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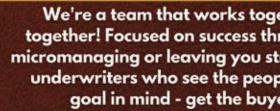
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HELLO, SUMMER!

Dear Real Producers of South Jersey,

As the summer season unfolds, I want to personally wish you a happy and refreshing June ... and a Happy Father's Day to all the hardworking dads out there! This month marks the start of warmer weather, longer days, and the perfect time to enjoy the great outdoors. Whether you're planning on taking a vacation, spending time with friends and family, or just enjoying some much-needed downtime, I hope that you make the most of this wonderful time of the year.

While you're enjoying your summer adventures, I wanted to take a minute to reflect on the importance of being empathetic and accountable. As you're in the process of assisting clients with buying or selling a property, you may be working with a number of parties who are responsible for getting that deal to the closing table. It's important to remember that these professionals are people, too, and they also deserve a break to recharge and refresh.

Top agents should also understand the importance of maintaining communication with their clients, especially when they're 'OOO' for more than 24 hours. That's why they will always leave a designated, reliable agent who can assist with any urgent matters or concerns that may arise with a client while they're unplugging. This way, you can be assured that your clients are being taken care of, even if you are not physically present to show a house, for example.

This practice not only demonstrates a high level of professionalism and responsibility but also shows your clients that you care about their needs and are committed to providing the best possible service. Nothing is more frustrating than trying to reach an agent who is on vacation and has not left a backup contact ... But as top 500 real estate agents, you probably already understand this and strive to meet those expectations!

So as you embark on your summer adventures, I encourage you to

communicate openly and honestly with your clients about your schedule. By doing so, you build a strong and trusting relationship with your clients that will help you achieve your real estate goals.

With this in mind, I hope that you can relax and enjoy your summer!! We look forward to seeing you all again at our next big event in the fall.

With gratitude,



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LA ONQUE ELLIS

TRANSACTION COORDINATOR SOLUTIONS

La Onque (pronounced "Lay On'Kway") Ellis wears many professional hats — published author, podcaster, paralegal ... and for the past few years, owner of Transaction Coordinator Solutions.

Serving real estate agents throughout New Jersey and Pennsylvania, La Onque opened her business in 2021, closing 120 contracts in her first full year. With the addition of four active and two part-time independent transaction coordinators, three of whom are Spanish speaking, she hopes to increase closed contracts this year by 50 percent.

Owning a transaction coordinator business was a natural fit for La Onque. She spent over 25 years as a paralegal in a wide range of specialties, such as commercial and residential real estate, environmental litigation, and public health. As a result, she has a dedicated work ethic, a commitment to excellent service, and an impeccable eye for detail.

"I always say that a transaction coordinator is to a real estate agent what a paralegal is to an attorney," La Onque notes. REALTORS® utilize Transaction Coordinator Solutions to assist in the entire real estate transfer process. La Onque's team focuses on concierge service, administrative tasks, and the expertise to make sure all paperwork goes smoothly and deadlines are met.

"I want my agents to have a stress-free transaction so they can feel good about the process," she



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The Art of Seamless Transactions





La Ongue Ellis is the owner of Transaction Coordinator Solutions.

explains. "In turn, their clients have a stress-free transaction, the agent looks good and earns additional referrals."

Buyers and sellers can agree that there is comfort and peace of mind when working with a transaction coordinator, and many agents see an immediate benefit when partnering with Transaction Coordinator Solutions, as they have all the systems in place.

La Onque was born and raised in East Orange, New Jersey. As a fifth grader, she realized her dream of having a professional singing career would not become a reality, after being the only girl in her class not to land a part in the school chorus. As devastating as that was, the pivotal moment helped La Onque find her true voice with the guidance of her mother and a teacher when she was given a speaking role instead.

Hand movements, projection, posture and timing are all important components of public speaking and what La Onque practiced and perfected over and over again before she presented on stage. "That moment set me up for countless opportunities to perform and speak in front of audiences," she recalls. "It taught me to be comfortable in a room and to speak up."

In fact, speaking up is how La Onque operates. She has led several training courses on quality improvement, HIPAA, emergency preparedness, and paralegal practices, prompting her to write the book "We Made Plans," published in 2019, and develop a podcast on active shooter responses. "Sounding the Alarm — Be Safe, Be Vigilant, Be Prepared" aired for two years, addressing an issue plaguing many of us in modern society.

After graduating with a liberal arts degree from Rutgers University, La Onque moved to South Jersey due to the profitable housing market. Although La Onque had the transferable skills to become a transaction coordinator, she diligently researched the necessary tools to get started and completed additional courses to sharpen her knowledge and expectations. She says it is important to make sure that a new transaction coordinator business is completely set up before taking on the first client.

"Acquire the tools you need to partner with agents," she advises. "Have real boundaries, be consistent yet flexible. Be confident in your abilities to get the job done completely and effectively and celebrate the little wins."

La Onque and her team are compassionate, reliable, and efficient, and hope to be the go-to transaction coordinator management company throughout New Jersey and Pennsylvania as Transaction Coordinator Solutions strives to make life easier for both Realtors and their clients.

Success, to La Onque, means seeing an agent and a buyer through the entire transaction process with minimal stress and conflict, from the time the seller accepts an offer until both parties have signed the closing paperwork and the buyer walks away with the keys.

For more information, visit TransactionCoordinatorSolution.com.



FAMILY FOCUS

La Onque Ellis has been married for 31 years to her real estate agent husband. They have two adult children and one granddaughter, all living within 30 minutes of each other; as well as her beloved dogs, a boxer and a cane corso, who keep La Onque company in her office all day. "I call the dogs my co-workers because they are in my office all day and we all start and leave work at the same time," she laughs.

As a family, they enjoy getting together for dinner, spending summers outdoors, and cheering for the Philadelphia Eagles. They are also passionate about the Christmas season, breaking out the decorations, celebrations, and matching holiday pajamas well before December 1.



Transaction Coordinator

Solutions





LUKE Prising star By Aja McFarland Photos by Chris Kellyman

BUILDING THE FAMILY NAME

Lucas "Luke" Romano is a secondgeneration real estate agent in Gloucester County, licensed with his family brokerage, Romano Realty. Selling 17 units for \$3.3 million his first year, and 27 units for \$8.3 million the next, Luke's drive for success has already led him to great heights.

Winning Rookie of the Year that first year and Top Office Salesman his next, Luke's also been given a 30 Under 30 award from SNJ Millennials, a young entrepreneurs group. Despite only having his license for two years, Luke has been entrenched in the real estate world since the day he was born.

Too Young to Sell

"My mother has been an agent for about 20 or so years, and my father has been a contractor for about 40. My brother has been an insurance agent for about 10 years or so, too, so I've been around the business my whole life," Luke explains.

Despite having the know-how and backing to jump right into the industry, Luke says he chose to go to college for two reasons.





Luke Romano is a second-generation Realtor with his family's brokerage, Romano Realty.

"I felt too young to sell a house; getting a marketing degree went handin-hand with selling real estate. And I realized pretty young how up and down the business could be with the fallout of 2008," Luke says. "I wanted a backup plan in case of another crash, so I made the move to go into higher education."

"During my time in college, I did an internship for a title company, freelance marketing for different agents," he continues. "I also took a gap semester to help my mother open her brokerage — building out an online presence, logo design, etc. Once I graduated, I went back to the title company for a year in refinancing before getting my license and starting to sell with Romano Realty."

Building a Legacy

"I'm set apart by being a younger agent and by having more experience in the industry than most agents, just from being around it my whole life."

But it's not just work experience that sets Luke apart; it's a passion like no other. "Since I've been around the industry my whole life, that's given me a passion for houses and people, and a want to build a legacy for myself and our company — the company name and the family name."

"I also care a lot about people; I take care of the customer as best as possible," Luke notes. "I'm extremely motivated and hungry to be successful in the business. Success, for me, is being fulfilled with my career, and being able to leave some type of mark after I retire or quit. Building a life for myself, being able to support my family, not working until the day I die. All that."

This passion for a legacy and hunger for success has become the foundation of Luke's end goals: to expand his family's business and become an example that any REALTOR[®] could look up to.

"My goal is to eventually open up offices with the brokerage in Romano Realty. In the future, I would like to have offices in different states. Romano is in the name, so it's a legacy, and it's important that I'm able to provide for and build on the family name."

A Different Approach

Luke combines years of experience with a fresh, youthful perspective, and this gives him an edge over more traditional Realtors.

"Coming into the space with my younger age, I do a lot with social media, pushing the company and myself through Google and social media outlets. Most clients are through Facebook and Instagram," Luke notes. "I would say that I take a very non-traditional approach to finding clients. Real estate has a very oldschool mentality centered around cold calling, but I get my business through attracting people to me, not through going out and finding them."

This gives Luke a rather unique clientele in the real estate world: first-time buyers. "My clientele is a somewhat niche market of first-time homebuyers, and I'm helping people through major changes — having their first kid, getting married — things like that that usually come with buying a house. It's fulfilling to help them through that process. I get a lot of satisfaction from being able to help someone progress in their life, from helping them smoothly through the process of homeownership." MY FIRST YEAR IN REAL ESTATE WAS PIVOTAL... TWO YEARS LATER, I'M STILL WORKING AS HARD AS POSSIBLE TO BECOME THE BEST AGENT I CAN BE.





Dedication

Despite spending most of his time working, Luke still makes room for his hobbies, music and property investment, and his family. "I mostly spend my off-time hanging out with family and friends, like my three nephews and my girlfriend, who is very supportive of my business and how much time I spend there. I also have a little puppy, and a lot of my time goes there."

Taking a moment to reflect on how far he's come and how he got there, Luke offers some important advice to real estate rookies.

"My first year in real estate was pivotal... Two years later, I'm still working as hard as possible to become the best agent I can be."

"So my advice would be to know that it's a difficult business and there's a lot to learn," he concludes. "But if you dedicate yourself to the craft itself, if you put in the time and really work at it, you can make it."



JEREMIAH cover story By Zachary Cohen KOBELKA & PHILIP 66 PIP99 HAXBY-THOMPSON

Bringing Color to the Community

"Real estate, for us, is not just about buying or selling homes. It's about immersing ourselves within a community and becoming a pillar of the community. Our goal is to improve the community for everyone there, whether they buy or sell a home with us or not. We focus on creating, making a difference, and supporting everyone — all the people that make a community bright, diverse, and vibrant." —Pip Haxby-Thompson



Before relocating to South Jersey in 2015, Jeremiah Kobelka and Pip Haxby-Thompson lived in Palm Springs, California, a town known for its hot springs, wine tasting, and eclectic brand of mid-century modern architecture. Jeremiah and Pip fell in love with wine during their time in California; Jeremiah was a sommelier, and Pip was a wine salesperson. They also discovered a passion for the area's homes.

"When we lived there, we would go to open houses all the time," Jeremiah reflects. "It was something of a passion of ours. So when we moved back East, we realized it was time to do what we said we were going to do get into real estate."

Jeremiah launched his real estate career near the end of 2017, and Pip followed suit soon after. The

husband-husband duo has been working side by side ever since, co-leading The JFKLiving Team brokered by Real Broker, LLC.

LIVING IN COLOR

Jeremiah and Pip have grown the team to 18 agents and counting. In 2022, their team closed 175 transactions for \$63 million, and they are tracking to exceed those numbers this year. More impressively than any sales statistic, Jeremiah and Pip have embedded their brand within the Haddon Township community, quickly becoming recognizable for their flashy colors and genuine community support.



Philip "Pip" Haxby-Thompson

"We're a fun-loving team," Jeremiah says. "Our brand is pink and blue with splatter shirts. We work hard and we play hard. We get in, follow up, and make our clients raving fans, but the culture is also about having fun and supporting each other in times of good and times of bad. We go axe throwing. We have happy hour. We built a bar in our office. At the same time, this is our business. We have systems and processes and support staff to help our agents go out and be the best they can be."

Jeremiah and Pip's approach to real estate can be summed up in three words: homes, lifestyle, and community. Their business has flourished by developing creative content, like videos promoting other local businesses.

We not only sell homes in our area but promote our area. We are trying to be the digital mayors of the area we work.



The JFKLiving Team

"We not only sell homes in our area but promote our area. We are trying to be the digital mayors of the area we work," Pip explains.

BEING THEMSELVES

Being married and running a business together isn't always easy, but Jeremiah and Pip wouldn't have it any other way. They have each other to brainstorm creative ideas, process difficult situations, and discover the best path forward.

"We each have our roles within the company. I'm more sales, and Pip is more marketing and the creative director. It's yin and yang. Pip is the calm one; I'm the crazy one," Jeremiah laughs.

Jeremiah and Pip are excited about more growth; their goal is to grow to 30 agents by the end of 2023. While their primary focus remains in Haddon Township, they are looking toward potential expansion into other areas of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. Perhaps most importantly, they intend to continue serving with a dedication to their community and a commitment to being themselves.



Jeremiah Kobelka (left) and Philip "Pip" Haxby-Thompson (right) were speakers at the Tom Ferry Success Summit in Dallas, Texas, on October 6, 2021.

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"We really see the vision of the JFKLiving brand growing and growing," Pip says proudly.

"When we first got into real estate, we were told by people to be less gay. 'Don't be splashy. Don't wear colors.' But our business thrived when we started being ourselves. We work hard, we are kind, and we sell a lot of homes, give back to our community, and show our true colors," Jeremiah closes.

BEYOND REAL ESTATE

When they aren't selling homes or building the business, you'll find Jeremiah and Pip with their two dogs, Tully and Osha, or hanging out in the backyard with a glass of wine. As a member of the board of directors at the Haddon Township Equity Initiative, Pip is one of the principal organizers of Haddon Township Pride Parade and Events, a multi-day event that hosted over 11,000 attendees in 2022.



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