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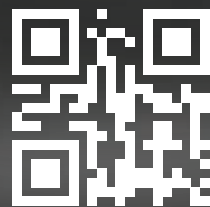
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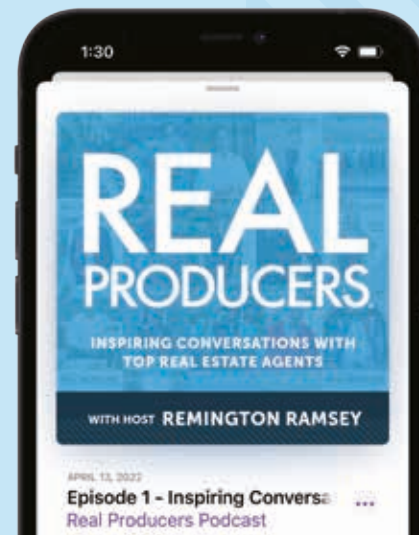
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Do Personal Cards STILL WORK?

We all know how important mailings are to a solid marketing plan. From “Recently Sold” cards to seasonal mass mailings, keeping your name and brand image in front of potential and past clients is important. But what else can you do to set yourself apart? Many agents find success with taking a two-pronged approach, with one part focusing on quantity and another prioritizing more personal interactions. Handwritten, personal greeting cards can play an important role in the latter.

Greeting cards at first glance can appear passé. You might think of the birthday card your great aunt still remembers to send, or the once-a-year winter greeting cards that get lost in the holiday shuffle. With so many other forms of communication, from email to social media, it’s no surprise that greeting card usage has fallen out of fashion. Year after year, the number of greeting cards sent out gets smaller and smaller, according to a 2022 IBISWorld Industry Report. What may be bad news for this industry is actually great news for agents.

GREETING CARD OCCASIONS

While homeowners are inundated with emails and overwhelmed by the billions of options social media presents, physical mail has become a less cluttered environment for getting your message across. Below are a few ways to take advantage of this medium with a handwritten, personal card or note.

AS AN INTRODUCTION

If you’ve received the name of someone that might be interested in your services, why not send a personal note of introduction?

TO SOLIDIFY A RELATIONSHIP

Maybe you’ve already had an initial meeting with a potential new client; a personal thank-you card can demonstrate your attention to detail.

TO CELEBRATE A MILESTONE

Whether it’s your client’s recent closing or an anniversary of their home purchase with you, recognizing these events can show your thoughtfulness and sincerity.

GREETING CARD BEST PRACTICES

- Strategically choose a limited number of recipients to send personal cards to each month. Since these are time-consuming cards to write, limit your total send to no more than a dozen or so each week.
- Always handwrite and personally sign your cards. Yes, this is much more time-consuming than simply printing out cards or stamping a signature ... but that additional effort is what makes this type of communication stand out to your recipient.

- Use a seasonal stamp and skip mass-mailing postage for personal cards.



With more than 25 years of experience, Todd Lebowitz is CEO and owner of My Marketing Matters, which he runs with his business partner Ram Devaguptapu. Together, they have grown the company to be a recognized leader in real estate marketing with more than 20,000 clients locally, regionally, and nationwide.

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SAMANTHA

A N D O Z



▶▶ rising star

By Manuella Hancock
Photos by Chris Kellyman

A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

When Samantha Sandoz obtained her real estate license in 2020, she already had some key ingredients to the “secret sauce” of her success. Finding the right mentor in Tara Hendricks of the HomeKey Real Estate Group in 2022 fully launched her career, and this South Jersey native hasn’t looked back since.

AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

The keystone of Samantha’s relationship with her clients, with whom she connects through authentic conversations and a personal touch, she learned from her father.

“We moved a lot when I was growing up,” she shares. “I learned two critical lessons from my parents in the process. My chiropractor father takes the business part of his practice seriously. I watched and learned as he took opportunities, making them grow and thrive through hard work and entrepreneurship.”

According to Samantha, “My dad can talk to anyone, and through his genuine nature, this led to his success in business. This curiosity and ease were

important lessons for me growing up and finding my fit in a new community.”

Meanwhile, her mother fueled another passion of Samantha’s: design.

“My mom could quickly turn any house into a home,” Samantha says with a smile.

Her mother’s talent for assessing a property and finding its best attributes and hidden potential was Samantha’s inspiration. She carried this motivation with her to Liberty University and received a bachelor’s degree in interior design with a minor in business. To this day, Samantha says her mom’s eye continues to be an important part of Samantha’s service to her clients, helping them to look at a property and see where some small changes can be transformative to the space.

BACKING INTO THE BUSINESS

Early in her career, Samantha had the opportunity to work at a boutique real estate firm in McLean, Virginia. As executive assistant to the director of operations for McEnearney Associates, she learned some critical pieces of the real estate business, such

as tracking sales volume for agents, managing a CRM, writing copy for agents, and the ins and outs of real estate marketing. These building blocks helped Samantha understand what it takes to succeed as an agent when it comes to the back end of the business. She also had a front-row seat to the life of an agent, understanding the essential numbers and other milestones that need to be reached.

“The team at McEnearney Associates was very family-oriented,” Samantha recalls. “This close-knit support was the model I knew to look for when I set out on my own.”

Before she became a full-time agent, Samantha provided operational support for a company specializing in house flipping, learning a great deal about how to assess a piece of property for investment purposes. Then, in 2020, she got her real estate license and soft-launched her business by working part-time for her father. His backing allowed her to earn a steady income to support herself and her daughter while getting the ball rolling as an agent.

“His encouragement was so tangible to me,” Samantha notes. “He let me take client calls at work, and I had a lot of flexibility in my schedule so I could work as an agent, take care of my daughter, and get the job done for him ... It was a lot to handle, but I remain eternally grateful for his help.”

DIVING IN HEADFIRST

Samantha met her mentor, Tara, at a tailgate party at a Phillies game. The two hit it off instantly, and Tara encouraged her to take a leap of faith and join her group as a full-time agent. Samantha took the chance, and within two months, she transitioned.

In the past year, Samantha has continued to build on her understanding of the business and has learned quickly on the sales side of being an agent.

“I think authentic connection is critical, which I learned from my dad,” she affirms.

Samantha is quick to point out she couldn’t succeed without family. Her parents live close by, her daughter is the light of her life, and her sense



Rising Star Samantha Sandoz is a Realtor with the HomeKey Real Estate Group at Keller Williams Realty.

of family extends to her team and clients. Samantha enjoys getting to know people from all seasons of life. For her, trust leads to people opening up, and she loves being there to help them with whatever challenges they might be going through.

“Some of my favorite clients are investors who seek my understanding of what it takes to identify the

possibilities of a house, and I love walking them through the property and helping them have a vision of what it could be,” Samantha explains.

ON THE HORIZON

Looking ahead, Samantha is excited to continue growing her business and hopes to one day be the kind of mentor and teacher she has benefited from all her life. In the short term, spending time with her daughter is her top priority, and the two share a love of Disney that includes regular trips. So far, she and her daughter have been five times, but that’s small change compared to the 35 times Samantha has been in her life!

In her free time, Samantha enjoys going to local venues and listening to live music, spending time outdoors, attending Philly sporting events, and being with family and friends.

When asked to share her secret sauce, Samantha advises, “Believe in yourself and have a support system reminding you that you can do it — for me, that support system got me where I am today.”

I THINK AUTHENTIC CONNECTION IS CRITICAL, WHICH I LEARNED FROM MY DAD. 99



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By Zachary Cohen
Photos by Chris Kellyman

NEW MODEL, NEW SUCCESS



MARK

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We just know one thing — we work. Seven days a week, grinding.

Mark McKenna obtained his real estate license in 1988 at the age of 18, following his parents into the business. Mark's mother and father started in real estate in 1978, and after his father passed away, Mark's mother, Eleanor, took over. She became the broker and owner of Pat McKenna Realtors, the independent brokerage Mark launched his career with and the only team he's been a part of during his 30-plus-year career.

As Mark reflects, "I always knew I was going into real estate. I always knew what I was going to do."

Mark began selling full-time after graduating from college in 1991, starting what has been a long and fruitful career.

"I'm a really competitive person. I think being in sales is the best job in the world. If you're really good at your craft, the more you close, the more you make. And it's nice to help people make a good decision along the way," he adds.



Eleanor and Mark McKenna



Back row (left to right): Shealyn Maugeri, Ryan Lynch, Karli Cinelli, Mike Lynch, Julia Hoagland, Lucie Nowicki, Devon Thorp; Front row: Eleanor McKenna, Mark McKenna

CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

Pat McKenna Realtors was an independent brokerage with roughly eight to 10 full-time agents for decades, with Mark and Eleanor growing the brokerage. For many years, this model was a success, allowing them to run a thriving business.

By the 2020s, however, the real estate market began to shift dramatically. With technology and team-building at the forefront, it was becoming more challenging to succeed as an independent agency.

In June 2021, Mark and Eleanor transitioned the team to eXp Realty, allowing them the benefits of the company's technology and resources. While Eleanor continues to sell at a high level in her 80s, Mark now leads the team.

"We had a void in our model — training and technology," Mark admits. "I knew being an independent brokerage was getting tougher and tougher. We had to make a strategic decision, and the move was attractive to the ownership and all the agents. This

was the best fit for them, to support them through their journey."

The move to eXp has been a boon to the team's business. They have grown from a group of less than 20 agents to 60 agents and seven salaried staff members. Many of the team members have been with the team for 15 up to 35 years.

"We have a different mindset, we provide leads for our agents. We have seven salaried staff for 60 agents. We overstaff to make sure they get their money's worth, and we're coaching them and giving them what they need to be successful in a difficult market," Mark explains. "Our inside staff people are the cream of the crop."

In 2022, Pat McKenna Realtors was the number 49-ranked team in the country with eXp, closing \$155 million over 425 transactions. With over 60 agents on board, Mark recently opened a second office location in Maple Shade, New Jersey, and is planning to open a third in Camden County in 2024.

"One of the beauties about eXp is you take all the back-office work off your plate, and it gives me more time to build the team and sell more properties. As we went out and talked to agents, we found a lot of people wanted to come work with us. It was a surprise because we never recruited before, and things have gotten better and better for us."

Mark has been a successful agent for over three decades. Now, his primary goal is to see those around him grow and thrive. Building an all-star real estate team is something he's proud of.

"My goal is to get 75 agents selling a minimum of 20 houses a year and get up to 1,500 transactions a

year. That would be a great accomplishment," he concludes. "We want to have quality people who understand the process, are professional, educated, and know what they're talking about. That's our image, and people want to join us. I want to be known for having the best systems in the area with the best quality people that work for me."



Mark McKenna is team leader of Pat McKenna Realtors at eXp Realty.

WORDS OF WISDOM

"The first thing is, you've got to be patient. Be consistent. And you have to make a lot of sacrifices in real estate to be successful. It's not for everybody."



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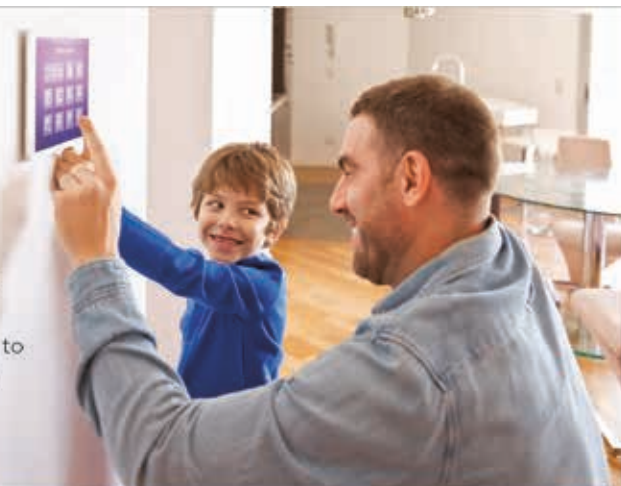
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