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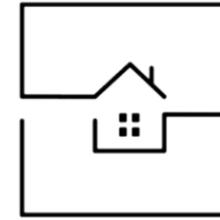


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Maximizing Year-End Momentum: The Key to Real Estate Team Success in the New Year

By Verl Workman

For real estate teams, Q4 isn't a time to wind down but to ramp up strategic planning for the year ahead. Workman Success Systems advocates this period as critical for agents and teams aiming to excel in a competitive market.

Reflect and Analyze

Agents and teams should use Q4 to reflect on the year's performance, pinpointing successful strategies and areas for improvement. This analysis is foundational for informed planning.

SMART Goals

Setting SMART goals for the new year is essential. These goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Whether it's increasing listings or enhancing digital marketing efforts, these goals provide a clear direction for the upcoming year.

Strategic Action Plans

With goals set, teams must outline strategic action plans for each income stream, ensuring a diversified approach to revenue generation.

Market Trends

Staying ahead of market trends is crucial. Teams should analyze forecasts and economic indicators to prepare for changes that could affect the Houston market.

Professional Development

Q4 is also an ideal time for teams to invest in professional development, learning new technologies and strategies to maintain a competitive edge.

In essence, Q4 is a pivotal time for real estate teams to lay the foundation for long-term success. By assessing past performance, setting clear goals, creating strategic plans, anticipating market trends, and enhancing skills, teams can approach the new year with confidence and a plan for growth.

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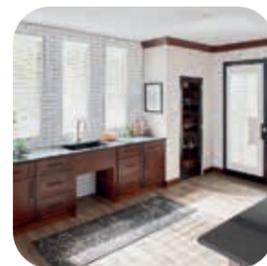
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Reflect, Recharge, and **DOUBLE DOWN!**

December, with its unique mix of reflection and hope, encourages us to look back with gratitude and look forward with optimism.

It's the month when we most naturally slow down, seek warmth, and create space for the people, places, and traditions that ground us. From the glow of candlelight to the joy of a home-cooked meal, this season invites us to nurture ourselves and our connections with others. Everything and everyone is more open to connection than at any other time of the year.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself to help with your **reflection**:

1. What were your three best accomplishments from the year?
2. What new relationships did you make worth celebrating?
3. What relationships did you let lapse that need your attention?

When it comes to **recharging**, try doing the following:

1. List out the activities that GIVE you more energy.
2. Ask yourself: Throughout the past year, when were you at your lowest energy level and why?
3. Translate these insights into time blocks on your calendar from now through 2025... AND TREAT THOSE BLOCKS LIKE LISTING APPOINTMENTS!

DOUBLE DOWN in DECEMBER with your efforts.

Most of your peers will be relaxing and taking time off. Great. For those of you looking to make 2025 your best year, make more relationship-building appointments. Plan out 2025 and give thanks.

If you are getting this magazine, you are the best of the best. However, are you the best you can be?

I can't wait to see and learn from you in the coming months ahead.

Yours in a Real Relationship with Real Producers,



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BREAKING RESTORING CHAINS, DIGNITY



International Justice Mission is a relentless force dedicated to eradicating violence and injustice against the world's most marginalized populations.

By **Shauna Osborne**,
National Editor

In the face of child labor's dark reality, Kumar and others like him inspire hope.

In a world where poverty and brutality cast a shadow over many innocent lives, N2GIVES partner International Justice Mission (IJM) has emerged as a global organization dedicated to safeguarding those most vulnerable. IJM is deeply committed to the fight against trafficking, violence involving women and children, and police abuse of power. They collaborate closely with local authorities, government partners, criminal investigators, social workers and community organizers in 16 countries to address gaps in the local justice system

and provide trauma-informed aftercare to help heal and rebuild survivors' lives. Founded in 1997 by Gary Haugen, a visionary human rights attorney driven by a sense of urgency, IJM's story is one of hope, determination and the unwavering belief that justice can and must prevail.

Kumar's is just one of IJM's countless stories of full-circle redress and restoration. Twenty years ago, Kumar was a vulnerable child in desperate need of intervention. He lost both of his



parents by age 5, and at just 7 years old, he was forced into a life of unpaid labor by a local brick kiln owner over fraudulently inflated family debt. Kumar endured two agonizing years of abuse until, with the assistance of IJM, local authorities rescued him. Since then, IJM has supported Kumar in pursuing his educational aspirations, enabling him to complete his bachelor's degree and a master's degree in social work. Kumar now gives back as a social worker with the IJM South Asia team, passionately dedicated to aiding other former victims on their path to recovery.

The work of Kumar and IJM shares a common goal with justice-minded companies like The N2 Company: to make a positive impact in the battle against human trafficking and violence. Acknowledging the collective effort needed to bring about lasting change, IJM enacts initiatives and provides support and actionable steps to make a difference globally.



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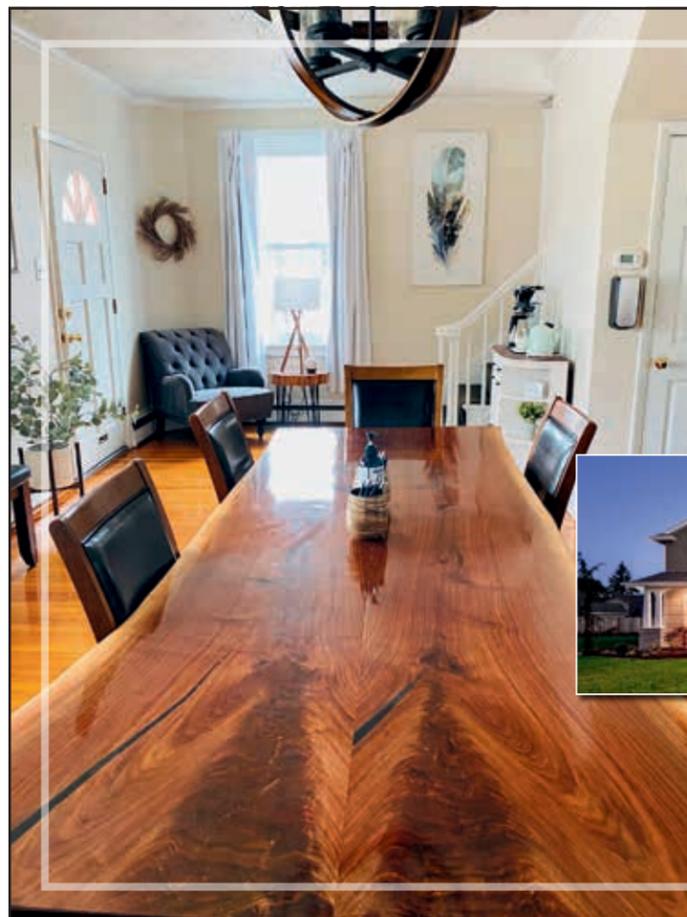
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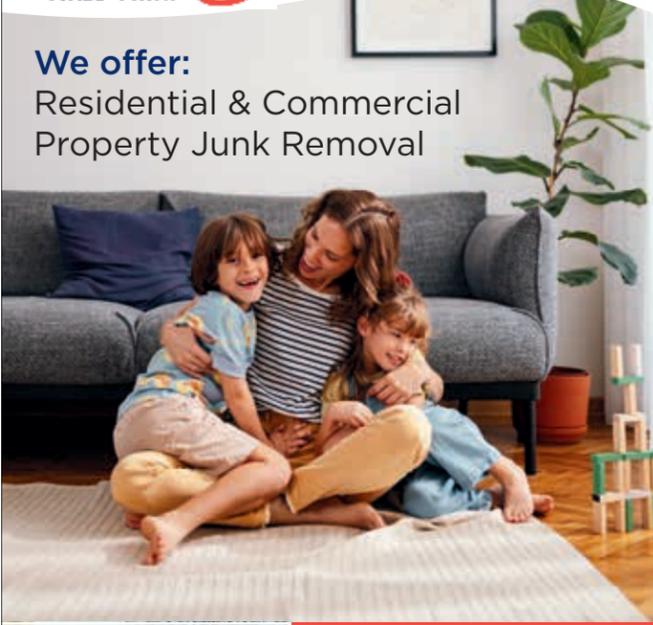


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COUCH POTATO CARPET & FLOORING

GLENN USHKOWITZ AND DAUGHTERS

keep family values at the heart of Couch Potato Carpet & Flooring.

Glenn Ushkowitz, owner of Couch Potato Carpet & Flooring, has been part of the flooring industry since childhood. “My uncle owned a flooring store in New York, and my mom worked there. I would go with her and play in the carpet rolls,” Glenn recalls.

By 16, Glenn was already installing carpets—a skill that laid the foundation for his career. After moving to Pennsylvania in 2002 to manage installations for a major retailer, he knew it was time to build something of his own. That’s when Couch Potato Carpet & Flooring was born.

Couch Potato began in 2004 as a shop-at-home service with the slogan, “You stay home, we’ll come to you.” Growth was slow at first, relying on word-of-mouth.

Glenn kept busy with installation work for large retailers, but the business expanded when they opened a second location in Etters, PA, in 2018.

Quality and Expertise

Now with two showrooms and ten employees, Couch Potato Carpet & Flooring offers a wide range of options. “We do it all,” Glenn says. “From carpet, vinyl, and laminate to ceramic tile showers and countertops.” The company also provides custom woodwork and area rugs to match homeowners’ visions. “We love turning a house into a home. There’s nothing better than seeing a customer’s dream become reality.”

Couch Potato also simplifies flooring upgrades with its unique Dreamseller Program. With just \$100 down, homeowners can upgrade now and defer the remaining balance until the home sells.

“It takes the financial stress off homeowners. We want them to get great flooring without dipping into savings or cutting corners.” Glenn emphasizes honest, fair pricing. “We never price gouge or offer fake discounts. If something sounds too good to be true, it usually is.”

Understanding each customer’s needs is central to their approach. “Every home is different. We ask about pets, kids, and what kind of subfloor they have. Not every product works for every situation, so we want to make sure the flooring fits.”

From free estimates to personalized follow-ups, Couch Potato focuses on building lasting relationships with clients.

Meet Glenn and His Family

When Glenn isn’t working, he enjoys spending time with his family in Harrisburg. His daughters, Gina and Sarina, are integral to the business, ensuring the family legacy continues.

Gina moved to Pennsylvania in 2008 and immediately began working in the office, quickly mastering all aspects of the business. Now the office manager, Gina is the go-to person for questions and problem-solving. “Gina knows all the ins and outs and can work any position. She’s a very valuable part of the team,” Glenn shares. Outside of work, Gina enjoys exploring new restaurants with friends, attending concerts of all genres, volunteering through her church, and caring for her two dogs.

Sarina and her husband, Matt, moved to Pennsylvania in 2012. Matt, who grew up building homes with his father, started as an installer for Couch Potato before shifting to the office in 2022, where he now manages commercial accounts and handles measurements. Sarina, a social worker by trade, initially worked part-time in the office. After their first son was born in 2013, she became a stay-at-home mom but became more involved with the business when the Etters location opened in 2018. Today, she focuses on marketing and advertising. Sarina and Matt enjoy watching their two boys play baseball, spending time with family and friends, and attending church. “It’s a family affair,” Glenn says. “My grandsons are my pride and joy. We love hanging out by the pool in the summer and making time for baseball and football games.”

Glenn also enjoys pickleball, cigar lounges, and golfing when he can. Traveling is another passion—whether it’s weekend trips to the Poconos or adventures abroad. “We’ve had some memorable trips to the Bahamas and Italy. I’m already thinking about my next destination,” he shares.

Looking ahead, Glenn hopes to continue growing Couch Potato Carpet & Flooring with the goal of passing it down to the next generation. “I look forward to the day when my grandsons can join the business. For now, I’m just enjoying the ride—networking, meeting new people, and watching the business grow.”

30+ Years of Precision and Community Commitment

Couch Potato Carpet & Flooring has earned multiple “Simply the Best” awards from *Harrisburg Magazine* and was named a 2024 Neighborhood FAVE by Nextdoor.

“We’re proud of what we’ve built, but we couldn’t have done it without our customers and community,” Glenn says. The company supports local youth sports, churches, and schools to give back to the communities that have helped them grow. Whether it’s finding the perfect flooring for a family home or helping clients prepare to sell, Glenn and his team are ready to guide homeowners through every step.

“Flooring can feel overwhelming, but when you have the right team, it doesn’t have to be.”



Glenn’s family | Photo submitted by family



Glenn’s grandsons
Photo submitted by family

James RHOADS

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Homesale Realty

James Rhoads isn't just selling homes—he's helping people achieve clarity during emotionally charged decisions. A real estate financial advisor by nature, James prides himself on being his clients' "Realtor for life," ensuring they feel informed and empowered from the first meeting to long after the closing. With 15 years of experience, James reflects on his journey, professional growth, and the inspiration he finds through family and community.

Where did your journey into real estate begin?

I grew up in Perry County and, after high school, made my way over the

mountain to Cumberland County, looking for new opportunities. I first got into real estate thinking I'd become an investor, buy a bunch of properties, and make a ton of money. But the reality set in—I had no idea what I was doing and no resources. That's when I decided to get my license and really learn the business.

I started with Keller Williams, where I thought the phone would just start ringing. But my first year? I didn't close a single deal. I was juggling night shifts at my full-time job, coming into the office exhausted, and learning everything I could.

Leaving Keller Williams for Coldwell Banker was a turning point. Courtney Franklin, a temporary office manager at Keller Williams gave me simple

but powerful advice: "Put yourself in the way of business." That phrase is still on my office whiteboard today—it won't even wipe off anymore.

What motivates you each day?

My family is my biggest motivation. My wife, who's currently in nursing school, works harder than anyone I know. She inspires me to show up and put in the work. If she's up an hour earlier than me to study, I have no excuse not to give my best.

How does real estate impact your quality of life?

The flexibility of this business is one of its biggest perks. I get to be there for my kids—whether that's coaching sports or just showing up to their events. But, with that freedom, it's easy to slack off if you're not careful. In real estate, you get exactly what you put into it. I love that challenge—if I'm not growing or moving forward, I know it's time to change things up.



Rahsaan "Sean" Robinson, James Rhoads, Doraezha Scott, Darius Ramsey





What's your approach to business?

It's all about relationships. A lot of my clients come from my inner circle, past clients, and referrals. I learned early on that if you do right by the person in front of you, they'll tell others. Real estate isn't just a business—it's about people making huge life decisions. I never take that lightly. You're not just buying a property; you're investing in a future, a place where families grow and memories are made.

One of the most rewarding moments is calling a buyer to say, "Congratulations, you got the house!"—especially in competitive markets. It's an amazing feeling when someone realizes all their hard work has paid off.

Tell us about your team and how they contribute to your success.

Right now, we have four agents, along with a fantastic virtual assistant in the Philippines who's truly my Swiss

Army knife—she handles a bit of everything. We also have a transaction coordinator who takes care of contracts from pending to close, which really helps us focus on new business. I've been fortunate to work with some incredible people over the years—agents who've come through our team, learned, grown, and then branched out to build their own businesses. I see that as a big win. There's enough market share for everyone, and I love seeing others succeed, whether it's with us or on their own. We all work better when we grow together.

What changes have you made recently to adapt to the market?

The last few years, I've focused on being proactive with my past clients, keeping them updated on the value of their homes and market trends—without expecting a transaction in return. With economic uncertainty and shifting markets, people just want to know if their equity is safe.

That's where I come in, providing clarity and information so they can make sound decisions.

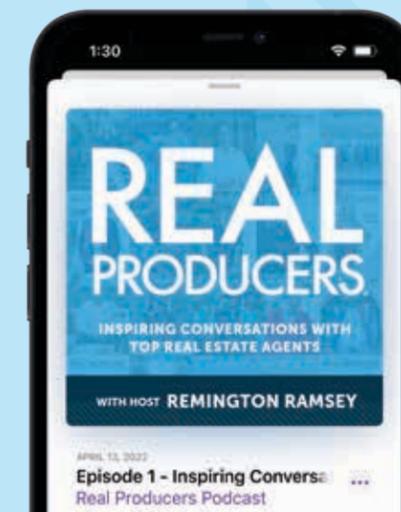
What books have influenced your thinking and business philosophy?

I'll admit, I wasn't much of a reader growing up—if it wasn't in Cliff Notes, I probably didn't read it. But since starting Ninja Selling, I've become more intentional about reading. Some of the books that have had the biggest impact on me include *The Millionaire Real Estate Agent*, *Atomic Habits*, and *Seven Levels of Communication*. These books reinforce the basics—like building real connections and focusing on what matters.

It's easy to get distracted by shiny objects in this business, but at the end of the day, it's about staying consistent and serving people well.

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ASHLEY Bleacher

HOWARD HANNA

▶▶ top agent

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“I love Lancaster—it’s a great place to raise kids, with excellent schools and a supportive community,” says Ashley Bleacher, founder of *The Ashley Bleacher Team* with Howard Hanna.

That love for her hometown shines through in both her personal life and professional pursuits, where she has built a thriving real estate career over the last decade and a half.

With a team of seven agents and growing, Bleacher’s journey from a young hotel sales and travel manager to a respected real estate leader is marked by community connections and a commitment to helping others succeed.

“My husband and I made the choice to raise our own children here, and I’m proud of our area. It’s easy for me to sell Lancaster County.”

BUILDING ON RESILIENCE

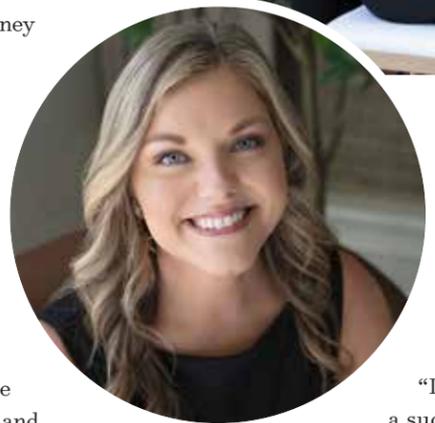
Ashley got her real estate license in 2009, a year that presented challenges for even seasoned agents.

“I was 22, fresh out of school, and we were in the middle of a recession,” she recalls. “I had to prove why someone should trust me to buy or sell their home.” With no family background in real estate and her parents still living in the same house she grew up in, Ashley’s path into the industry wasn’t traditional.

Her early work in the hospitality industry, including group sales for hotels, helped prepare her to excel in real estate. “I learned I really enjoy working with people and helping them have a great experience,” Ashley says. That knack for service led her to attend a career night hosted by a local brokerage, where the promise of independence and unlimited earning potential piqued her interest. She signed up for classes on the spot and soon after began the career that would become her passion.



Laura Eshbach, Ashley Bleacher and Sarah Lapp (Front) Heather Scheid, Blake Brubaker, Jeffrey Oram, Landon Coronado (Back)



However, starting out on her own during a downturn was not easy.

“I partnered with a successful real estate team and handled a mix of administrative tasks and some of my own deals,” she says. “I learned a lot from those early years—especially about working with investors and handling short sales and foreclosures.”

These experiences ignited what she calls “an adrenaline rush,” helping clients through tough situations like foreclosure and job loss.

“It was incredibly rewarding to help people navigate difficult moments and get back on their feet.”

In time, Ashley says she built the confidence to step out on her own. The opportunity to hire her first assistant was a pivotal moment.

“That was a scary but necessary decision. Delegating and paying someone else felt tricky at first, but I

knew I needed the help to reach the next level.”

That hire laid the foundation for what would eventually become *The Ashley Bleacher Team*.

“We grew the team together through a lot of trial and error,” she says. “As the industry evolved, we adapted. I’ve been through buyer’s markets, seller’s markets, and everything in between—you just have to stay in tune with what’s happening and keep moving forward.”

THE ASHLEY BLEACHER TEAM

Today, the team is seven members strong, plus a work-study student from a local high school who hopes to join the industry after graduation. Team members are quick to credit Ashley for creating a collaborative, supportive environment.

“Ashley has given me so many opportunities,” says Jeff Oram, one of the team’s earliest members.



Laura Eshbach echoes that sentiment: “Encouragement is the word I’d use—Ashley fosters an environment where you feel empowered to grow.”



Blake Brubaker emphasizes how valuable that support has been: “Everyone has been so helpful since I joined.”

Other team members describe Ashley’s leadership as both knowledgeable and creative, with Heather Scheid noting, “Ashley always finds solutions to challenges.”

Navigating change is a constant in real estate, and Ashley and her team embrace it. “Change is hard, but it’s unavoidable in this business,” she says. “You just need to adapt and keep going.”

Whether it’s fluctuations in interest rates, shifts between buyer and seller markets, or evolving consumer expectations, the team approaches every change with transparency and confidence.

“We’ve always focused on showing clients our value,” she says. “We know we’re worth what we bring to the table.”

While real estate keeps her busy, Ashley finds time to give back to the Lancaster community she loves. “Events like our Haunted Hannah fundraiser and supporting the Free Care Fund are important to us,” she says. “We want to be more than just agents—we want to be part of the community.”

Looking to the future, Ashley sees continued growth for her team.

“We’re working smarter, not harder, every year,” she says. “In five years, we’ll be further along, growing together and finding new ways to serve our clients.” With her team’s strong foundation, adaptive spirit, and commitment to excellence, the future looks bright.

As Bleacher reflects on her journey, one thing is clear: building a successful real estate career isn’t just about closing deals—it’s about relationships, trust, and helping others grow.

“I never thought I’d end up here with a team of my own,” she says. “But now that I’m here, I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

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This includes bankers, architects, service and repair providers, interior designers, and staging experts, among others.

The **HBA enriches the services** I can provide to my clients, **adding significant value** to their real estate experience!

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