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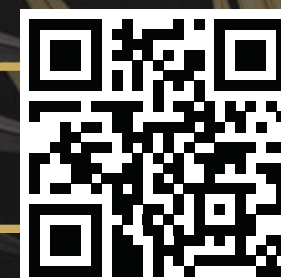








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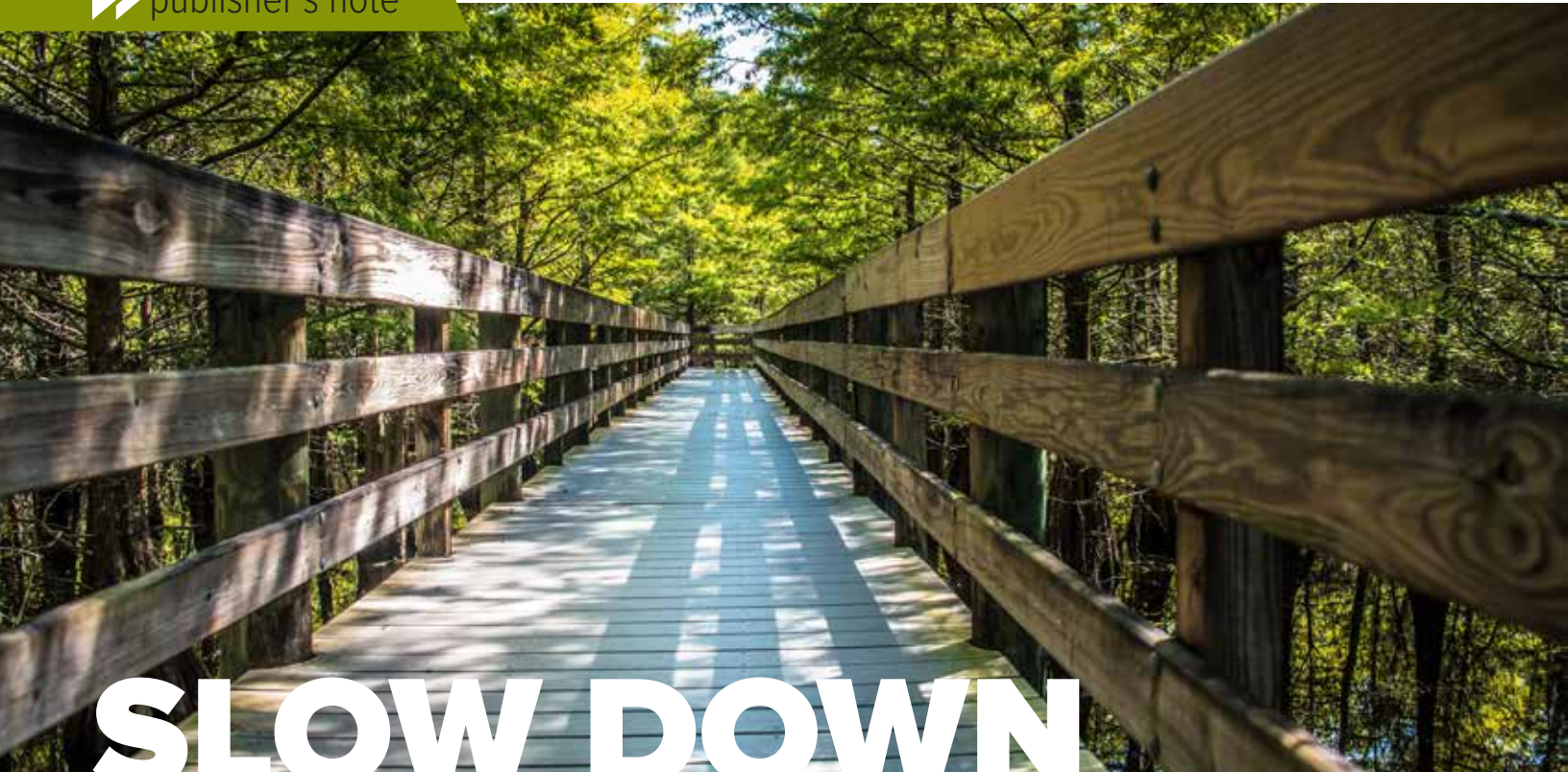
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SLOW DOWN TO SPEED UP

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." —Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NIV)

Dear Real Producers of South OC,

As we enter into the summer months, a time when many of us take much-needed vacations, I want to share an important concept that can transform the way you approach your business: slowing down as a powerful and effective approach to subsequently speed up your efforts. This may seem counter-intuitive, especially for entrepreneurs in an industry where speed is often equated with success. However, taking advantage of the opportunity to reflect on and assess your business can yield tremendous benefits.

To be clear, slowing down isn't just about catching your breath — it's a strategic

pause that allows you to delve deep into your business, identifying crucial drivers and issues for more informed decision-making. Taking the time to reflect on and assess the allocation of your resources — be it time, money, or energy; to establish or reinforce clear accountability structures for yourself and your team, if you have one; and to focus on root issues fosters continuous learning and fuels strategic growth. Ultimately, this methodical pace enhances profitability by prioritizing efficiency, laying the groundwork for sustained success, and priming you for more effective acceleration as you emerge from it.

I want to emphasize that slowing down does not mean procrastination or a lack of urgency. Rather, it's about moving forward with clarity and confidence, ensuring that every action you take aligns

with your overarching goals. I encourage you to embrace the wisdom of "going slow to go fast." Taking the time to reflect, assess, and strategize, positions you for success going forward.

Coming up, mark your calendars for our prestigious Awards Gala, to be held at Marbella Country Club on October 7th ... and keep an eye on your inbox for your exclusive invitation to this and other upcoming events.

We can't wait to see you all again soon!

With gratitude,



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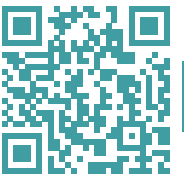
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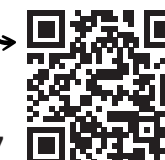
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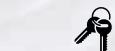
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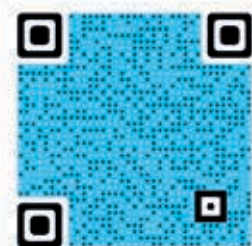
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► marketing matters
By Todd Lebowitz

How Your PERSONALITY TYPE Should Inform Your LEAD STRATEGY

Every agent is different and brings a unique dynamic to their role. It's better to focus on your strengths when it comes to lead generation, rather than forcing a method that's not right for you. Here are three classic agent types and some options that align with their needs. Take these tips to better narrow your lead strategy.

THE INTROVERT
Although the industry often attracts outgoing people, there are plenty of ways to draw in leads without going cold into a packed room full of strangers.

1. Leverage online platforms.
Communicate through written messages, emails, or video recordings.

2. Create viable content. Share valuable content related to real estate on your website and social media channels. It can help attract potential clients and establish you as an expert in your field.

3. Focus on your niche. Choose an area of real estate where you excel, and market yourself as an expert in that area through advertising and content marketing.

THE SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

- 1. Attend networking events.**
Use your outgoing personality to connect with people and make a lasting impression.
- 2. Let your personality shine on social media.** Host live events or start a podcast — anything where you can show off your gift for being dynamic and engaging.
- 3. Cold call.** Gregarious real estate agents can use their outgoing personality to their advantage when cold calling potential clients. Use your charm and persuasion skills to win over potential clients.
- 4. Collaborate with other professionals.**
Sometimes, outgoing agents can find themselves with too many connections, which can eat into a schedule. Choose connections that make the most sense to network with.

THE PERPETUALLY BUSY

Maybe not so much a personality as a stage of life, this agent's schedule is always jam-packed between clients, family, and social demands. It feels like there's never enough time to work on lead generation.

- 1. Focus on client relationships.**
Gregarious real estate agents can build strong relationships with their clients by taking the time to get to know them and understand their needs. They can use their outgoing personality to connect with clients on a personal level and make them feel valued.
- 2. Use online advertising.**
Consider running targeted online advertising campaigns to reach potential clients in your area. It can be a cost-effective way to reach a large audience.

- 3. Use technology to automate tasks.** Automate email campaigns, chat bots, and social media scheduling to batch lead-generating tasks.
- 4. Qualify your leads.** Prioritize and focus on quality over quantity.



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

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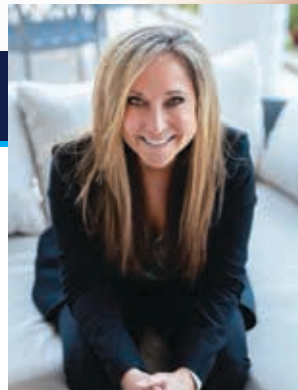
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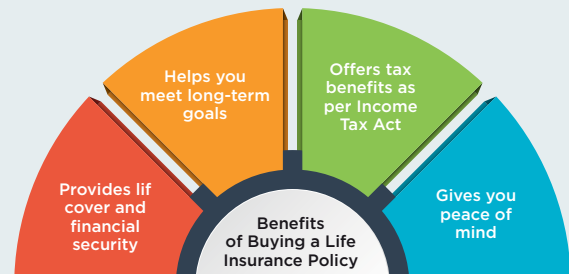
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Photos by Wasio faces



Capturing Your Best Self

Chances are, you've already admired WASIO faces' work without realizing it if you've gotten behind the wheel lately — it's hard to miss one of the 400 Sweet James billboards dotting the highway between L.A., Orange County, and Las Vegas.

Yaneck and Sasha Wasiek, the fun duo behind WASIO faces and those ubiquitous billboards, have been capturing the essence of their clients' personalities through photography for years. Based in Santa Ana, California, their studio serves as a creative hub where they work their magic to make people look and feel their very best.

"We believe that everyone deserves to feel confident and photogenic," emphasizes Yaneck. "Our goal is to bring out the best in our clients and create images that they'll be proud to share."

An Early Start

Yaneck's passion for photography traces back to his early childhood when he received his first camera at age 8. Growing up in Warsaw, Poland, Yaneck's interest in capturing people blossomed into a lifelong pursuit. After pursuing bachelor's and master's degrees in business from the University of Illinois and DePaul University, respectively, Yaneck continued to hone his skills by shooting weddings on weekends while working as a director for Avanade (Accenture).

Meanwhile, Sasha's photography career began when she joined Yaneck after years of working as an office manager for a chiropractor's office.

The couple's move from Chicago to California in 2016 marked the beginning of WASIO faces, a venture born out of their shared love for photography and connecting with people. Since then, WASIO faces has earned a stellar reputation for their stunning professional headshots with over 300 five-star reviews on Google and Yelp while working with prestigious clients such as Amazon, Microsoft, Walmart, Zillow, and Realtor.com, among others.



Sasha Wasiek partners with her husband, Yaneck, in their photography business.



Yaneck Wasiek owns WASIO faces and is a lead photographer for *South OC Real Producers* magazine.



WASIO faces is a top-tier portrait and headshot photographer in Orange County.

“As co-owner, Sasha is essentially our operations officer. She does our social media and handles customer relations, in addition to photographing clients,” Yaneck offers. “I handle our business development, as well as photograph clientele, and we work really well as a team.

“We always deliver portraits back within five business days of the shoot too,” he adds. “But we can even turn a headshot around to be ready in 24 hours to a real estate agent if it’s necessary.”

Unique Coaching

What sets WASIO faces apart is their innovative approach to facial expression coaching. Through years of experience, Yaneck and Sasha have mastered the art of capturing authentic emotions, ensuring that every smile and expression feels genuine. Their signature coaching technique helps clients showcase their best selves, resulting in stunning and natural-looking photographs.

“We find joy in making clients feel comfortable and confident in front of the camera, ensuring that every photo

shoot is not only professional but fun,” Yaneck affirms. “We try to bring our unique blend of expertise and enthusiasm to each session by making every person photogenic through our signature WASIO facial expression coaching, creating an atmosphere where clients can just relax and be themselves.”

Yaneck holds a prestigious Master of Photography designation from the Professional Photographers of America (PPA), proof positive of his tireless devotion to his craft. He also serves as an ambassador for several top photography brands and regularly teaches classes at national conferences. His passion for mentoring other photographers shines through in his active Facebook photography mentoring group, where Yaneck advises over 600 members, often conducting live sessions to educate photographers on running their businesses more efficiently.

“As a mentor, I find great fulfillment in helping other photographers grow and achieve their goals,” says Yaneck. “There’s nothing more rewarding than seeing someone’s passion and talent flourish with a little guidance and support.”

Beyond the Shoot

Outside of work, Yaneck and Sasha cherish their time with their three children, Savannah, Luka, and Sofia. The Wasieks enjoy outdoor adventures together and look forward to visiting one of their favorite family spots, Joshua Tree National Park, on a regular basis.

“Two of our kids play soccer, so I also coach soccer in the Ladera Ranch community where we live,” Yaneck shares.

Eyeing the future, Yaneck notes he is optimistic, even as AI technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace. While AI has made an impact on the field, Yaneck believes that personal experience and expertise are irreplaceable.

“I stay abreast of industry trends by attending conferences, networking with peers, and continuously learning and adapting to new technologies,” he points out.

In addition to their exceptional photography services, WASIO faces is currently offering a special discount for Real Producers, allowing top REALTORS® to enjoy an incredible 60 percent discount on their headshot session fee.



Sasha Wasiek with her and Yaneck’s children, Sofia, Luka, and Savannah



“We’re excited to continue serving our clients and making a positive impact through our work,” Yaneck concludes. “With each photo shoot, we always strive to create lasting memories and moments of joy for our clients.”

WASIO faces is ready to bring your stunning professional headshot to life! Call 949-529-0512 or visit www.wasiofaces.com to book your appointment and receive your discount code today.



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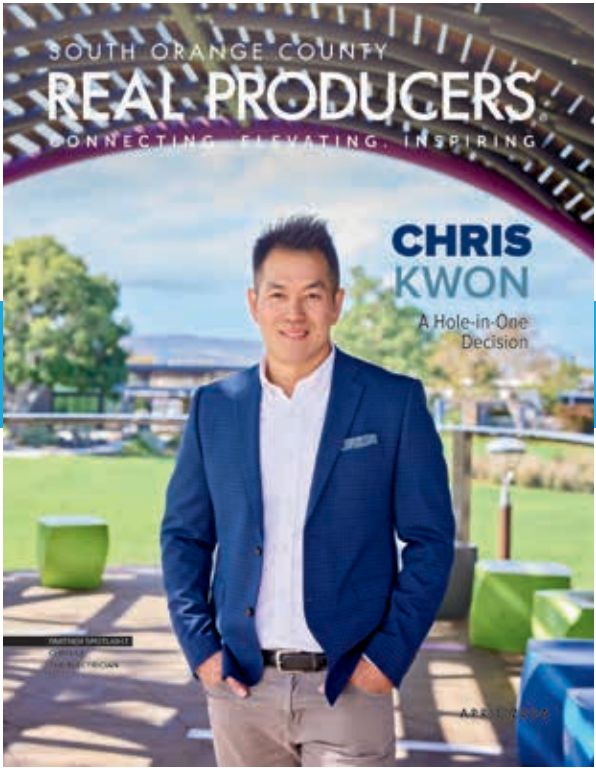
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►► cover story

By Ellen Buchanan
Photos by WASIO faces

JOHN RUSSELL

Trailblazing Excellence in Coto de Caza



With over two decades of experience in real estate and a career volume exceeding \$1 billion, John Russell now finds himself at the threshold of a new and exciting chapter at Pacific Sotheby's International Realty, where he is assembling a handpicked team of top performers poised to deliver unparalleled service to their clients. John, a versatile professional with a diverse career spanning multiple industries, is a dynamic figure in the Coto de Caza real estate arena.

Reflecting on the evolving local landscape, John says, "Coto de Caza has changed. It has become the Bel Air of South County — a luxury brand that requires luxury service.

And I don't think anyone can better serve that than Pacific Sotheby's. Synergizing our local expertise with the Sotheby's brand creates a level of service that I think will be unequaled in the region."

Coast to Coast and Coming Home

Although John's family hails originally from California, his parents relocated to New York State before his birth. He grew up and went to school in New York, graduating summa cum laude from the State University of New York at Albany with a degree in history with a minor in English. He went on to receive his juris doctor at Fordham University School



John Russell



Debra Douglass



Debi Buckley

of Law and has been a member of the New York State Bar since 1989. John furthered his education in California, attending USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.

From his early days as a weathercaster in Mississippi to stints as a TV reporter in Albany and New York City, John honed his skills in communication and analysis, later joining the prestigious firm Thomson Reuters as a financial data analyst.

"At Thomson Reuters, I worked on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange every day and wrote about market momentum. I feel I have a fairly good idea on how to price things based on my experience with that company," John says.

John eventually returned to California when his job transferred him to Hollywood to cover the entertainment sector.

"California is home to me," he asserts. "I love California, and I love Coto. I think it's just perfect. And so, for me, coming back here was coming home."

The Thrill of Real Estate

Once in California, John's aunt sold him a house. Intrigued by her work as a

real estate agent, John embarked on his own journey in the industry, obtaining his real estate license in 2004.

"The first time I did it, I thought, 'Wow, this is what I think I'm supposed to do, and I think I'm good at it,'" John recalls. "The ability to have a plan, put it into place, work it, and then close the deal ... it's a rush."

The years in the business have been good to John. As co-owner of his former brokerage, his team racked up \$93 million in sales and \$1.3 million in commissions last year alone. In his new venture at Sotheby's, he anticipates continuing to build on these successes with a much smaller, elite team of professionals.

"I came from an office of 200 people, and I just feel that being nimble and being able to know a file inside and out is really important. I could have chosen a much larger team, but I want quality over quantity," John shares. "I want a team that can work together seamlessly and provide really great professional service to our clients."

The John Russell Group

In late April of this year, John orchestrated a strategic move, inviting a

select group of associates from his former brokerage to join him in his new endeavor. In addition to John, the group includes Debi Buckley, who has worked closely with John the past five years, running transactions for the larger team while also doing her own deals; Debra Douglass, who began working with John as his buyer's specialist; Doug Krone, John's cousin, who focuses on the coast; and Parker Buckley, Debi's 19-year-old son who is already showing great promise. Together, they form The John Russell Group.

With years of collective experience and intimate familiarity with the Coto de Caza area, the team stands ready to fuse their expertise and passion to provide unparalleled client service in their new venture. Collectively, they epitomize local area experts.

"We've all raised our kids in Coto," Debi notes. "We know it inside and out."

Debi has two sons, a 24-year-old living in Arkansas, and Parker, a member of the team; and Debra has lived in Coto de Caza for 25 years and has two children, one in college and one soon to graduate from high school.

"People really put their trust in us because we have been in the community so long," Debra says. "And in Coto de Caza and the surrounding areas, there's no one with the experience that John has."

A Client-Centric Philosophy

John emphasizes that the cornerstone of his methodology, as well as that of his team, is an unwavering commitment to providing unparalleled client care, a principle that permeates every aspect of their work.

"In my business model, the client in front of me is my most important client," he asserts. The number one thing is taking care of your clients and preparing the property to get them the highest number that we can."

From landscaping to painting and updating, John's team meticulously orchestrates every detail to enhance a

property's appeal. Remarkably, most of these services come with little to no upfront cost to the client.

"That's a big difference with us," John emphasizes. "A lot of our services are complimentary. I think people deserve that. It's all about creating an ROI — sometimes, we spend our own money to add value. It's a really good model, and it's worked out very well for us. Our listed properties look like model homes ... and sell for model home prices."

Another aspect that distinguishes John and his team is their unwavering dedication to accessibility.

"When you list with John Russell, you are getting John Russell," John says with a touch of pride. "We sit our open houses and are at every showing. We don't believe in lock boxes. When a client lists with



Top performer and Coto de Caza area expert John Russell has recently brought his team to Pacific Sotheby's International Realty, where he joins as a broker associate.

us, they get us, and we're there from the beginning until the end."

Beyond the Office

Beyond the hustle of real estate, John finds solace and joy in his family life. Married to his wife, Paula, for 33 years, the couple is blessed with three grown sons: John (31) and Michael (28), both residing nearby; and Ryan (22), who calls San Diego home. The Russell household is rounded out by their beloved Corgi, Cayman.

When he's not working, John and Paula enjoy traveling by car around the country, taking a month off each year for a long road trip. John is also an avid, lifelong competitive runner. He belongs to the Cal Coast Track Club and is ranked in the top 25 nationwide for his age group.

"I think an important part of John's overall persona is, people know him and see him all over Coto running," Debra imparts. "He runs every day, and everybody waves at John and he waves back."

The entire team is deeply engaged in the Coto de Caza community, finding fulfillment in giving back through regular sponsorship of sporting events and hosting complimentary document-shredding events for residents.

On the Horizon

In the coming year, John and his team have plans to build their own office in Rancho Santa Margarita, with potential expansion into new territories on the horizon. But for now, they remain focused on consistently delivering exceptional service to their clients in Coto de Caza and Dove Canyon, and derive great satisfaction from their capacity to serve them with excellence.

"What truly fulfills me, honestly, is the opportunity to care for my clients, shouldering the responsibility of selling their largest asset, making it work, and seeing them happy across the closing table," John emphasizes. "If my clients are happy, I'll be happy."

"My greatest reward is when a client we've helped says, 'Wow, you've made a difference.' Because that's what we do."



Longtime colleagues Debra Douglass (left), John Russell (center), and Debi Buckley (right) have joined forces to form The John Russell Group.



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