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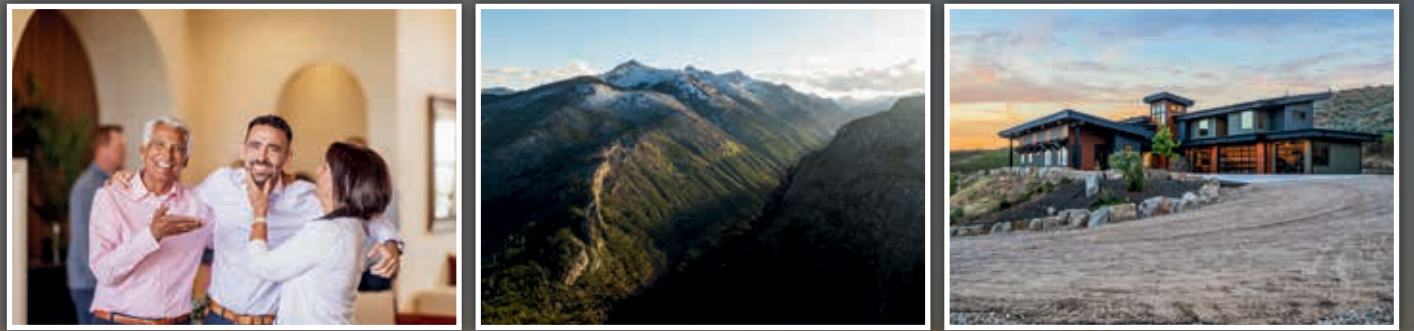
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CRUZ PAINTING

AN AMERICAN DREAM STORY

From humble beginnings, some stories transcend mere numbers and accolades, capturing the essence of grit, determination, and the pursuit of a better life. Cruz Painting LLC is one such story. Founded by Jose Cruz, this business—now flourishing for 18 years—had its roots in a small town in Mexico, growing into a trusted name in Idaho’s painting industry. Jose Cruz’s journey didn’t begin in the United States. He was raised with a family of 11 siblings, in a life where resources were scarce, but the spirit of hard work was plentiful. From a young age, Jose made two promises to himself: to learn a trade that could provide stability and to raise no more than three children, ensuring they had a life filled with the opportunities he had once longed for.

At just 18, armed with dreams bigger than his hometown could hold, Jose set off for Los Angeles. It was a leap into the unknown—he spoke no English, had no formal skills, and knew that his first step toward a brighter future was to overcome these

challenges. So, he enrolled in English classes, determined to break the language barrier and carve out a path for himself.

A chance encounter changed everything when friends invited him to help



partner spotlight

with a painting job. What began as a one-off opportunity soon sparked a passion. The art of painting, with its precision and beauty, captivated him. Jose started at the very bottom, learning the trade brushstroke by brushstroke. Every completed job was a step toward perfecting his craft. Years of hard work paid off, but the realization that he was worth more than the roles he had filled under others pushed him to start his own business. With the support of his wife, Cruz Painting LLC was born. Now, almost two decades later, the business has a reputation for impeccable craftsmanship and high-quality materials, with an ethos of transforming homes, not just painting them.

“We don’t just paint; we transform,” Jose proudly states, summarizing what sets Cruz Painting apart. This commitment to excellence has not only built trust with clients but has also made the company a sought-after partner in the real estate world, with 25% of its projects coming from this industry.

But behind every brushstroke is the driving force of family. Jose’s three children are his inspiration, his reason for striving to be the best in both business and fatherhood. Despite the demands of running a thriving company, Jose is always present for



“ WE DON’T JUST PAINT; WE TRANSFORM.”

family time, whether it’s a relaxing park visit or a cozy movie night.

Painting remains his passion. “There’s nothing quite like turning a blank space into something beautiful,” Jose says. His joy comes from seeing the satisfaction on a client’s face, knowing his work will be admired for years.

Interestingly, during his time in Los Angeles, Jose had the rare opportunity to paint the homes of some of Hollywood’s elite. Though he keeps names under wraps, this surprising chapter adds a unique twist to his story, which few would guess about the owner of an Idaho-based painting business.

Despite those glamorous moments, Jose chose the quieter, community-focused life of Idaho. He’s built a legacy founded on honesty, hard work, and faith. His gratitude shines through as he reflects on his journey—how his values, combined with the opportunities in America, made everything possible.

Looking ahead, Jose hopes to leave a lasting mark on the Boise business community, one that upholds the principles that brought him this far. He lives by three simple yet powerful words: honesty, kindness, and punctuality. These guide not only his business but also how he treats people. His philosophy, inspired by the Golden Rule, is clear: “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Cruz Painting LLC is more than just a business. It’s a testament to what’s possible when determination, family values, and faith come together. As Jose continues to grow his company, his mission remains clear: to provide a future filled with possibility for his children and to show them, through his own hard-earned success, that with dedication, anything is achievable.

With 18 years of success behind him, the future of Cruz Painting LLC shines bright.



MAXIMIZING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE IN DECEMBER



DON'T LET OFF THE GAS!

By Carrie Holmes, Owner of Approved By Carrie Social Media Manager & Instagram Coach

As the year comes to a close, it's tempting to slow down on social media. But December is the perfect time to connect with your audience in a meaningful way without being overly salesy. The holiday season offers a great opportunity to focus on relationship-building and consistency, keeping your business top of mind.

KEEP IT REAL AND HELPFUL
December is about connection. Your clients are thinking about family, traditions, and the upcoming new year—not just real estate. Rather than pushing listings, focus on being helpful. Share winter home-selling tips or insights into what the market might look like in early 2025.

For example: “Selling your home during the holidays? Here are my top tips for creating a cozy atmosphere during winter showings! #holidayselling-tips #boiserealestate”

Or, reflect on the year and share your excitement for the next one (CapCut is a great app for templates): “As 2024 comes to a close, I’m reflecting on an amazing year of helping families find their dream homes. Here’s to 2025 and making even more dreams come true! #yearendreflection #grateful”

SHOW OFF YOUR PERSONAL SIDE
December is full of opportunities to share personal moments that make you relatable. Post about family

traditions or holiday outings. For example, film a Reel while visiting the holiday lights at Scentsy or Indian Creek Plaza. Showcasing local events connects you with your community. Also - make sure to tag the places you go!

Sample caption: “Checking out the amazing lights at Indian Creek Plaza in Caldwell tonight with the family! One of my favorite holiday traditions in the Treasure Valley. If you’re looking to call this area home in 2025, let’s chat! #idahome #movetocaldwell”

▶▶ the social edge

STAY CONSISTENT
Consistency is key, even in December. Mixing personal and professional content will keep you connected to your audience and set you up for success in the new year.

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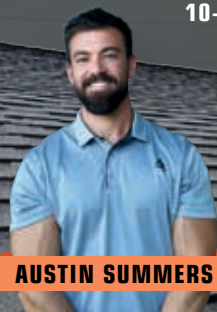
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FAITH MIKITA HOMES OF IDAHO

For Faith Mikita, real estate isn't just a job—it's the path to live the life she had always dreamed of. Making the jump to real estate eight years ago seems like a blink of the eye. Fast forward, she's accumulated over \$100 million in sales, with an impressive 34 homes closed in just the last year. But for Faith, success is measured in more than just sales and figures. To her, real estate signifies freedom, family, and the chance to shape a life where hard work truly pays off and every day presents new opportunities.



Real estate wasn't always part of her plan. "I got tired of working hourly jobs where my efforts didn't reflect in the paycheck," she says. "I needed to be in a place where my hard work actually mattered." This is the point in time where real estate became an intriguing path. AND. IT. WORKED. "It's simple: the more effort you put in, the more you get out. No ceilings,

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“
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”
is incredibly satisfying—it fills my heart.”

Outside of Real Estate, you will find Faith staying active and engaged in the community. Whether cheering on her boys at football games, hitting the trails for a hike, paddleboarding, or camping, she embraces an adventurous lifestyle. “I love staying fit, whether it's through F45 workouts or just getting outside. Life's too short to be a spectator.”

Her travels have taken her on memorable journeys far from Boise, like the three months she spent exploring Costa Rica and Nicaragua with two of her sons. “We traveled light—just one suitcase—stayed in hostels, surfed, and roamed the coast. It was a bit chaotic but completely unforgettable,” she laughs. She's also ran



no limits. I dove right in because I had nothing to lose—and it's been the best decision I've ever made.”

You will always find Faith as one of the top producers at her brokerage, receiving the esteemed “Big Kahuna” title in 2024, along with several awards from Boise Regional Realtors. Still, these accomplishments aren't what fuel her ambition. For Faith, it's all about living life her way and savoring each moment of the journey.

At the center of Faith's life is her family. She and her husband, Nate, have been together for 24 years, raising three football-loving boys. “We've got one at Boise State, another at College of Idaho, and the youngest is at Eagle High,” she proudly shares. “They're the reason I do what I do. Their dedication and

passion fuel me, and they inspire me in ways they'll never fully realize.”

Faith's work ethic was built early on, growing up in a small town as one of seven siblings. “We were always taught to aim high and find a way to make things happen. If college was in the cards, scholarships were the answer—and we all made it happen. That experience showed me that with the right mindset, anything is possible.”

What brings Faith great joy is helping others reach their full potential. Whether it's mentoring new agents, leading mastermind groups, or speaking at industry panels, seeing others succeed is what fulfills her. “There's nothing better than watching someone take what you've taught them and soar. Seeing people hit their goals

the Rock and Roll Marathon in San Diego and even braved the chilly waters of Oregon to learn how to surf. “Life's one big adventure—you've got to jump in and relish every moment.”

Balancing her career and family hasn't always been easy. “Perfect balance is a myth—it shifts as life changes,” she notes. “There are times when you have to make tough choices to get to where you want, but once you're there, the freedom is worth it.” One of the hardest lessons she's learned is knowing when to say no. “It's easy to get sucked into things that don't really matter, but staying focused on what's important, both in work and in life, is key.”



For those just starting in real estate, Faith offers a simple yet powerful piece of advice: “Don't quit.” She believes persistence is the key to success. “People talk about luck, but luck is just being ready when opportunity knocks. Keep showing up, and eventually, things will fall into place.” Through it all, Faith is incredibly grateful for the life she's built. “My faith, my family, and the freedom I have as a realtor are what I'm most thankful for,” she says. “Sometimes I catch myself in the middle of a workday and think, ‘How did I get lucky enough to call this my job?’”

Faith's path is all about trusting her instincts, staying focused on what truly matters, and embracing life's unpredictability. Whether she's guiding clients to their ideal home, mentoring fellow agents, or supporting her kids at their games, she's always grateful for the life God has given her. With family, faith, and a bold sense of adventure driving her, she's learned that when your priorities are clear, extraordinary opportunities will follow. As each chapter unfolds, Faith moves forward with confidence, knowing the best is still ahead.

Roxy Feller

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rising star CARTER BAKER

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Photos by Garrett Leo

Describe your journey into real estate. What drew you to this profession?

I got into real estate because I wanted to become a lifelong real estate investor, and I figured, “What better way to learn about real estate than by selling it to people?” I saw real estate as an excellent investment due to its leverage of debt, appreciation, and depreciation. The Business Model of Real Estate, to me, made the most sense plus I was always told I had a knack for selling, so I thought, “Why not?”



What life event(s) led you to become a real estate agent?

During college, I had this moment where everything changed. I had been working as a plumber and fully planned on going to medical school, but something inside me nudged me to take a Business Management class. That decision turned out to be a turning point. Suddenly, I was deep into learning about investing—the stock market, real estate, and business acquisitions—and it felt like everything clicked. I realized I wasn’t just interested in these things; I was excited about them. I found out that I love taking on challenges and figuring out how to make things work better. My mind is always spinning with ideas, asking, “How can I improve this?” It felt like a perfect fit for who I am, and from that moment, I knew business was where I belonged.

What are some things you are passionate about in real estate?

I’m most passionate about the investment side of real estate. While I enjoy working with first-time homebuyers and beautiful homes, my true passion is finding good investments—whether it’s raw land or turnkey rentals. I love underwriting deals, figuring out creative solutions, and constantly innovating my marketing strategies and systems.



What are some things you are passionate about outside of real estate?

Business has always been a big passion of mine. I’ve always been a visionary, and there’s something exciting about seeing the potential in different businesses and putting plans into action to make those visions a reality. Leading people and guiding teams is something I want to continue doing throughout my life. In fact, my entrepreneurial spirit started early—when I was just 10 years old, I started my own business to earn enough money to buy and care for a dog!

Fast forward to now, in October of this year, I partnered with a friend to purchase D&A Heating and Cooling, an HVAC business in Nampa that has been around for over 20 years. Since taking over, we've been scaling, hiring, and automating processes to grow the company, and we're already actively looking to acquire other home service businesses here in the Treasure Valley. It's been an exciting journey, and I can't wait to see what's next.

What is the most challenging this you have faced in this industry?

Some of the biggest struggles when I first got started in real estate was just getting people to trust me to use them as their agent. Why would somebody want to use me? It took me a couple of years to be able to round out a solid answer that I could be confident in. But my success leads back to my confidence, I was always confident that I would figure everything out, even if I had no idea what was going on. I continue to live that way, confidently taking on challenges, knowing that I will figure it out.

Tell us about your family:

I'm the second of five children, and I've been married to my wife for three years. We met in high school, became great friends, and eventually started dating in college. We now have a 6-month-old baby girl named Blair, who is developing her own personality, and an English Cocker Spaniel that everyone loves. We are blessed with health and happiness.

When you're not working, what kinds of things do you enjoy doing?

I love sports and anything related to the automotive industry. Basketball is my favorite, but I also enjoy golf and pickleball. I've flipped cars and trucks since high school and still do it as a hobby. I recently completed a full restoration of a 1981 Honda CB750, which turned out great!



What is something others might be surprised to know about you?

I'm pretty handy—I actually built the ADU where my family and I live! It was a shop conversion that took me about three months to complete. The only thing I outsourced was the electrical work.

Who do you look up to? What are some of your best sources of inspiration?

I look up to my dad, who always kept me in check and raised my standards. My grandpa inspires me with his knowledge and generosity. I also admire my mentors, Ken and

Sherry Fernandez, for their success in business, their strong marriage, and their health.

What sort of legacy would you like to leave on the real estate industry?

I want to be remembered as the agent who operated with complete integrity and welcomed difficult challenges. I want to be known as a problem-solver—someone people turn to when they need solutions. I'm not someone who sugar-coats things, and while that might not be for everyone, I want to work with people who respect and appreciate who I am as a person.

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Year-end Reflection: Key Insights and Growth Strategies

By Roxy Feller

As the year comes to a close, it's the perfect time for real estate professionals to reflect on their achievements, challenges, and growth. A thoughtful review of the past year can provide valuable insights, helping agents refine their strategies and set clear, actionable goals for success in the year ahead.

Here are some reflective tips for real estate agents to evaluate their achievements and lessons learned in 2024:

1. Set Specific Goals

- Review the goals set at the beginning of 2024. Were they achieved? If not, why?
- Analyze which goals were realistic and which were overly ambitious.

2. Evaluate Sales Performance

- Assess the number of transactions completed, sales volume, and types of properties sold.
- Compare performance to previous years to gauge growth.



3. Client Feedback

- Gather testimonials and feedback from clients. What went well, and what could be improved?
- Reflect on your communication style and relationship-building skills.

4. Market Trends Analysis

- Examine market conditions throughout the year. What trends impacted sales, and how did you adapt?
- Consider how economic factors influenced your strategies.

5. Continuing Education

- Reflect on courses or training attended. How did they contribute to your professional development?
- Identify areas for further education or skill enhancement.

6. Networking and Relationships

- Evaluate the effectiveness of networking efforts. Did new connections lead to business opportunities?
- Reflect on partnerships with fellow agents or businesses that enhanced your services.

7. Time Management and Productivity

- Analyze how time was spent in various activities. Were there areas of productivity or inefficiency?

- Consider implementing new tools or practices to enhance productivity in the upcoming year.

8. Technology Utilization

- Assess how technology was used in your business. Did it streamline processes or reach new clients?
- Identify new tools or platforms to explore for 2025.

9. Financial Review

- Review financial performance, including expenses and profitability.
- Reflect on budgeting practices and identify areas for cost reduction.

10. Work-Life Balance

- Consider your work-life balance throughout the year. Did you prioritize self-care?
- Reflect on stress management techniques that worked or need improvement.

11. Celebrate Achievements

- Acknowledge personal and team successes, however small. Celebrate milestones with colleagues.
- Set a plan to maintain or build upon these achievements going into 2025.

By systematically reflecting on these areas, real estate agents can gain valuable insights to guide their future success and personal growth in the industry.

As you reflect on 2024, take the time to celebrate your successes and learn from any challenges. Embrace the lessons, refine your strategies, and enter 2025 with renewed focus and determination. Your growth this year sets the foundation for even greater achievements ahead—make the next year your best yet!

If you're ready to elevate your mindset and unlock your full potential in 2025, don't miss Roxy's Mindset Mastery event (see ad for details). This is your opportunity to gain powerful insights and practical strategies to take your business and personal growth to the next level. Reserve your spot today and start your journey toward success!

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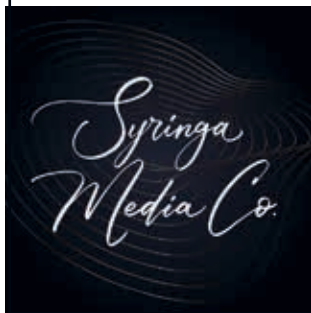
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