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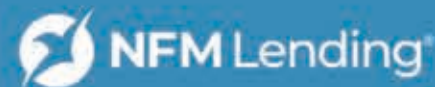
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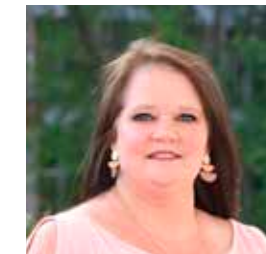
MEET THE COLUMBIA REAL PRODUCERS TEAM



Robert Smith
Co-Owner & Publisher
Advertising Sales
robert.smith@realproducersmag.com
843-560-6278



Sierra Nelson
Co-Owner & Publisher
sierra.nelson@n2co.com
402-560-4555



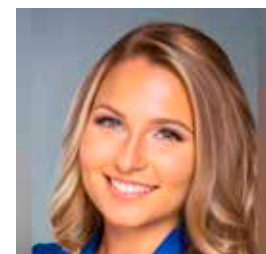
Amy Porter
Director of
Content/Relations
amy.porter@n2co.com
864-356-1443



Andrea Hoffman
Ad Strategist
sc.ads@n2co.com



Sheena Summers
Account Executive
sheena.summers@n2co.com
843-560-2681



Amber Smith
Client Success Manager
sc.ads@n2co.com
919-391-5894



Chelsea Marne
Photographer
Chelsea Marne Photography
chelseamarnephotography@gmail.com
724-289-6179



Shayla Tabor
Photographer
hello@staborstudios.com
713-402-8989



Heather Spruill
Writer



Beth McCabe
Writer

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

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publisher's note

April

HAPPY BELATED EASTER!



By Robert Smith, Area Director/Publisher

Dear *Columbia Real Producers*,

As we usher in the blossoming beauty of spring, we are thrilled to bring you the April 2024 edition of *Columbia Real Producers Magazine*. This month, we celebrate not only the vibrant renewal of nature but also the dedication and excellence of the real estate professionals who make dreams come true.

On our cover, we proudly feature Heide Brown, an exemplary individual whose commitment to service and exceptional achievements have set new standards in the industry. Join us as we delve into their inspiring journey, uncovering the strategies and passion that drive their success.

In our "Celebrating Leader" segment, we shine a spotlight on a visionary in the real estate realm who has not only led with integrity but has also made significant contributions to the community. Their leadership style and innovative approach have left an indelible mark, and we invite you to explore the insights they share in this exclusive feature.

Recognizing excellence, our "Top Producer" showcase brings you the crème de la crème of real estate professionals, an individual who has consistently outperformed and exceeded expectations. Learn from their experiences, strategies, and industry wisdom as they reveal the keys to their ongoing success.

As part of our commitment to collaboration, we proudly present our "Preferred Partner Spotlight," highlighting businesses and individuals who play crucial roles in supporting the real estate ecosystem. These preferred partners have earned their place through reliability, expertise, and a shared commitment to excellence.

In the spirit of Easter, a season of hope and new beginnings, we extend our warmest wishes to you and your loved ones. May this joyous time bring renewal, prosperity, and success to your lives and endeavors.

Thank you for being part of the *Columbia Real Producers Magazine* community. We hope you find inspiration, insights, and valuable connections within the pages of this special April edition.

Happy Belated Easter!



Warm regards,

ROBERT SMITH
Co-Owner/Publisher/Advertising Sales, *Columbia Real Producers Magazine*
843-560-6278
Robert.smith@n2co.com



SIERRA NELSON
Co-Owner/Publisher, *Columbia Real Producers Magazine*
402-560-4555
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Welcome Columbia Real Producers Class of 2024!

THE TOP 5% IN THE COLUMBIA METRO AREA!

▶ announcement

Welcome *Columbia Real Producers* Class of 2024. First, I want to congratulate you for qualifying whether you are a new member or a returning member.

So, what this means is that you ranked in the top 300 producing realtors in the Columbia Metro Area out of 6,000 realtors putting you in the top 5%.

Since the launch of *Columbia Real Producers* Magazine in August 2023, I've noticed recurring questions from many of our readers. To ensure everyone has access to the answers, I've decided to compile them here. Feel free to explore, and remember, my door is always open for discussions about anything related to the magazine. This publication is crafted to be YOUR voice!

Q: What is the purpose of Real Producers magazine?

A: The mission of *Columbia Real Producers* is simple. We strive to inform and inspire the top-producing real estate agents in the upstate market and connect them socially. We do this by telling their personal stories. How they have succeeded and failed. What drives them to achieve year in and year out? Where they spend their time when not working and what they are passionate about – other than real estate. We give local top-producing REALTORS® a platform to tell their story in a way they have not been able to do before.

The secondary focus is to provide an avenue for our affiliate partners to create relationships with these top performers, on a level that they might not be able to achieve on their own.

Q: Who receives this magazine?

A: The top 300 producing agents in the Columbia market. This is based on the total volume sold and the data is based

on 2023 MLS (by closed volume) We cut off the list at 300 from each MLS. The ranking is annual and resets every year. For this year the publication will go to the top 300 ranked agents of 2023. It will continue to update annually with a fresh list of top performers.



Q: What is the process for being featured in this magazine?

A: It's really simple – you can nominate other REALTORS® (or yourselves!). We will consider anyone brought to our attention because we don't know everyone's stories, so we need your help to learn about them. A nomination currently looks like this: You email us at robert.smith@realproducersmag.com with the subject "Nomination: (Name of Nominee)." Please explain why you are nominating them to be featured. It could be that they have an amazing story that needs to be told; perhaps they overcame extreme obstacles, they are an exceptional leader, have the best customer service, or they give back to the community in a big way, etc. The next step is an interview with us to ensure it's a good fit. If all works out, then we put the wheels in motion for our writer to conduct an interview and write the article, and for our photographers to schedule a photoshoot.

Q: What does it cost a REALTOR®/team to be featured?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing, my friends, so nominate away! This is not a pay-to-play model whatsoever.

Q: How can I write an article to be printed?

A: If you are interested in writing an article to contribute your ideas,

experience, knowledge, expertise, or stories to *Upstate Real Producers* Magazine. Please email Amy Porter at amy.porter@n2co.com she is our Content Director.

Who are the preferred partners?

A: Anyone listed as a "preferred partner" in the front of the magazine is part of this community. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine and attend our quarterly events. We don't just find these businesses on the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have personally referred to every single preferred partner you see here. We won't even take a meeting with a business that has not been vetted by one of you and "stamped for approval," in a sense. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network, not only of the best REALTORS® in the upstate but the best affiliates as well, so we can all grow stronger together.

Q: How can I refer a preferred partner?

A: If you know and want to recommend a local business that works with top REALTORS®, please email us to let us know at robert.smith@realproducersmag.com and introduce us!

Robert Smith
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POWERS INSURANCE EXPERTS

JEREMY POWERS

▶▶ preferred partner spotlight



Photos By: Shayla Tabor (Stabor Studios) | Written By: Amy Porter

Business Spotlight: Powers Insurance Experts

Meet Jeremy Powers: A Family Man with a Passion for Protection

Jeremy Powers, along with his wife Emily and their three children, Olivia, Chloe, and Judah, leads a fulfilling life in Columbia SC. As a dedicated family man and community member, Jeremy balances his time between his thriving business, Powers Insurance Experts (PIE), and his various hobbies, including serving at his local church, playing board games, and hosting the Purpose Over Profits Podcast.

The Birth of Powers Insurance Experts: From Bland to Brilliant

Jeremy's journey into the insurance industry was motivated by a desire to make a tangible difference in people's

lives. After gaining over a decade of experience with Allstate, Jeremy founded Powers Insurance Experts in January 2020. Recognizing the perceived dullness of insurance, Jeremy injected a dose of creativity into the industry by naming his business "ChoosePIE," reflecting his belief that insurance can be more fun!

The PIE team, consisting of experienced professionals like Amber, Sherry, Lyndon, Garnett, Alan, and Jeremy himself, prides itself on offering a comprehensive range of insurance services, including home, auto, life, business, pet, boat, ATV, golf cart, and motorcycle insurance.

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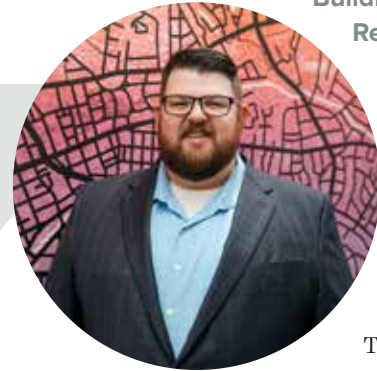
personalized and engaging insurance solutions. The team's unique approach involves creating personalized video explanations for each client, simplifying complex coverages and ensuring informed decision-making. With a seamless process that takes less than a minute to share information, Powers Insurance Experts makes insurance easy and enjoyable for their clients.

Community Engagement: Empowering Others Beyond Insurance

Jeremy's dedication to serving his community extends beyond his business. He actively participates in initiatives like itscola, which aims to cultivate and promote talent and innovation in the Columbia area. Additionally, Powers Insurance Experts supports organizations like Sccadvasa, contributing to efforts to end domestic violence and sexual assault in the state.

Awards and Accolades: Recognizing Excellence

Jeremy's professionalism and dedication have earned him numerous accolades, including being listed in the "35 under 35" by Columbia Metropolitan Magazine and named one of the "Top 50 under 35 insurance professionals in the USA - Rising Stars" by Business Insurance Monthly. Powers Insurance Experts has also been recognized as the "Best Local Insurance Company" and Jeremy as the "Best Local Insurance Agent" multiple times by publications like Free Times.



Building Trust, One Relationship at a Time

For Jeremy, success isn't just about profits; it's about knowing that he's done what's best for those he serves. His favorite quote by Theodore Roosevelt, "No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care," encapsulates his philosophy perfectly. Powers Insurance Experts aims to be the go-to choice for homeowners who value exceptional customer service, blending technology with local expertise to provide the best possible solutions.



Final Thoughts: Insurance Made Simple and Enjoyable

At Powers Insurance Experts, Jeremy Powers and his team are more than just insurance agents; they're trusted advisors dedicated to protecting their clients' best interests. With a focus on purpose over profits and a commitment to building meaningful connections, Powers Insurance Experts is redefining the insurance experience one client at a time.

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▶▶ cover story

Heidi **BROWN**

Photos By: Chelsea Marne Photography (Chelsea Marne)
Written By: Amy Porter

Heidi Brown **A Dedicated Realtor Making Dreams Happen**

Heidi Brown, an esteemed real estate agent at EXIT Real Estate Consultants, epitomizes dedication and passion in her craft. With over two decades of experience in the industry, Heidi's journey is a testament to her unwavering commitment to excellence and client satisfaction.

A Journey of Passion **and Perseverance**

Heidi's journey into real estate began in 2003 after graduating from the University of South Carolina with a degree in Public Relations and a minor in Business. Armed with a thirst for knowledge and a drive to excel, she dove headfirst into the world of real estate, quickly establishing herself as a trusted professional in Lexington and Richland County.

From her very first listing, Heidi's dedication to her clients' needs set her apart. Her genuine desire to serve and her relentless pursuit of excellence propelled her career forward, leading to numerous successful transactions and accolades along the way.



**HEIDI BROWN
IS UNDOUBTEDLY
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DREAMS INTO REALITY
ONE CLIENT AT A TIME.**



A Commitment to Continuous Learning

What sets Heidi apart is her unwavering commitment to continuous learning and improvement. Always striving to be at the top of her game, she devotes herself to ongoing education, constantly seeking out new insights and staying abreast of the latest industry trends. Whether it's through reading, podcasts, or specialized training courses, Heidi ensures that she is always equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver exceptional results for her clients.

Building Success Through Mentorship & Collaboration

Heidi attributes much of her success to the supportive environment fostered at EXIT Real Estate Consultants. With a mentorship program in place and a culture of collaboration, Heidi and her colleagues uplift and empower each other, sharing insights, strategies, and resources to collectively elevate their performance.

Guided by her broker, Craig Summerall, Heidi has thrived, utilizing the tools and support available to deliver outstanding outcomes for her clients.

Making Dreams a Reality, One Client at a Time

For Heidi, the most rewarding aspect of her business is seeing the joy and satisfaction on her clients' faces. Whether she's helping a first-time homebuyer find their dream home or assisting a seller in maximizing their property's value, Heidi's focus is always on her clients' best interests.

Her genuine care and attention to detail shine through in every interaction, earning her the trust and loyalty of her clients time and time again. Beyond the dollars and titles, Heidi finds fulfillment in knowing that she has made a positive difference in her clients' lives.

Looking Ahead: A Future Fueled by Passion and Purpose

As Heidi looks to the future, she sees real estate continuing to play a central role in her life. With each passing year, she sets new goals and aspirations, driven by her passion for her work and her desire to exceed expectations.

Whether it's through her philanthropic endeavors supporting causes close to her heart or her adventures with her family, Heidi approaches life with the same energy and enthusiasm that defines her professional endeavors.



A Legacy of Excellence and Integrity

Heidi Brown is more than just a real estate agent; she is a beacon of excellence and integrity in her field. Her dedication to her clients, her commitment to continuous improvement, and her unwavering passion for her work set her apart as a true industry leader.

As Michael Jordan once said, "Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen." Heidi Brown is undoubtedly one who makes it happen, turning dreams into reality one client at a time.

In the annals of real estate history, Heidi Brown will be remembered not only for her impressive sales achievements but for the lasting impact she has had on the lives of those she serves. With Heidi Brown by their side, clients can rest assured that they have a trusted partner who will always go above and beyond to make their dreams come true.

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Candice McCuien

▶ celebrating leaders



Century 21 Excel

Photos By: Shayla Tabor (Stabor Studios)
Written By: Amy Porter

A Passionate Realtor and Servant Leader

Introduction:

Meet Candice McCuien, a seasoned real estate professional dedicated to serving her clients and community with integrity and compassion. As a REALTOR® with over a decade of experience, Candice has successfully navigated the dynamic real estate landscape, leaving an indelible mark on the industry.

Early Years and Inspiration:

In 2008, Candice embarked on her real estate journey with Rymarc Homes (now NVR Ryan Homes), where her fascination with the home buying and selling process took root. Her interest deepened during the construction of her family's second home, sparking the realization that a career in real estate was her calling. This revelation led her to become a sales agent for a local builder, marking the beginning of her remarkable journey.

Career Evolution:

Candice's career path includes stints with ERA Wilder Realty, Keller Williams Realty, and the founding of her own brokerage, Excel Real Estate, in 2017. As the Founder of Excel, she witnessed its phenomenal growth, with over 400 agents joining across seven locations in five years. In 2023, she made a strategic decision to join forces with Century 21, recognizing the importance of

collaboration and support in an ever-changing market.

Achievements and Leadership:

Having personally assisted over 200 clients in their real estate transactions, Candice's commitment to excellence is evident. In 2023, she took on the role of Broker-in-Charge, overseeing 117 agents who collectively closed over 550 units and achieved a sales volume exceeding \$200 million. Amidst her leadership responsibilities, Candice still found time to assist 16 clients with their real estate needs.

Overcoming Challenges:

Candice faced the fear of the unknown when starting her own brokerage, Excel Real Estate. The absence of a blueprint did not deter her; instead, she embraced the opportunity and learned to navigate the challenges. Additionally, during a period of family health challenges in 2023, she made the strategic decision to partner with Century 21 for added support and synergy.

Passion and Rewards:

Candice's current passions include coaching and mentoring agents, advocating for Fair Housing, and educating first-time homebuyers. The most rewarding aspect of her business has been launching Excel Real Estate and witnessing the success of agents under her leadership, as well as making a positive impact on clients during major life transitions.



Legacy and Future Goals:

Real estate, for Candice, is a means of creating a lasting legacy for her family and future generations. She envisions continuing to educate people about financial literacy through real estate, recognizing its role in generating wealth and sustaining a desirable lifestyle.

Community Involvement:

Beyond her commitment to the real estate industry, Candice actively supports God Cares Charities, an organization dedicated to community service, health education, and more.

Personal Life:

Candice shares a fulfilling life with her husband, Kenny, and their daughter, Alana. They enjoy traveling, watching movies, attending Alana's school events, and participating in various family activities.

Closing Thoughts:

Candice McCuien, a true servant leader, leaves an inspiring legacy in the real estate industry. Her dedication to excellence, compassionate leadership, and commitment to serving others have defined her career. As she continues to impact lives and shape the future of real estate, Candice remains a beacon of inspiration for colleagues and aspiring professionals alike.

Favorite Quote:

Candice draws strength from the words of Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

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MORRIS ▶ top producer | Photos By: Shayla Tabor (Stabor Studios) | Written By: Heather Spruill

LYLES

Morris Lyles is considered a successful real estate veteran, having 27+ years under his belt. With almost \$10 million in total sales just last year, his experience speaks for itself, along with his excellent leadership skills and commitment to serving his community with his best efforts. Morris couldn't be more thrilled to help educate and assist his fellow neighbors and newcomers to the Columbia area to find their dream homes.

A REALTOR® IN CHARGE

After graduating from Presbyterian College, Morris began working with a real estate appraiser. Though he learned a lot, he wanted to work more with the residents and newcomers of his community. After networking with several brokers in the Columbia market, Morris decided to earn his license in 1997.

Morris began his journey as an independent agent at a small boutique firm in downtown Columbia. Years later, after some time at a larger franchise, ERA Wilder Realty reached out to offer him a position as Broker in Charge in 2006. He is now the Broker In Charge in the Northeast Columbia ERA Wilder office. He is coaching and mentoring this office



and working to grow and expand the office and ERA Wilder in the Columbia market.

Morris states, "I love the company I work for. I have always admired how they handled their business professionally, and I appreciate that family feeling when you walk through those doors—not to mention how we all uplift each other in every office and department."

Though the art of real estate is not always smooth sailing, Morris has found the resilience to take on a dynamic industry.

"Ever-changing markets and limited inventory can make being a REALTOR® difficult, but I am always up for a challenge. This business is constantly wavering, and it's vital that I stay positive and motivated to help my clients and agents find what they are looking for. In order to help them through a stressful process, I have to be on top of my game."

While he continues to educate himself on the Columbia market, Morris makes sure to help and educate his clients, customers, and his agents on the process and business of real estate. He continues to support those in the industry by taking on leadership roles within the REALTOR® organization, such as Central Carolina



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“I have learned more about what drives our industry and how we can be better stewards of our industry. I hope to lead others to thrive in this business.”

While he gives his clients and agents his best, Morris also spares time to help others in his community. Though a former president, he is involved in the Contemporaries at the Columbia Museum of Art. He has also been involved with The Columbia Kiwanis Club and served as its president in 2006.

After he leaves the office, Morris enjoys spending quality time with his wife, Sarah, and their two daughters, Elyce and Sadie. After their recent adventures to D.C., Orlando, FL., and Williamsburg, VA, it is safe to conclude that this family of four loves traveling together. Morris enjoys hunting, fishing, boating, and many other outdoor activities when he finds a moment to himself. And if he is not outside, he can be found in the kitchen challenging himself to a brand new recipe to serve for dinner.

Morris stands out as a strong REALTOR® and leader in his field. He had the honor of serving as President of the South Carolina Association of REALTORS® in 2021 and was named the SC REALTOR® of the Year in 2022. With \$100 million in career volume, there is no doubt that his knowledge of the housing market and people skills make him the ideal agent.

With his experience and expertise, he hopes to extend some words of wisdom to encourage new agents or those interested in real estate.

Morris concludes, “If there are educational opportunities that would help take your career to the next level, pursue them. Gaining knowledge and confidence in a competitive and vigorous field will help you excel and grow in your business.”

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