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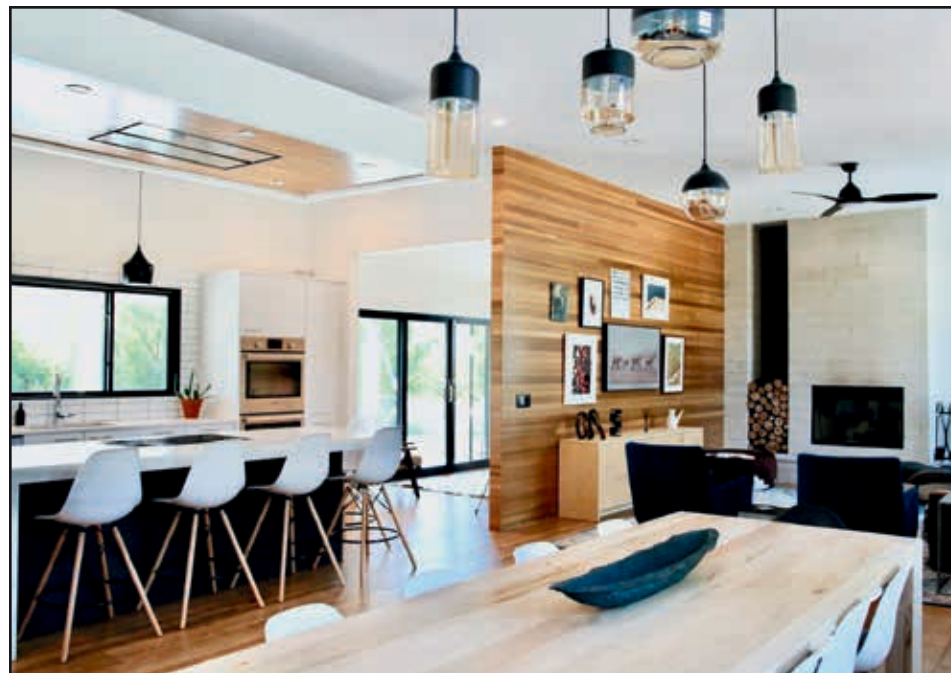
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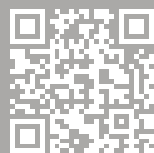
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PETE BRUINSMA

► top producer

By Amanda Matkowski
Photos by Jacob Harr with harr Creative LLC



GUIDING HIS COMMUNITY TOWARD A BETTER TOMORROW

advertising sales jobs, but he was first exposed to the life-changing ways of real estate in the early 2000s when his friends began to invest in properties. Pete became a financial backer for them, and their real estate journeys inspired him to owner-occupy and rehab his first investment property in Heritage Hill. He later purchased his first solo renovation project in Fairmount Square in 2003, hired his first contractor, and quit his job around Christmas time to take his licensing class. In February of 2004, Pete was a full-time agent.

For the next two years, Pete focused on investors, his sphere of influence (SOI), and for sale by owners (FSBOs). While he was slowly building his real estate career, he was surprised with an offer to become the music director for the 88.1FM WYCE, a local nonprofit radio station. “I felt like I had to seize the incredible opportunity,” Pete recalled. “I certainly hadn’t set out for something like this to happen, but I did have an ongoing passion for the radio station and for the music community. Somehow it just felt right, like a dream was coming true.” He balanced his new job at the independent community radio station with real estate for the next 12 years, staying busy along the way. In 2011, Pete founded Life Cycle Property Management with a friend after having spent a lot of time with investors during the Great Recession.

Although Pete enjoyed encouraging artists and working with volunteers, real estate was patiently waiting for him to fully commit. In 2017, Pete purchased a storefront and founded his own brokerage — Grand River Realty. “My first year after leaving the nonprofit job, I saw my sales double,

Pete Bruinsma has always found ways to help his local community. Whether it’s through his role as a real estate agent and broker, a Grand Rapids historic preservation commissioner, or a nonprofit media producer, Pete knows how to harness his passions to positively impact the city that he calls home.

Originally from Chicago, Illinois, Pete moved to Indianapolis with his family on his thirteenth birthday. After high school, he enrolled at Calvin University and eventually settled in Grand Rapids. While he was a college student earning his bachelor’s degrees in business and communications, Pete spent a lot of his time at the campus radio station.

Pete then spent the next few years in audio installation, music writing, and

and they doubled again the following year,” he explained. “Real estate for me has been less about sales figures and more of a way to connect with and assist people. Once I became a full-time agent for the second time, I was surprised with how effectively those extra 25 to 30 hours were absorbed into my business, yet, somehow, it felt like I was working less.”

Since dedicating himself to real estate full time again, Pete has thrived in the industry. He has closed over 500 transactions in the last two decades, but in the past three years, he has sold over 120 of those homes. Pete has also been voted a Top 3 “Best REALTOR®” by REVUE magazine for the past six years, and in 2021 and 2022, the Greater Regional Alliance of REALTORS® (GRAR) rewarded him with two Pinnacle Awards.

Pete works as a solo agent, but as a broker, he does everything he can to encourage his office team to define and realize their own goals. Much like his days at WYCE, where he mentored interns and encouraged musicians and volunteers, Pete finds fulfillment in helping new agents navigate the early years of a career in real estate. He has always found joy in forming and building relationships with others, and whether Pete is interacting with clients or other industry professionals, he is grateful that real estate has given him the perfect outlet to do so. “Some of the relationships are lifelong, some are shorter, but I love to have such an enduring positive impact on people’s lives,” he said.

When Pete began his real estate career twenty years ago, the industry looked very different, but the independence and ability to have a flexible business model have remained the same. “I love the idea that having a



business is more akin to a small ship instead of a gigantic freighter,” he explained. “If one thing isn’t working, the small ship can try another way or — better yet — try two new things. Being a small ship might take a little more work, but the level of freedom and flexibility is what makes this a fun and interesting profession.”

Outside of real estate, Pete is usually spending time with his family. He has been married to Elizabeth for 15 years, but before they were married, Pete went with her as she was searching to buy a house. “When

looking for my future wife’s home, we entered a dark basement with a squatter who pretended to be a dog to scare us away. It worked,” he recalled, laughing. Nowadays, the two of them have a 6-year-old son named Jacob Orson, and they love to spend sunny weekends in Muskegon. “I also like to take Jake on ‘adventures’ such as visiting a pig rescue farm, picking apples, joining a kids’ fishing contest, or riding our bikes to grab some burgers,” Pete said.

After Pete got married, he and Elizabeth bought and renovated a



“

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Victorian home in Heritage Hill. Built in 1885, the house was formerly used as a group home, and after spending over 10 years updating it, Pete and his family live there to this day. “We restored over 40 wood windows and thousands of square feet of wood flooring and plaster and revived the original floorplan by removing split-room walls, closets, doorways and hallways,” Pete shared. “We tripled the size of our kitchen space by removing two full bathrooms, a chimney, a back hallway and a nest of old HVAC runs, and then we added a garage.”

Other than being with his family, Pete enjoys sailing and fishing. He is in the process of learning how to maneuver his 30-foot, 12,000-pound sailboat and aspires to be its captain. “When it’s out of the water, I like to

work on cleaning it up and refinishing the teak and fiberglass,” Pete shared. “On the weekends, it’s fun to boat out to a dune with my family and bask in the sun.”

As Pete continues to lend his skills to better his community, he hopes that many people will remember him as a loyal supporter. For individuals who hope to become thriving agents, Pete recommends that they learn to focus on the big picture. “I have a strong work ethic. That was especially evident 20 years ago when I just refused to give up,” he said. “I’m in this business for lifelong relationships. When I take the opportunity to enjoy the time I have with people and consistently do good work, we mutually increase our quality of life, and everything else follows.”

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Please provide a short summary of your book and its key themes and/or messages.

My book explores the importance of having empathetic leadership in any type of business. I'm in the real estate industry, where this book hits home for all of us in this space.

Drawing on personal stories and lessons learned, it highlights the power of collaboration and adaptability, and of serving others to achieve success.

Describe your book in seven words or less.

Empathetic leadership: Keys to real estate success.

Balancing my professional responsibilities with the creative process required a significant amount of focus and commitment. You want your book to serve others and inspire people to make positive changes, and there is the underlying fear that what you're writing may not have the impact that you are hoping to provide.

Who helped you write your book, and/or who do you pay tribute to in your book acknowledgments?

I received invaluable support from my wife, family, assistant, and colleagues throughout the writing process. Their encouragement and guidance played a crucial role in bringing this book to fruition. I pay tribute to those who have inspired and supported me on this journey — from the earliest stages of my career to the present day. Special thanks to Chris Voss for allowing me to be a part of this incredible book and to my great friend Nick Nanton for always inviting me in the right rooms with the right people.

Do you hear from your readers much? What do they say?

Yes, I receive feedback from readers regularly, especially those who have taken advantage of the free giveaway included with the book purchase. They often express gratitude for the bonus video conference call, highlighting how the personalized guidance has helped them apply the principles of empathetic leadership in their real estate endeavors. It's heartening to hear how the book and the bonus offer have positively impacted their professional growth and mindset.

What do you hope your readers take away from your book?

I hope readers gain a deeper understanding of the transformative potential of empathy in leadership and feel empowered to apply these principles in their own careers, fostering success and making a positive impact.

What was your favorite part of the writing/publishing journey?

My favorite part was the opportunity to reflect on my experiences and distill them into actionable insights. It was incredibly rewarding to share my knowledge and perspective with others who are passionate about leadership and changing people's lives for the better in a genuine way.

What was your least favorite or most challenging part of the writing/publishing journey?

The most challenging part was finding the time and discipline to dedicate to writing amidst my busy schedule.

YEAR OF PUBLICATION: 2024

GENRE: Business

PUBLISHER: SuccessBooks

CO-AUTHOR: Chris Voss

What inspired you to write your book?

I've always been a huge fan of Chris Voss. He has inspired so many of us in the real estate and sales spaces. He has shared so many of his experiences, and it inspired me to do the same.

I met with some friends at a party, celebrating my episode of "My Story" featured on Amazon Prime, and was presented with the opportunity to co-author in Chris' new book on empathetic leadership.

It allowed me to share insights and experiences from my journey in real estate leadership, emphasizing empathy and selflessness, which I thought was a great fit for me.

Where can readers purchase your book? What formats of the book are available?

Amazon: www.amazon.com/Empathetic-Leadership-Successbooks-Publishing/dp/BOCXBPQJNB

Where can readers learn more about you and your book?

Readers can learn more about me and my book by visiting my website or following me on social media @curtishewell.

Do you have any tips or advice for aspiring writers?

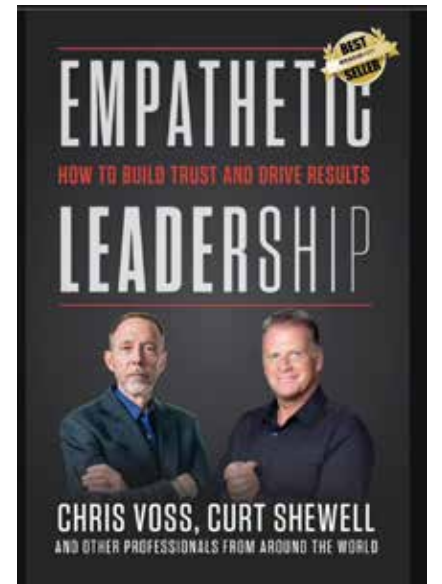
Don't be afraid to write imperfectly in the beginning; you can always revise and refine later. Additionally, read widely and learn from other authors in your genre. Finally, believe in yourself and your story — your unique voice and perspective are what will set your writing apart. Be authentic.

Do you plan to write another book in the future, or do you currently have another writing project in the works?

Yes, I am actually an author in "Resilient A.F.: Stories of Resilience." It's a collection of stories of resilience from around the world. Telling your story can be a powerful part of your healing journey, and we created a safe space for people to share and read stories of resilience. It was a different kind of project for me, but it was nice to do something more personal than just strictly business.

Is there anything else you'd like to share about your writing process, your book or the reception of your book?

Embrace the journey of promoting your book and engaging with readers — it's incredibly rewarding to hear how your words have impacted others' lives. Finally, don't forget to celebrate your accomplishments along the way, no matter how big or small. Being a part of any book is an achievement to be proud of!



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Josh WISER

▶▶ agent spotlight

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TURNING HOMES INTO ADVENTURES

On April 1, 2018, Josh Wisner entered the foray of real estate, thus marking the beginning of a transformative chapter of his life. At the time, Josh was supporting his wife and two young children while working as a manager at a local pet supply retailer, but he was eager to make a career change, so he started doing real estate part time. He was mentored by Geoff Brown and Steve Frody, and in his first two years, he closed an impressive 30 units, laying the foundation for his future success.

By 2020, Josh had paid off all of his debts and accumulated a comfortable nest egg, enabling him to take the plunge into full-time real estate. “I was very driven to build my business as fast as possible so I could dive into real estate full time,” he explained.

Before stepping into the world of real estate, Josh spent 14 years as a retail store manager for Chow Hound Pet Supplies. His journey with the company involved significant milestones, including launching new retail locations and earning accolades such as the 2015 Grandville Jenison Medium to Large Business of the Year Award for the Jenison location. Josh’s dedication, however, extended beyond the business — he actively participated in community initiatives such as co-founding a local Kiwanis chapter.

For Josh, the decision to transition into real estate was not immediate. A pivotal moment occurred in 2013 when he was purchasing his first home and discovered his passion for the industry. He met Agent Joey LeMaire, which sparked the realization that real estate aligned perfectly with his skills and aspirations. It took a few more years, events at his prior employer, and a chance meeting with Geoff Brown in 2017 to propel Josh into a full-time real estate career.

According to Josh, being an agent and team leader of The Wisner Real Estate Group at Keller Williams - Grand Rapids North is more than a career: It’s a passion fueled by the competitiveness and unpredictability of the industry. “It feels like the biggest and craziest game out there,” he said. Josh’s love for the profession stems from its inherent challenges, the need for sustained effort, and the direct impact on clients’ lives.

In 2022, Josh faced a ceiling in his business and grappled with the decision of whether or not to scale up by building



a large team. He remarked that the process is filled with trial and error, requiring a careful balance between business growth and personal life.

Outside of his thriving real estate career, Josh’s world revolves around his family — his wife, Samantha, his daughter, Isabelle “Izzy”, and his son, Oliver. Josh finds joy in helping first-time homebuyers and considers the purchase of his first home at age 25 a significant accomplishment.

Beyond his professional endeavors, Josh is actively involved in supporting people in need within his sphere and contributing to causes his past clients’ endorse. As Josh looks into the future, he envisions building his investment portfolio, gradually transitioning to rely on passive income in his 60s and 70s, and splitting time between West Michigan and a Sun Belt location.

Josh emphasizes the importance of staying relevant and standing out in a crowded field. He sees real estate



Photo by Kelsey Pelak Photography

contact sport and advises aspiring agents to focus on creating systems for consistent outreach, maintaining contacts, and staying present in their spheres. "I try to make it feel as easy and fun as possible for the client," Josh said. He believes that his success stems from being goal-driven and a systems-person, and from being committed to providing the best experience for his clients.

In a profession where resilience, passion, and dedication define success, Josh stands out as a testament to what can be achieved with the right mindset and commitment.



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Tina DRUM

Photos by Jacob Harr
with harr Creative LLC

From Plates to Properties

Tina Drum, a real estate agent with 616 Realty, brings her unique blend of experience, passion, and unwavering dedication to her clients. Her career in real estate is relatively young, which began in June of 2022. Before venturing into the world of buying and selling homes, Tina had an impressive track record as an entrepreneur. She proudly owned and operated a successful restaurant and beauty shop in her hometown of Fremont, Michigan. She also played a key role in helping her partner manage a construction company.

Looking back, Tina can now see how each of these diverse business experiences has been instrumental in her success as an agent. Her background in the construction business provided her with a deep understanding of building and design, allowing her to guide clients more effectively. This knowledge proves especially valuable when working with first-time homebuyers, who often rely on her expertise to make informed decisions.

Tina learned the importance of exceptional customer service and leadership through her restaurant and beauty shop ventures, which are qualities that continue to define her approach to real estate. She emphasizes that running a business — whether it's a restaurant, a beauty shop or a real estate agency — requires a strong work ethic and the ability to be a self-starter.



Many people may wonder why Tina decided to become a real estate agent after a successful career as an entrepreneur, but to Tina, she felt like the job would be a good fit because of her building and entrepreneurial background. “I had worked for myself for 25 years, and I knew I didn’t want a nine-to-five job or a boss,” she explained. “I still wanted the flexibility of being an entrepreneur, and I wanted to invest in real estate. It was always an interest, and it was just something that I had always wanted to try.”

Tina’s journey to becoming a successful real estate agent was shaped by her past and the life events that molded her into the person she is today. She hails from a small town in Michigan and draws inspiration from her grandmother, who raised three children, ran a farm, earned a college degree, and even opened a store and a meat-cutting shop during a time when such accomplishments were remarkable. Tina believes she inherited her grandmother’s drive and determination.

Tina also looks up to a successful uncle who built a thriving business in Alaska. After high school, she spent four years living and working in Alaska, which exposed Tina to a broader world outside of her small hometown and left her with a lasting impact. “I think everyone should move away for a while,” Tina said. “It helped me see there was a whole world outside of the little town I grew up in.”

In her real estate career, Tina's passion lies in continual learning. She understands that every deal is unique, and she takes great pleasure in uncovering new insights and strategies with each transaction. Her commitment to learning and growth is unflinching, mirroring her entrepreneurial spirit.

For Tina, success is defined by loving what she does and achieving a balance between work, family, friends and personal time. She appreciates the flexibility her career provides, which allows her to set her own schedule and work late into life.

It's not just about the business, however: Tina finds great joy in meeting new people. She treasures the relationships she forms with her clients, especially with first-time homebuyers. "I tend to mother them a bit or act like a good auntie. I look out for them; I want them to have a positive experience getting started in their new home," she said.

Beyond the realm of real estate, Tina is also committed to philanthropy and pledges to donate \$200 to charity for every house she sells. Her choice of charities often revolves around children and animals, reflecting her deep love for both.

Outside of work, Tina has a range of interests. She is an avid cook and loves to nurture her dog, Jaxon. She also practices yoga, enjoys decorating and renovating her home, and likes to entertain. These activities provide a well-rounded life beyond her professional pursuits.

Tina's advice for up-and-coming agents is rooted in her own experiences. She believes in learning as many aspects of the real estate business as possible and values the mentorship she received from someone who had experience in various fields related to real estate.

"I appreciate the support of my broker and his office staff as well," Tina said. "I searched around before I found someone who fit my hands-on approach to business versus a corporate setting. I really love the culture at 616."

One of Tina's strengths is her communication skills. She prides herself on responding promptly to clients and on ensuring that they always feel heard and valued. "I want them to feel like I have all the time in the world to address their needs," Tina shared.



I want them to feel like I have all the time in the world to address their needs.

Tina's path from entrepreneur to real estate success is a testament to her unshakable dedication and the valuable life lessons she has gathered along the way. She has transitioned seamlessly into the real estate world, bringing her unique skills and boundless passion to every client interaction. In her commitment to helping others, she not only finds fulfillment but also defines what success means to her. Tina's story serves as an inspiration to both newcomers and seasoned professionals in the real estate industry.

▶▶ event recap

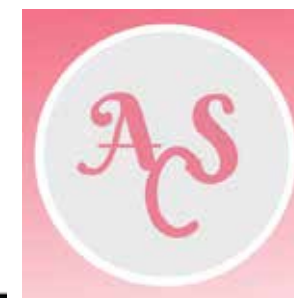
May Mingle at Vander Mill

Thank you for joining us for our Grand Rapids Real Producers May 30th Mingle!

See photos from this event in the August issue.

Special thanks to Vander Mill for hosting and sponsoring us as well as Agent Concierge Services, harr Creative and Brian McDonald Photography.

Check out linktr.ee/GRTop300 for the registration link to our next event.



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► broker spotlight

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CORY MAGUIRE

GRATITUDE & GROWTH

With 11 years of experience as a real estate agent and three years as a broker, Cory Maguire is fostering a unique and virtue-focused company culture at Green Crown Real Estate, LLC. He began his real estate career in April of 2012, balancing a part-time job at the JW Marriott in downtown Grand Rapids while he diligently built his business.

“My degree is in hospitality and tourism management with an emphasis in lodging. I started my career in the hotel industry, and from there, I transitioned into banking, working as a personal banker at Fifth Third Bank,” Cory explained. “While pursuing my dream of real estate, I was able to work part-time back at the hotel.”

Over the years, Cory has not only established himself as a successful agent with a career volume of more than \$60 million but has also taken on the role of a broker and owner of his own small brokerage. The journey to becoming a broker unfolded in the fall of 2020, marked by the hardships posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“After eight years of being an agent and in a leadership role, it felt like the right time to take the next step and progress to a broker,” Cory said. “When COVID-19 happened, being at home with my family encouraged me to pursue opening my own brokerage.”

Green Crown Real Estate LLC has offices located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Naples, Florida. They view themselves as not just a real estate firm but also a community that focuses on their core virtues: gratitude, fortitude and charity. “We focus on living a virtuous life,” Cory said. “We believe that living out our company virtues in our personal lives makes us a better agent and contributor to society.”

Cory’s passion for education shines through as he expresses his

commitment to his agents. “I am passionate about making sure that all of the agents at Green Crown have the available resources they need to succeed,” he said. “I also make myself available to all of our agents — to bounce ideas off of, answer questions, and mentor.”

For Cory, the most rewarding aspect of his job is being able to watch clients achieve homeownership. “It’s something that I believe everyone should strive for. If it takes one year or 20



years, everyone should want to own a piece of the American dream," he said.

A significant challenge in Cory's world is time management — especially when it comes to balancing his family, personal well-being, and business. "Being conscious of where each facet of your life is and effectively communicating can be daily challenges, but it is needed to maintain relationships and exceed your goals," he shared.

Cory hopes that people will remember him for his gratitude. "Gratitude is a gift, not an exchange," he said. "It is a virtue that I choose to celebrate daily."

As he looks toward the future, Cory invites others to join him at Green Crown Real Estate, LLC as they continue to expand. "We are looking to grow our small brokerage and share our company culture with more people," he explained. "We hope to have

many conversations in the future about what it means to be a Green Crown agent and the value that brings to an agent's business."

Cory's tale is more than a chronicle of real estate milestones: It's a narrative of gratitude, growth, and the pursuit of a virtuous life.



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Here's what the top 300 agents in GRAND RAPIDS sold

\$3,685,973,817

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10,228
TOTAL TRANSACTIONS



34
AVERAGE TRANSACTIONS PER AGENT



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AVERAGE SALES VOLUME PER AGENT



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