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Mason Sanders & Eric Schafer

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PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Princeton Mortgage

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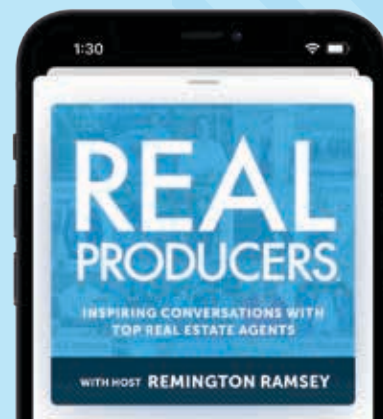


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ARE YOU

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS?

“The quality of your life is determined by the quality of the questions you ask.” - Tony Robbins

Many of us were raised to believe we needed to have the right answers. I know I was. Having the right answers is usually our path to success in school and work, from landing a job to advancing our careers. The result of such conditioning is that we become uncomfortable with unanswered questions, or worse yet, unanswerable ones.

I thought I needed to have the right answer to lead my team, but now I’m considering that my lack of questions is a barrier in my life and business.

As humans, we are hardwired to seek closure and certainty and answers offer a form of comfort, a semblance of control in an often unpredictable environment. The pursuit of certainty can sometimes eclipse the importance of curiosity and the invaluable learning that comes with asking the right questions.

What questions could we be asking to unlock areas of uncertainty or unknowns?

What If? This is the most visionary of all questions. It requires imagination to visualize a parallel universe in which things are better or different.

Why? It pokes a stick at the status quo. We are often threatened by “Why?” questions when they come from our team or even our family. It takes a brave business leader to encourage their employees, team or family to be asking them.

Why Not? This is the question that dares to believe. It is audacious.

Who Else? It invites an expanded perspective that can inform important decisions. “Who else?” can we invite to comment on this? Whose opinion have we not considered? What uninformed assumptions are we making?

My questions for you today are: Are you fostering a culture that celebrates curiosity as much as it does knowledge? What unknowns make you uncomfortable and what questions will you start asking?



Best,
Meredith Jones
Owner/Publisher

► publisher’s note



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CARISSA RICKMAN

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“I’ve been learning about mortgages since I was a child,” says Carissa Rickman, assistant branch manager, loan officer, and team originator at Princeton Mortgage. “My father owns a mortgage company,” she explains. Being brought up in this type of environment left an impression on Carissa, who was homeschooled.

Interestingly, mortgages weren’t the initial plan for her career. “I wanted to be a full-time missionary,” she says. Her heart was changed, however, for mortgages. “I feel like this is a mission field,” she points out. “I saw a lot of predatory lending and I wanted to be a part of the solution.”



LOVING HER JOB

For Carissa, mortgages aren’t just transactions; they’re opportunities to make dreams come true. “Mortgages are fun. I love what I do,” she exclaims. She looks forward to going to work every day, eager to help the clients who are entrusted to her care.

Her passion for her work shines through as she describes the joy she finds in helping people, especially first-time homebuyers and young couples. “It really does bring me joy to help people,” she adds, emphasizing the role mortgages play in supporting families and fulfilling her calling from God.

“I also like helping people who didn’t think they could purchase a home,” she adds. Getting a mortgage can be challenging, but Carissa knows the ins and outs of the industry. As an invaluable source of knowledge about mortgages, she can help people who might have considered giving up on their dream of homeownership.

“Around seventy percent of people rely on their home equity to retire,” she points out. Making that a reality for people is what it’s all about for Carissa. She knows that with every mortgage she grants, she is changing people’s lives for the better as well as the trajectory of their families.

One thing that sets Carissa apart is the fact that she is a servant leader. She loves and values each client, helping them from start to finish.

LIGHTNING-FAST TURNAROUND TIMES

When it comes to rapid turnaround times, Carissa and her dedicated team at Princeton Mortgage deliver. Carissa explains, “Princeton Mortgage’s turnaround times are incredibly fast with 24-hour turnaround times. Our company hosts the ‘not so happy hour.’ If something

▶ partner spotlight

Written by Elizabeth McCabe
Photos by David Graves,
David Graves Photography





“
It really does
bring me joy to
help people.”

isn't finished – with a 24-hour turnaround time for underwriting – we don't go home until it is done.”

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POPULAR PASTIMES

When not working, Carissa enjoys spending time with her family. She raves, “I like to spend time with my husband, Matt Rickman. I married the most incredible man in the South.” They met through a dating app and have been married for 10 years now. Matt, a nurse practitioner, proposed while they were on a mission trip. Carissa said, “Yes,” and they've been happy ever since.

They began their lives together and now have three crazy boys, Samson (8), Solomon (7), and Shiloh (4). The boys all attend private church school. “We have an amazing network of friends,” adds Carissa.

In their free time, expect to find them park hopping, hiking, and simply savoring the outdoors. “We are really outdoorsy people,” says Carissa. They also enjoy the constant companionship of their teacup Yorkie named Respa (named after a real estate law) and their German shepherd named Swiffer.

Carissa has a heart for others and likes being involved in the Hispanic church at her place of worship. “We're also going to start fostering soon,” she says with a smile. “That will be another mission in and of itself.”

To relax, Carissa likes to bake sourdough bread, which is always delicious.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you're looking for mortgages that are lightning fast with exceptional service from start to close, choose Princeton Mortgage. Carissa and her dedicated team would love to cater to you. They excel in making mortgages a cinch in a pinch.

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MASON SANDERS & ERIC SCHAFFER

RESPECTED. RESILIENT. RELENTLESS.

Never underestimate the power and influence of the next generation in real estate. Enter Mason Sanders, 25, and his business partner, Eric Schafer, 24. These two real estate professionals are a remarkable duo challenging norms and redefining success with Base Partners LLC. With their entrepreneurial spirit, passion, and unwavering dedication, they are game changers in local real estate.

MEET MASON

Mason Sanders, the face of the business, epitomizes the quintessential go-getter. His journey into real estate, which commenced in November 2020, reflects a bold decision to pursue a path with unlimited earning potential and the promise of substantial impact. Coming from a small town in Montevallo and bypassing the traditional college route, Mason's determination to carve his niche in the industry speaks volumes about his grit and ambition.

"I knew I wanted to do something with unlimited earning potential," says Mason. "I picked the highest commission rate and largest asset that you could sell – real estate. I'm also interested in the wealth-building side of things." With his mind set on real estate, Mason decided to go "all in."

He started working with Keller Williams Homewood in Birmingham, which is where he learned the ropes of real estate. He was named the Birmingham Association Rookie of the Year in 2021. With over 70 successful sales, he has navigated the competitive real estate landscape with ease. He explains, "I did it through a simple direct sales strategy, calling people and seeing if I could provide value. It was a really good year, but it was tough. I learned a lot about real estate, though, especially how to provide value to people." As a 21-year-old with no experience, Mason had to hustle to find people who needed his services.

MEET ERIC

Eric Schaefer, Mason's business partner, had his own journey into real estate along with serving our nation in the Marine Corps. He explains, "I went to college in 2019 and was there for half a year. I realized I didn't like college. When COVID came around in March 2020, we were all working from



home. I was spending \$8000 a semester to click buttons and take quizzes." Instead, he saw a better way – real estate. "My dad was into commercial real estate and I liked the idea of it." Eric got his license at the end of 2020, dropping out of college, and joining a real estate team in 2021.

"When I went into real estate, I completely fell in love with the industry," he says. "It was everything I wanted and more."

PARTNERING TOGETHER

How did they decide to join forces? "Eric and I were on the real estate team for the Apollo Property Group and we had similar interests," explains Mason. Mason did off-market acquisitions for the company and Eric also had an interest in that line of work. They started parting ways from the team. Mason left first, followed by Eric, and they started working together.

Fueled by a mutual drive to excel, they ventured out on their own, establishing the creation of BASE (Buy And Sell Equity) in March 2022. Mason focused on client relations and transactions, while Eric managed projects and marketing. Together, they've bought or sold nearly 200 properties over three years, with Mason ranking in the top 1% of agents in their MLS and Eric expanding the business into new markets.

They also make income to invest back into real estate, fueling their dreams in the process. Together, they form a powerhouse, with Eric spearheading investor relations, private capital acquisition, and strategic partnerships, while Mason focuses on the operational aspects, lead generation, and marketing efforts.

“Eric is a huge part of the company,” says Mason. “He’s the engine. I think we can be a one-stop shop in real estate – homes, investment property, and renovations.” They envision adding more agents, properties and flips in the future.

Beyond transactions, they find fulfillment in building connections with clients and contributing to the local economy by providing quality housing options and job opportunities. Outside of work, they enjoy exploring their city and brainstorming strategies for business growth.

PASSION, PERSISTENCE AND PERSEVERANCE

For Mason and Eric, real estate isn’t just a career; it’s a passion that permeates every aspect of their lives. From waking up each day with a sense of purpose to engaging in endless discussions about market trends and investment opportunities, their dedication knows no bounds. These two entrepreneurs eat, breathe, and live real estate.

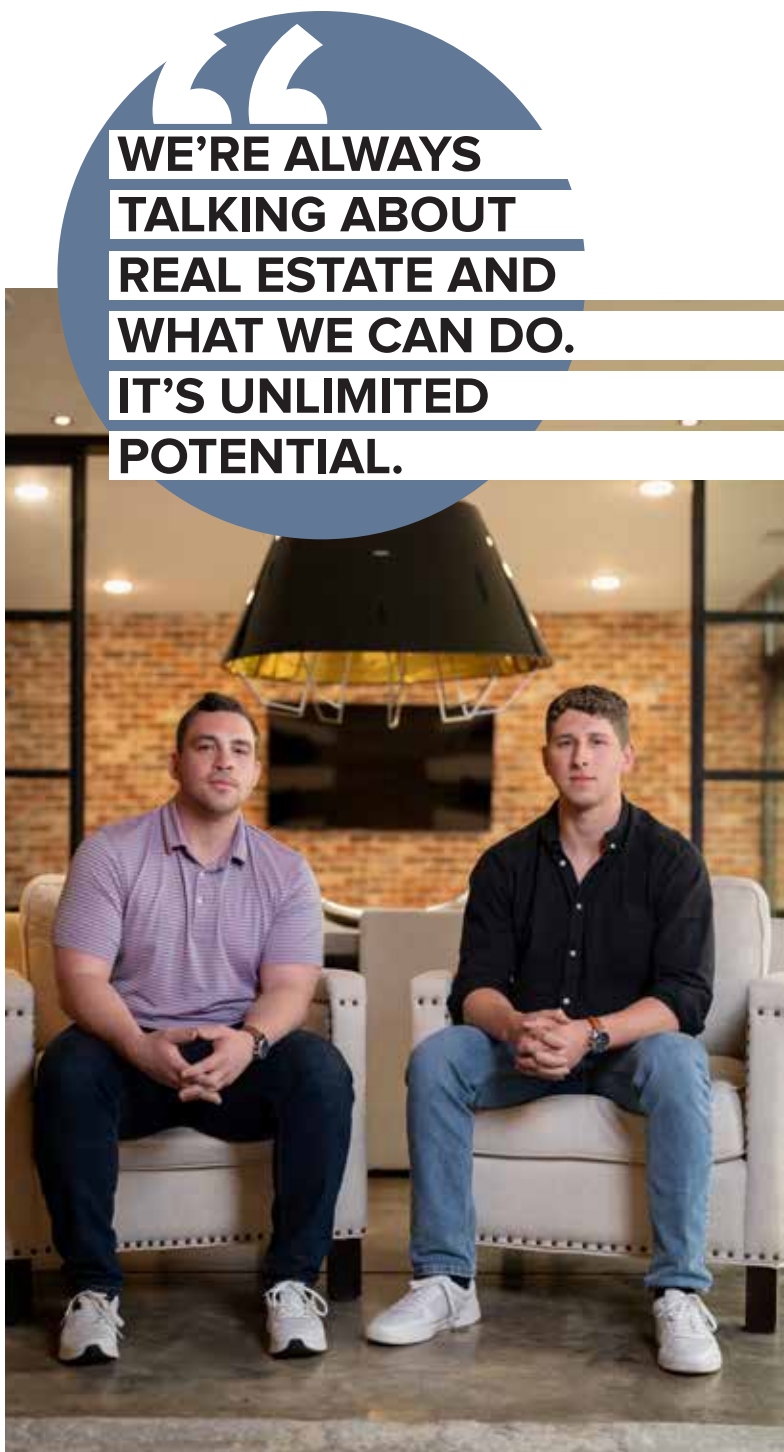
“It’s really not just a career for us at this point. It’s a lifestyle,” says Mason. “We’re always talking about real estate and what we can do. It’s unlimited potential. There aren’t many careers where you can provide value for clients and have a big impact on their lives as well as your life – financially.

Looking ahead, Mason and Eric envision a future brimming with possibilities. Their ambition to expand into vacation homes and lakefront properties reflects their audacious dreams and entrepreneurial spirit. With a track record of over 200 transactions and a portfolio encompassing 138 units worth \$18.9 million since January 2021, they are leaving a positive impact on the real estate industry.

COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE

What sets Mason and Eric apart is not just their youthfulness or their impressive track record but their unwavering commitment to excellence and

innovation. As they continue to push boundaries and redefine success, one thing remains certain—their journey is only just beginning. Mason Sanders and Eric Schaefer shine brightly as role models for aspiring entrepreneurs and real estate enthusiasts alike. They conclude, “We are only scratching the surface of what we can do.” Stay tuned for what this dynamic duo does next.



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▶▶ agent feature

Written by Elizabeth McCabe
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Srianil KUMAR PEDDI

FORMER SOFTWARE ENGINEER RISES IN RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE

Srianil Kumar Peddi is not your typical REALTOR®. With a background in software engineering and a journey that began with ambitious dreams in India, his path to real estate success is marked by hard work and a deep commitment to his clients' needs. As a seasoned REALTOR® with eXp Realty, Inc. and AKS Realty Group LLC, Srianil brings a unique perspective and a wealth of experience to the table. His analytical skills, coupled with his ability to solve problems, have made him a welcome face in local real estate.

"I got my real estate license in 2018," says Srianil. Since then, he has amassed an impressive track record. With over 5 ½ years of experience under his belt, he has facilitated transactions totaling approximately \$43 million. Despite the challenges of the past year with the market, Srianil maintained his momentum, closing deals worth \$11 million, showcasing his dedication and expertise in the field.

A self-described workaholic, Srianil knows how to work hard. "I work 60-70 hours a week," he admits. It comes naturally to him, especially during his days as a software engineer. "I worked leading tech teams as a team leader and a manager as well," he explains.

INVESTING LED TO A NEW PROFESSION

"I started investing in 2010, and once I started investing, I liked the way that we could increase our cash flow each month," explains Srianil. "I started working with my agent Kristen McGee, who encouraged and mentored me to get my license."

He came to the United States on New Year's Eve in 2001. Starting as a student in Missouri, Srianil longed for a warmer climate. "I couldn't stand the snow there," he says. "So, I decided to move to Birmingham in June 2002." He completed his master's program in computer science before applying for his green card and becoming a citizen. Although he misses his family in India, he does appreciate the opportunities that abound here in America.

A PASSION FOR HELPING OTHERS

Srianil's journey is not just about financial success; it's also driven by a genuine desire to assist others in achieving their real estate goals. His focus extends beyond traditional transactions to encompass guiding first-time buyers through purchasing their first home and helping investors evaluate potential returns on investment properties. Moreover, recognizing the need for effective property management services, Srianil expanded his

“
I'm very
thorough in
whatever I do. I
put a lot of time
into what I do.”





business to include property management, bridging the gap between property owners and investors.

FAMILY VALUES AND PERSONAL PURSUITS

Beyond his professional endeavors, Srianil treasures time spent with his family. His wife, Preethi, a software quality assurance analyst, and their two daughters, Akshaya and Akshara, form the foundation of his support system. Together, they enjoy movie nights, game nights, and outings to their favorite restaurants. Srianil's hobbies include playing volleyball and cricket to relax and unwind from the demands of real estate.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

While Srianil's achievements are evident, there's more to him than meets the eye. Few may know that he studied at one of India's top universities, National Institute of Technology, ranking among the top performers in his class. This achievement speaks volumes about his dedication to excellence and his unwavering pursuit of success. Srianil is a man who doesn't give up and knows the value of perseverance.

In the face of challenges, Srianil draws inspiration from one of his favorite quotes from Rocky Balboa: "It's not about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward." This resilient mindset underscores his approach to both business and life. Relocating to America isn't for the faint of heart, and forging your own path takes courage and confidence. Fortunately, Srianil has those qualities, which have served him well in life.

He says, "I'm very thorough in whatever I do. I put a lot of time into what I do." He is grateful for the support from his wife and kids. "They understand how busy my business is and they are very supportive of that," Srianil adds. "I also want to thank my clients and referrals from friends."

BLAZING HIS OWN TRAIL

Srianil Kumar Peddi's path from software engineer to REALTOR® exemplifies the power of perseverance, passion, and a commitment to excellence. With a steadfast focus on his clients' needs, a dedication to continuous improvement, and a resilient spirit, Srianil continues to make waves in the world of real estate, leaving a lasting impact on those he serves. This entrepreneur wouldn't have it any other way.



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Ben Hedden

From a Short Stint in Finance to Real Estate Success

“My dad is a plastic surgeon, but he always told us that he’s not successful because he’s a doctor. He’s successful because he has a good business and knows how to sell.”

Ben Hedden grew up in Birmingham, Alabama. After high school, he went to Auburn to study finance and economics. Ben obtained his Series 7 before graduating and ended up getting a job at a mutual fund right out of college. However, he quickly realized that his future wasn’t going to be in the corporate finance world. Real estate had always been on his radar, so just a month into his job, he decided to quit and pursue real estate full-time. He recognized it as a field where he could not only thrive but also genuinely believe in the value he was providing.

“I didn’t believe in what I was selling and always thought real estate was a good investment and thought, ‘What better way to learn about it than to start selling it.’”

Ben obtained his real estate license in 2020 and hasn’t looked back since.

GROWING HIS BUSINESS

Ben partnered with a friend of his and they began the challenging task of building their business from the ground up. Unfortunately, they got started shortly before COVID-19 swept through the nation and put a halt on the real estate industry. Despite facing initial setbacks and unforeseen challenges, they remained persistent and committed to their goal.

In those early days, they spent countless hours prospecting, cold calling, and refining their marketing strategies. It was a time of experimentation and learning for the first six months. But by the late summer, things started to get back to normal, the real estate market regained momentum, and their hard work began to reel in tangible results.

“All during COVID, we were sitting on the phones calling people 6+ hours a day, making as many connections as possible. Then following up with as many people as possible. We did very well that first year. Every year after that, we’ve continued to grow.”

They’d begun their business working out of Realty South, but as soon as they were able to, Ben and his partner decided to break off and start their own brokerage, Bham Realty. Despite the inherent risks involved, they embraced the opportunity to chart their own course and have more autonomy over their business. It was a significant milestone. Shortly after, the duo decided to split and Ben took over the brokerage operations.

Ben credits much of his success to both a persistent work ethic and a dedication to each client’s particular needs. He now manages a team of four other agents and an admin, all centered on expanding their clientele, reputation, and footprint in the Birmingham area.





“ IT’S REALLY ABOUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT THEY NEED AND SEEING IF YOU CAN HELP SOLVE THEIR PROBLEM. ”

“A lot of people get confused tailoring their process to what they think the consumer needs. It’s really about understanding what they need and seeing if you can help solve their problem.”

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

Looking ahead, Ben is focused on scalability and building a robust foundation for his business to ensure consistent, steady growth. Empowering younger agents and nurturing their development is a key priority as he seeks to transition into a more managerial role while maintaining his passion for sales. With a keen eye for opportunity and a strategic approach to business expansion, Ben envisions a future where his influence extends beyond individual transactions to shape the trajectory of his team’s collective success.

Outside of work, Ben is passionate about getting active outdoors, but he’s always holding his passion for real estate close.

“I love it and think there’s so much value in it, so I’m a huge supporter of the industry.”



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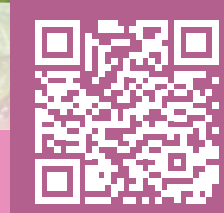
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