agent who has been making waves in the industry. With a motto that is also her email address, “AndREALSHereForYou@gmail.com,” she has been making sure that her clients know she is available and always there to help. In our interview, she revealed that when she first started in the industry, she was nervous and felt like she didn’t know enough to help people make the biggest purchase of their lives. But, she didn’t let that stop her. Instead, she spent six months training before she felt she was ready to make her mark.

Looking to absorb as much information as possible, Andrea was striving to make her clients feel comfortable with the knowledge and information she had available to help them find their perfect home. Her dedication to her clients, and her desire to be the best possible agent, pushed her to learn everything she could before starting her real estate career.

Born and raised in Mission Viejo, California, Andrea’s strong work ethic is a direct reflection on the way her parents raised her and her siblings. Her father is her hero and role model. “He never judges me,” she says. “Growing up in his presence has definitely made me the person I am today.” While raising five kids and working full time, Andrea’s dad still took time to coach her in softball and remains her number one mentor and role model. At age 79, Andrea is still looking to her father for guidance and he’s always willing to help. Growing up being overly complimented by her mom, Andrea was instilled with the confidence she needed to be so successful in her career and adult life.

Just like her parents were there for her, Andrea dedicates a lot of her time to her family as well, reflecting that same mentality her parents had. “My boys are my world,” she says about her two sons Alden and Orren. Alden, who Andrea often refers to as “Gorgeous”, is a great storyteller and jokester, is strong willed, loves riding dirt bikes, welding, and playing video games.

Andrea says, despite being a 18 year-old, he’s surprisingly fond of family time. Orren, the “Beautiful” to Alden’s “Gorgeous” is a bit more of a sensitive soul. He’s very kindhearted while still being competitive in nature and is also very athletic. He’s playing high school football, enjoys boxing and skateboarding, and loves sushi. “They are just the most amazing boys,” Andrea admits. “I raised them to be kind.”

When they’re all at home, Alden, Orren, Andrea and her man Joel, love playing with their two Pocket Bullies -Nala and Gabriel. Friends of Andrea’s admit that her whole world revolves around her boys and being the best mom she can to them. She’s hardworking, motivated, driven, and also strong willed. “I don’t sit around waiting for tomorrow. I am definitely a go-getter! I love working, keeping busy, and making things happen!”

Which is a prime example of her obsession with the gym. She works out six days a week, for two to three hours a day. She is passionate about weightlifting and eats extremely clean. “And when she has the time, she enjoys hiking, admitting that being out in nature with no distractions is where she finds the most peace.”

Andrea’s Bachelor’s degree in Communications with an emphasis on photography from Cal State Fullerton has helped her in her career tremendously. She also took counseling and social services classes, which helped her become a better listener. She understands that going through escrow with clients is an emotional rollercoaster, and it requires someone who genuinely cares.

Her previous career also bolstered her abilities and technique in communication and client services while she was traveling the world. “Right before getting my license, and even when I first got my license, I used to travel around the US selling hair tools. I’d get comped 5-star hotels and plane tickets,” Andrea explains. “I loved traveling but needed to be home more often.”

““““

**YOU NEED PEOPLE
TO TRUST YOU.
YOU CAN'T DO IT
ON YOUR OWN!**



When asked about what she finds most fulfilling about her work, Andrea said, “I’m changing people’s lives for the better. I feel when I sell them a home, it’s not just a house... I’m selling them a lifestyle, their future, their retirement, the place they’re going to make their most memories. I absolutely love that. I don’t see it as just a transaction.”

Andrea also loves educating first-time homebuyers. “I really don’t see it as work. I absolutely love what I do, and I thank God to have this as my job,” she says. She knows that it’s scary to put your trust in someone, but she loves holding their hand through the whole thing. She has faced hardships in her career, like feeling nervous in the beginning, but she overcame it by continuing to educate herself along the way and she strives to do the same for her clients in order to ease their minds.

A more recent focus for Andrea has been connecting more with clients, both past and present. Not through use of texting, social media, or generic emails... actually picking up the phone and having a conversation with them. She doesn’t even have a social media account! And admits it’s just not her style. Because of that, she draws in a different type of clientele, and she gets a lot more referrals that way. “It’s a lot more work, but it’s my style and I like it,” she says. The whole mindset and perspective she has towards keeping in touch with her clients came from the agent she bought her house from years ago. “I loved our phone calls and communicating with her, that personalization really goes a long way.”

Being available for the client, establishing their trust, and being honest with them is at the forefront of Andrea’s commitment to her sphere. “You need people to trust you,” she says. She also advises fellow agents to get a good team around them, to support and propel your reach in the industry. “You can’t do it on your own! And don’t be afraid to admit that you don’t know everything...none of us do.”



Laura

R O J A S D I A Z

Written by **Zachary Cohen** • Photography by **Marissa McCutchan**

Growing up in Rancho Cucamonga, Laura Rojas Diaz watched her immigrant parents thrive as real estate agents, inspiring her to create the career of her dreams. Upon immigrating from Mexico, Laura’s mom initially cleaned houses for a living, but soon, she got her real estate license. Laura witnessed her mom’s struggles, success, and the tenacity it took to succeed as a woman, immigrant, and REALTOR®. Laura’s father eventually joined the real estate business, too, and the couple worked as a husband-wife team for many years.

“I was inspired by watching my mom,” Laura reflects. “I saw her play the minority role in real estate companies. It was a struggle to bring in business, so she had to work hard. She put in the hours to build that book of business. Seeing her struggles but having the opportunity to earn success — it was inspiring to see. She earned such a positive reputation. I saw her drive and ambition, and I wanted to do something like that.”

Laura ultimately chose to forge her own path in life. She had the drive to find her own identity, aspiring to become a company founder or CEO. Laura spent the early part of her professional life working for nonprofits and in various corporate roles, which, coincidentally, led her right back to where she started.

“It wasn’t until I was working in the staffing industry that I met the CEO of a local real estate company. I was trying to sell him our staffing services. Instead, the roles reversed, and he recruited me as the office recruiter,” Laura reflects. “He didn’t have that position available but created it for me.”

Laura knew it’d be risky to leave her secure corporate role for a newly created position in a small business, but she felt the opportunity was worth it. So, in 2014, she entered the industry she grew up around. She spent a year as a recruiter before getting licensed and moving into real estate sales, completing the circle.

Laura made the conscious choice not to become a team with her parents. Despite following them into the real estate industry, she still desired the chance to start her own company. Her parents were surprised but supportive, acting as mentors and guides in the early years.

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YOU HAVE TO BE DISCIPLINED.”

Like many new agents, Laura struggled to get her business off the ground. With sweat and tears, she slowly became established, developing relationships and building a solid foundation.

“Today, I have a strong book of business,” Laura says proudly. “You have to be driven. You have to gain self-accountability. You are the employee of your own company. Therefore, you have to work. You have to stay consistent. You have to be disciplined.”

Here in 2023, Laura’s life is entering another new stage; she and her husband, Steve, are expecting their first baby in August. Their baby has already become their new driving purpose, their reason for waking up and working hard every day.

“It’s going to be a massive change,” Laura offers. “Everything turns upside down. It’s not about us anymore. It’s going to require a lot of help — in real estate (hiring staff like a showing agent and an assistant) and outside real estate. The baby is the new why. I want to make motherhood my priority.”





Thankfully, Laura has a strong example to draw from. Her mother was a REALTOR® and a mom of three. She was a standout businesswoman and a present, available, loving parent.

“My mom is the example,” Laura says proudly. “She’d tell me to take the bull by the horn. ‘You can do it.’ She’s encouraging. Things have really come full circle... and now I want to leave a legacy of being someone that changes the world in real estate. Somebody that is dynamic and problem-solves creatively. I’m trying to move my version of mountains.”

NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT

Laura founded the female empowerment nonprofit Tenacity 8 Foundation in 2017. “The goal is to be able to empower other like-minded women in real estate and other industries — to build a community. Whatever your business goal is, there are ways to earn what you want to earn while being a wife, a mother, and a woman finding her way... Ultimately, we help other women seeking growth in underserved communities.”

MARCH & APRIL MAGAZINE CELEBRATION!

We loved the opportunity to gather the people featured in our March and April issues! They received special presentations of their articles and extra copies of their issue. It's always such a fun opportunity for people from all over the Inland Empire to get together and connect!



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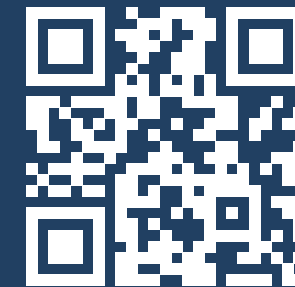
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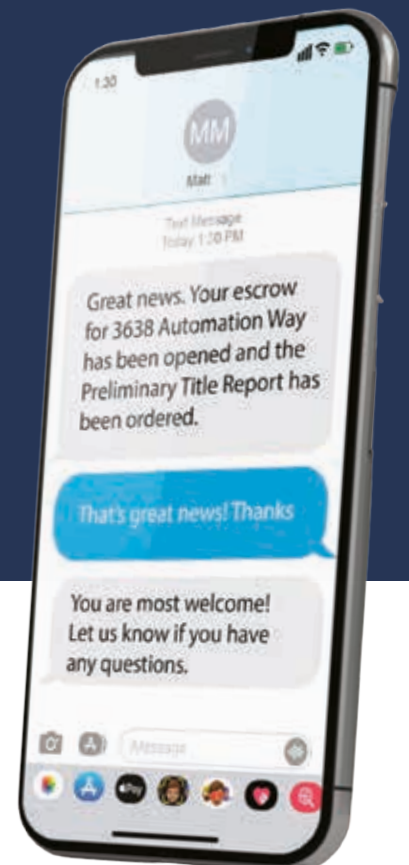
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NEW VENTURE
— ESCROW —

Tania Gonzalez
Sr. Account Executive
Tania@NewVentureEscrow.com
619.807.0711

Courtney Louis
Vice President of Sales
Courtney@NewVentureEscrow.com
858.229.9035



For more information please visit our website:
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